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Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture Online

Ausgabe 7/2020

Textual Thingness / Textuelle Dinghaftigkeit

Can texts be seen as things, or do they even require being seen as such? How do texts stage their own thingness, and which aesthetic dimensions are highlighted through a focus on their materiality? Members of the scientific network "Things in Medieval Literature" (funded by the DFG) discuss these questions from the perspective of literary studies and history.

Inwiefern können Texte als Dinge behandelt werden, beziehungsweise wann fordern sie ein solches Verständnis geradezu ein und machen es ästhetisch produktiv? Diesen Fragen gehen Mitglieder des DFG-Projekt-Netzwerks „Dinge in der Literatur des Mittelalters" aus literatur- und geschichtswissenschaftlicher Perspektive auf den Grund.

Articles by/Beiträge von Christina Antenhofer, Tamara Elsner, Sophie Marshall, Florian Nieser, Justin Vollmann, Silvan Wagner.

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Textuelle Dinghaftigkeit. Eine Einleitung

Justin Vollmann

Der Beitrag – der gleichzeitig die Einleitung zu MEMO 7 (2020) „Textual Thingness“ bildet – widmet sich der Frage, inwiefern Texte nicht nur von Dingen handeln, sondern auch selbst als Dinge behandelt werden können. Ein erster Teil stellt diese Frage zunächst in den Kontext (post-)moderner Ästhetiktheorien, wobei die Begriffe der Wahrnehmung (Luhmann), der Präsenz (Gumbrecht) und des Erscheinens (Seel) eine zentrale Rolle spielen. Ein zweiter Teil lenkt dann den Blick auf die spezifischen Merkmale mittelalterlicher Textualität und Medialität, die weniger unter dem Vorzeichen der Ästhetik als vielmehr unter demjenigen der Religion stehen (Kiening). Unabhängig von solchen Fragen des ideellen Überbaus verbindet der dritte Teil die Vorstellung der einzelnen Beiträge mit konkreten Vorschlägen, was alles unter textueller Dinghaftigkeit verstanden werden kann.

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As a preface to MEMO 7 (2020) „Textual Thingness“, this paper asks in what way texts are not only telling about things but may also be treated as things themselves. The first part poses this question in the context of (post-)modern theories of aesthetics while focussing on the concepts of perception (Luhmann), presence (Gumbrecht) and appearing (Seel). The second part directs the attention to the specific features of medieval textuality and mediality, which are much less signed by aesthetics than by religion (Kiening). Irrespective of such considerations about the ideational setup, the third part introduces the individual papers of this issue and connects them to concrete suggestions as to what we may understand as ‚textual thingness‘.

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Das anhaltende kulturwissenschaftliche Interesse an unbelebten, stofflich kompakten, klar abgrenzbaren Entitäten – kurz: Dingen[1] – bietet der Literaturwissenschaft Gelegenheit, sich ihrem Gegenstand neu anzunähern, indem sie sich die Frage stellt, inwiefern eigentlich auch Texte Dinge sind. Dieser Frage widmet sich Ausgabe 7 der Online-Zeitschrift MEMO unter dem Titel „Textual Thingness“, und zwar aus mediävistischer Perspektive. Die Einleitung liefert erstens eine theoretische Kontextualisierung[2] der Fragestellung, zwei-

1 Dieses Interesse sei hier durch einige neuere Monographien und Sammelbände allein aus dem Bereich der germanistischen Mediävistik dokumentiert: Christ 2015, Mühlherr u.a. (Hgg.) 2016, Selmayr 2017, Glasner (Hg.) 2019, Bildhauer 2020.

2 Ich knüpfe in diesem Teil an Überlegungen aus früheren Publikationen (Vollmann 2016, S. 455-457; Vollmann 2019, S. 248-250) an.

Titelbild
Freskomalerei 1420-1430, Südtirol (Ausschnitt). Institut für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit, Bild Nr. 002997. Online abrufbar in REALonline, https://realonline.imareal.sbg.ac.at/detail/nr-002997/.

tens eine Erläuterung des mediävistischen Ansatzes und drittens die Einbettung der vorgestellten Beiträge in eine kleine Typologie von Formen textueller Dinghaftigkeit.

1. Theoretische Kontextualisierung

Einer ersten Annäherung an das Thema kann die folgende Passage aus Niklas Luhmanns „Kunst der Gesellschaft" dienen:

> „Als Besonderheit, die das Kunstsystem von anderen Funktionssystemen unterscheidet, können wir festhalten, dass die Beobachtung zweiter Ordnung im Bereich des Wahrnehmbaren hergestellt wird. Es geht immer um Dinge oder um Quasi-Dinge, um reale oder um imaginierte Dinge, um statische Objekte oder um Ereignissequenzen. Wir wollen, diese Unterschiede übergreifend, von dinglicher Fixierung von Formen sprechen. Die in die Dinge eingelassenen Formentscheidungen garantieren die Möglichkeit, am selben Objekt Beobachtungen zu beobachten."[3]

Wenn Luhmann nicht nur von Dingen, realen Dingen und statischen Objekten, sondern auch von Quasi-Dingen, imaginierten Dingen und Ereignissequenzen spricht, dann hat er ganz offensichtlich auch die Literatur im Blick. Dass er als übergreifenden Begriff gleichwohl den – auf Werke der bildenden Kunst zumindest *prima facie* weit besser anwendbaren – Dingbegriff wählt, scheint mit dem hohen Stellenwert zusammenzuhängen, den er der sinnlichen Wahrnehmung (einschließlich Imagination) für das gesamte Kunstsystem beimisst.[4] Deutlich wird aber auch, dass es mit bloßer Wahrnehmung nicht getan ist, vielmehr muss das wahrgenommene Ding gleichzeitig die Beobachtung von Beobachtungen ermöglichen – letztlich eine etwas abstraktere Formulierung für die Tatsache, dass das Kunstwerk nicht etwa als Naturding wahrgenommen, sondern immer auch auf seine Gemachtheit hin beobachtet sein will.

Aufgenommen werden die Überlegungen Luhmanns u.a. von Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, der sie in „Diesseits der Hermeneutik" entlang seiner eigenen Leitunterscheidung zwischen Präsenz und Sinn (bzw. Präsenz und Bedeutung)[5] reformuliert:

> „Meine eigene – anspruchslose – Reaktion auf diese Beobachtungen – meine Antwort auf die Frage nach den besonderen Merkmalen, welche die Objekte ästhetischen Erlebens kennzeichnen – läuft nun auf den Hinweis hinaus, dass Gegenstände des ästhetischen Erlebens durch ein Oszillieren zwischen Präsenzeffekten und Sinneffekten charakterisiert sind […]."[6]

Und eine Seite später:

> „Wesentlich ist, dass der Sinn in dieser spezifischen Konstellation nicht der Einklammerung dient, nicht die Präsenzeffekte zum Verschwinden bringt, und dass die – uneingeklammerte – physische Präsenz der Dinge (eines

3 Luhmann 1997, S. 124.
4 Luhmann 1997, S. 13 u. 16 (zur Imagination).
5 Ich unterscheide im Folgenden ebenso wenig wie Gumbrecht zwischen Sinn und Bedeutung. Gumbrecht 2004a (übersetzt von Joachim Schulte) bevorzugt ‚Sinn', Gumbrecht 2004b dagegen ‚Bedeutung'.
6 Gumbrecht 2004a, S. 127.

> Texts, einer Stimme, einer Leinwand mit Farben, eines Mannschaftsspiels) nicht letzten Endes die Sinndimension unterdrückt.“ [7]

Wo Luhmann von „Beobachtung zweiter Ordnung im Bereich des Wahrnehmbaren“ spricht, da ist bei Gumbrecht vom „Oszillieren zwischen Präsenzeffekten und Sinneffekten“ die Rede. Hierbei scheinen die Sinneffekte mit der Beobachtung zweiter Ordnung, die Präsenzeffekte dagegen mit der unmittelbaren sinnlichen Wahrnehmung Hand in Hand zu gehen. Und ähnlich wie bei Luhmann kommt der – hier ausdrücklich auch auf Texte bezogene – Dingbegriff genau dort ins Spiel, wo es nicht etwa um die Sinnseite, sondern um die Präsenzseite der Objekte des ästhetischen Erlebens geht.

Weitere Differenzierungen, die sich insbesondere auch für die Literaturwissenschaft als hilfreich erweisen, finden sich bei Martin Seel. Statt eines Zitats hier zunächst zwei Tabellen, die einige zentrale Unterscheidungen seiner „Ästhetik des Erscheinens“ zusammenfassen:

Tabelle 1

	Sinnenobjekt		
	real		irreal
	anwesend	abwesend	
Sinnl. Wahrnehmung	X		
Sinnl. Vorstellung		X	X

Tabelle 2

Sosein (begrifflich fixierbar, propositional)	Erscheinen (phänomenale Individualität)		
	bloßes E. (Kontemplation)	atmosphärisches E. (Korrespondenz)	artistisches E. (Darbietung, Verstehen)

Eine erste wichtige Unterscheidung ist diejenige zwischen realen und irrealen Sinnenobjekten. Erstere sind, sofern anwesend, Gegenstand der sinnlichen Wahrnehmung, letztere sind Gegenstand der sinnlichen Vorstellung.[8] Sinnliche Wahrnehmung wie auch sinnliche Vorstellung können ihren Gegenstand sowohl im Modus des Soseins als auch im Modus des Erscheinens erfassen. Im ersten Fall wird der Gegenstand auf einen Begriff gebracht, im zweiten Fall dagegen – und nur in diesem Fall kann tatsächlich von *ästhetischer* Wahrnehmung bzw. *ästhetischer* Vorstellung gesprochen werden – präsentiert sich der Gegenstand in seiner phänomenalen Individualität.[9] Weiter unterscheidet

7 Gumbrecht 2004a, S. 128.
8 Seel 2003, S. 121-124.
9 Seel 2003, Kap. 2, vgl. auch S. 50-57.

Seel drei Arten des Erscheinens,[10] von denen im aktuellen Zusammenhang vor allem die dritte, das artistische Erscheinen, von Interesse ist. Seel formuliert hier die speziell für Kunstwerke geltende Voraussetzung, dass diese „in ihrem performativen Kalkül *verstanden* sein wollen"[11] – ein direktes Pendant zu Luhmanns Beobachtung zweiter Ordnung bzw. Gumbrechts Sinneffekten.

Literarische Kunstwerke sind nun einerseits reale Sinnenobjekte, die z.B. als Klanggebilde der ästhetischen Wahrnehmung unmittelbar zugänglich sind. Sie appellieren aber andererseits auch an die ästhetische Vorstellungskraft, mit deren Hilfe sie irreale Sinnenobjekte zum Erscheinen bringen. Wenn etwa Luhmann in der eingangs zitierten Passage von Quasi-Dingen, imaginierten Dingen und Ereignissequenzen spricht, dann scheint er eher diese irrealen Sinnenobjekte im Blick zu haben. Wenn dagegen Gumbrecht darauf hinweist, dass bei literarischen Texten neben der Sinndimension sehr leicht „auch die Präsenzdimensionen Typographie, Sprachrhythmus und sogar Papiergeruch ins Spiel kommen" können,[12] dann bezieht er sich ganz offensichtlich auf den Text als ein reales Sinnenobjekt. Es scheint deshalb geraten, eine Differenzierung des Dingbegriffs nach realen und irrealen Sinnenobjekten vorzunehmen.

Diese Differenzierung hat dann auch Folgen für den Begriff der Präsenz, der für Seel nicht weniger zentral ist als für Gumbrecht: „In der sinnlichen Präsenz des Gegenstands werden wir eines Augenblicks unserer eigenen Gegenwart inne. […] Ästhetische Anschauung ist eine radikale Form des Aufenthalts im Hier und Jetzt."[13] Das Problem besteht nun darin, dass man irrealen Sinnenobjekten nicht ohne Weiteres eine eigene Präsenz bzw. Gegenwart zusprechen mag: „[I]rreale Objekte sind ‚Objekte' einer besonderen Art. Sie sind nur zusammen mit Vorstellungen von ihnen überhaupt ‚gegeben'. Ihnen geht die Eigenständigkeit realer Objekte ab. Wir können ihnen nicht *begegnen*. Ihnen kommt keine eigene Gegenwart zu."[14] Sind nun aber, wie im Fall literarischer Kunstwerke, die irrealen Sinnenobjekte an ein reales Sinnenobjekt (den Text) gebunden, so können sie gewissermaßen an dessen Gegenwart partizipieren: „Es handelt sich hierbei einerseits um eine *geliehene* Gegenwart und eine *geliehene* Sinnlichkeit: andererseits findet die ästhetische Vorstellung in der Form einer *gebundenen* Imagination zu einem gesteigerten Bewusstsein von Gegenwart zurück."[15] Und so kann Seel formulieren: „Das Erscheinen des sprachlichen Gegenstands lässt eine abwesende Gegenwart erscheinen."[16]

Im dritten Teil sollen einige der hier referierten Unterscheidungen wieder aufgenommen werden. Soviel aber dürfte jetzt schon deutlich geworden sein: Die Frage nach der Dinghaftigkeit von Texten ist keine ganz unschuldige. Sie stellt sich in eine mindestens bis zu Susan Sontags berühmtem Essay „Against Interpretation"[17] zurückreichende Tradition, die darauf besteht, dass das literarische Kunstwerk sowohl auf der Ebene der sinnlichen Wahrnehmung als auch auf der Ebene der sinnlichen Vorstellung etwas zum Erscheinen bringt, dessen sinnliche Präsenz dem hermeneutischen Zugriff weitgehend entzogen bleibt. Das heißt nun freilich nicht, dass man auf Hermeneutik ganz verzichten müsste, im Gegen-

10 Seel 2003, S. 148-160.
11 Seel 2003, S. 158.
12 Gumbrecht 2004a, S. 130.
13 Seel 2003, S. 62.
14 Seel 2003, S. 122.
15 Seel 2003, S. 131.
16 Seel 2003, S. 134.
17 Sontag 1966.

teil: Es geht ja gerade um das Zusammenspiel von Präsenz und Bedeutung, von Sinnlichkeit und Sinn – nichts anderes wollen Formulierungen wie „Beobachtung zweiter Ordnung im Bereich des Wahrnehmbaren", „Oszillieren zwischen Präsenzeffekten und Sinneffekten" oder „artistisches Erscheinen" letztlich besagen.

2. Mediävistische Perspektivierung

Luhmann, Gumbrecht, Seel: Im vorherigen Teil bin ich von (post-)modernen Ästhetiktheorien ausgegangen,[18] um das Thema des vorliegenden Hefts in einem ersten Anlauf zu umreißen. Das geschah einerseits in der Überzeugung, dass sich moderne Theorien durchaus auch für vormoderne Texte fruchtbar machen lassen. Andererseits ist aber nicht zu übersehen, dass die genannten Theorien explizit oder implizit von Prämissen – z.B. einem die Literatur mit einschließenden Begriff der schönen Künste bei gleichzeitiger scharfer Trennung zwischen literarischen und nicht-literarischen Texten – ausgehen, die für das Mittelalter so nicht haltbar sind.[19] Der vorliegende Teil widmet sich deshalb der Frage, wie eine historische Perspektivierung des Themas durch die Mediävistik auszusehen hätte.

Den Weg kann vielleicht noch einmal Gumbrecht weisen, der seine Leitunterscheidung zwischen Präsenz und Bedeutung zu einer prototypischen Unterscheidung zwischen Präsenzkulturen und Bedeutungskulturen nutzt.[20] Während wir heute in einer stark bedeutungslastigen Kultur lebten, die freilich auch „ein massives Bedürfnis nach Präsenz" motiviere (es ist genau dieses Bedürfnis, das Gumbrecht offensichtlich antreibt),[21] sei es möglicherweise „lohnend, mit der These vom Mittelalter als dem Ausnahmefall eines ausbalancierten Verhältnisses zwischen Präsenz- und ‚Bedeutungskultur' zu experimentieren",[22] was Gumbrecht unter anderem an der Eucharistie verdeutlicht:

> „Die frühneuzeitliche Geschichte der christlichen Theologie lässt uns annehmen, dass die Eucharistie, der zentrale Ritus des Mittelalters, zugleich als ein Heraufbeschwören der Realpräsenz Gottes erlebt wurde und als zeichenhafte Erinnerung an die Fleischwerdung Gottes."[23]

Das Mittelalter als historischer Ausnahmefall eines ausbalancierten Verhältnisses zwischen Präsenz- und Bedeutungskultur: Wenn das stimmt, dann müsste nicht zuletzt auch die dingliche Dimension von Texten in der Vormoderne noch weit ausgeprägter sein als in der durch die Cartesianische Trennung von Geist und Materie geprägten Moderne. Außerdem steht zu vermuten, dass das Erscheinen sinnlicher Präsenz im Mittelalter weit weniger unter ästhetischen als vielmehr unter religiösen Vorzeichen verhandelt wird. In diesem Zusammenhang lohnt sich ein Blick auf Christian Kienings mediengeschichtliche Studie „Fülle und Mangel", mit der sich nahtlos an Gumbrechts Eucharistie-Beispiel anschließen lässt.[24]

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18 Zu nennen wären an dieser Stelle auch Brown 2001, Harman 2012 und Morton 2012, vgl. dazu Chinca 2016, S. 389f.
19 Programmatisch Speer 1994.
20 Gumbrecht 2004b, S. 6-9, vgl. auch Gumbrecht 2004a, S. 98-106.
21 Gumbrecht 2004b, S. 7.
22 Gumbrecht 2004b, S. 15.
23 Gumbrecht 2004b.
24 Im Folgenden greife ich auf einzelne Abschnitte meiner Rezension zu Kiening 2016 (Vollmann 2018) zurück.

Was Kiening sucht, ist das absolute Medium, in dem das Repräsentierte nicht nur repräsentiert, sondern tatsächlich auch ontologisch präsent wäre. Das Paradigma hierfür ist Jesus Christus, der, göttliche und menschliche Natur in sich vereinend, als wahrer Mittler zwischen göttlicher und menschlicher Sphäre fungiert und seinerseits, vermittelt durch das Eucharistiegeschehen, im Hier und Jetzt der Messe tatsächlich real präsent ist.[25] Kiening fragt nun nach Formen mittelalterlicher Schriftlichkeit, die dem skizzierten „Modell der christologischen Medialität"[26] zumindest nahekommen. Ich greife drei Beispiele heraus, in denen die Verbindung von Schriftlichkeit, göttlicher Präsenz und Materialität bzw. Dinglichkeit besonders deutlich zutage tritt.

Erstens kann man den sakralen Charakter der Schrift betonen, wie er bereits durch die ursprünglich vom Finger Gottes beschriebenen Gesetzestafeln verbürgt ist. Immer wieder wird die Materialität der Schrift zwar überschritten, so etwa in der Paulinischen Umcodierung der Gesetzestafeln zu einer göttlichen Herzensschrift. Gleichzeitig ist es aber gerade diese Materialität, die auch im geistlichen Kontext eine wichtige Rolle spielt, etwa für die Figurengedichte eines Hrabanus Maurus oder für heilswirksame Akte des Lesens und Schreibens.[27]

Zweitens kann die Schrift mit materiellen Artefakten wie dem Kirchenbau und seiner Ausstattung kombiniert werden. So gewährt Suger von Saint Denis in seiner Schrift *De administratione* nicht nur Einblick in die intendierte Rezeption des von ihm initiierten Kirchenbaus, sondern versieht diesen vorsichtshalber auch mit inschriftlichen Gebrauchsanweisungen, die den Aufstieg von der materiellen Pracht zum immateriellen Sinn garantieren sollen. Aber auch Beschreibungen und Ausdeutungen vom Rezipienten allererst zu imaginierender Artefakte – etwa der Arche Noah durch Hugo von St. Viktor – können der geistlichen Orientierung dienen.[28]

Eine geradezu symbiotische Verbindung ergibt sich drittens zwischen Schrift und Reliquie: Die Schrift „versieht die Reliquie mit Evidenz und versieht sich selbst mit Evidenz durch die Nähe zu jener".[29] Kiening zeigt das erstens anhand der Legendenbildung um das Schweißtuch der heiligen Veronika, das als *vera icon*, als wahres, nicht von Menschenhand gemachtes Bild Christi einmal mehr die Vorstellung eines absoluten Mediums heraufbeschwört, und zweitens anhand der hybriden, weltliche und geistliche Elemente auf eigenwillige Art und Weise miteinander verwebenden Erzählung vom *Grauen Rock* Christi – „[e]in textiler Text als Repräsentation einer lang nur textuell verfügbaren Textilie".[30]

Die Gesetzestafeln Mose, der mit inschriftlichen Gebrauchsanweisungen versehene Sakralbau Sugers von Saint Denis, die enge Verbindung von Schrift und Reliquie: All dies sind Aspekte einer starken textuellen Dinghaftigkeit unter nicht primär ästhetischen, sondern religiösen Vorzeichen. Wie Kiening zeigt, finden die von ihm herausgearbeiteten Konzepte einer präsentischen Schriftlichkeit aber auch ihren Weg in solche Texte, die man heute als im engeren Sinn literarisch bezeichnen würde. Zu nennen wären hier etwa das Modell

25 Kiening 2016, Kap. 2.
26 Kiening 2016, S. 68.
27 Kiening 2016, Kap. 5.
28 Kiening 2016, Kap. 7.
29 Kiening 2016, S. 318.
30 Kiening 2016, Kap. 9, Zitat S. 346.

einer eucharistischen Teilhabe im *Tristan*-Prolog,[31] die um das Geheimnis des Grals zentrierte Auratisierung, aber auch Dynamisierung und Transzendierung von Schriftlichkeit im *Parzival*[32] oder die groß angelegte, von einer umfassenden Reflexion des Medialen geprägte Beschreibung des Gralstempels im *Jüngeren Titurel*.[33] An diesen und ähnlichen Fällen ließe sich zeigen, dass die eingangs diskutierten (post-)modernen Theorieangebote durchaus auch schon für mittelalterliche Texte Relevanz besitzen.

3. Vorstellung der Beiträge, gleichzeitig eine kleine Typologie textueller Dinghaftigkeit

Die in diesem Themenheft behandelten – meist deutschen, vereinzelt auch lateinischen bzw. italienischen – Texte decken einen Entstehungszeitraum vom Frühmittelalter bis zur Frühen Neuzeit ab, das Spektrum der Textsorten reicht von Inventar, Gebet und Glosse über Lehrrede, Märe und Fabel bis hin zu legendenhafter Erzählung und höfischem Roman. Diese Vielfalt war uns wichtig, verhindert sie doch eine allzu einseitige Fixierung auf bestimmte Formen textueller Dinghaftigkeit, wie sie zu einer bestimmten Zeit oder innerhalb einer bestimmten Gattung vorherrschen mögen. So sind wir zuversichtlich, dass unsere Sammlung einschlägiger Phänomene umfassend genug ist, um eine kleine Typologie der verschiedenen Formen textueller Dinghaftigkeit zu ermöglichen. Dieser Typologie gehorcht die Anordnung der Beiträge, und gemeinsam mit ihnen soll sie im Folgenden kurz vorgestellt werden.

Bei textueller Dinghaftigkeit wird man wohl zuallererst an die konkrete Dinghaftigkeit des materiellen Schriftträgers denken, mit der sich Christina Antenhofer in ihrem Beitrag zu Inventaren des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit auseinandersetzt. Gerade eine an der materiellen Kultur der Vormoderne interessierte Forschung hat ironischerweise lange Zeit dazu tendiert, Inventare als bloße Texte zu lesen, denen sie etwas über die darin verzeichneten Dinge zu entnehmen hoffte. Erst die jüngere Forschung hat erkannt, dass Inventare immer auch eine Geschichte erzählen, deren Kenntnis nicht zuletzt für das Verständnis der darin verzeichneten (und eventuell auch nicht verzeichneten) Dinge essentiell ist. Um diese Geschichten zu entziffern, so Antenhofer, dürfen die Inventare aber nicht nur als Texte, sondern müssen sie vor allem auch als Dinge ernstgenommen werden, deren Ausstattung z.B. auf eine rein administrative oder auf eine repräsentative Funktion hindeuten kann.

Von dieser konkreten Dinghaftigkeit wäre eine metaphorische Dinghaftigkeit zu unterscheiden, die dann vorliegt, wenn ein Text – sei es vom Autor selbst oder auch von anderer Seite – als ein Ding bezeichnet oder mit einem solchen gleichgesetzt wird. So werden z.B. bestimmte frühmittelalterliche Gebete in Anlehnung an die in ihnen verwendete Waffenmetaphorik schon von den zeitgenössischen Dichtern selbst als *lorica* (Brustpanzer) bezeichnet, was zunächst einmal natürlich auf ihre apotropäische Funktion verweist. Sophie Marshall, die sich in ihrem Beitrag mit einem lateinischen (obendrein aber auch noch althochdeutsch glossierten) Vertreter dieser Gattung

31 Kiening 2016, S. 148-152.
32 Kiening 2016, S. 200f.
33 Kiening 2016, S. 273-280.

beschäftigt, will sich mit dieser funktionalen Erklärung aber nicht zufriedengeben und befragt die von ihr untersuchte *lorica* nach weiteren Aspekten der ‚Panzerhaftigkeit'.

Fündig wird sie bei demjenigen, was man als mediale Dinghaftigkeit bezeichnen könnte. Gemeint sind gewisse visuelle oder klangliche Qualitäten eines Textes, die auch bei unterschiedlichen Schriftträgern und Schriften bzw. bei unterschiedlichen Stimmen, die einen Text realisieren, mehr oder weniger dieselben bleiben. Besonders interessant ist diese mediale Dinghaftigkeit natürlich dort, wo sie vom Text selbst ostentativ genutzt wird, so z.B. auf visueller Ebene bei Figurengedichten oder auf klanglicher Ebene bei gereimten Texten. Marshall argumentiert, dass die von ihr untersuchte *lorica* eine extreme Überstrukturierung der Textoberfläche durch Reim und weitere Äquivalenzbeziehungen aufweise, die dem Gebet, auch über die rein metaphorische Dinghaftigkeit hinaus, die Undurchdringlichkeit eines quasi magischen Klangpanzers verleihe. Auf beides – metaphorische wie mediale Dinghaftigkeit – reagiere die althochdeutsche Glosse minutiös, dies aber nicht (wie sonst bei Glossen häufig zu beobachten) im Medium des Visuellen, sondern ebenfalls im Medium des Klangs.

Konkret, metaphorisch, medial: Die bisher genannten Formen textueller Dinghaftigkeit beziehen sich sämtlich auf den Text als ein real-anwesendes Sinnenobjekt. Nun lässt aber „[d]as Erscheinen des sprachlichen Gegenstands" gleichzeitig „eine abwesende Gegenwart erscheinen",[34] die bevölkert ist von irrealen – oder auch realen, zum Zeitpunkt der Rezeption jedoch in aller Regel nur textuell verfügbaren – Sinnenobjekten wie z.B. einem kostbaren Edelstein, einer edelsteinbeschrifteten Hundeleine oder einer edelsteinverzierten Tafel. Im Fall all dieser Dinge, die nicht Gegenstand der sinnlichen Wahrnehmung, sondern einer – wenn auch natürlich durch den sinnlich wahrnehmbaren Text gebundenen – sinnlichen Vorstellung sind, könnte man von imaginierter Dinghaftigkeit sprechen. Im Folgenden seien zwei – durchaus auch miteinander kombinierbare – Möglichkeiten genannt, die diese imaginierte Dinghaftigkeit zu einer dezidiert *textuellen* Dinghaftigkeit machen.

Erstens können die textuell vermittelten Dinge poetologisch auf den sie vermittelnden Text hin transparent gemacht werden. Das Verfahren ist ein ähnliches wie bei der metaphorischen Dinghaftigkeit, nur die Richtung ist umgekehrt. Während die metaphorische Dinghaftigkeit vom Text ausgeht, den sie dann mit einem Ding (z.B. einem Brustpanzer) gleichsetzt, nimmt die imaginierte Dinghaftigkeit von einem textuell vermittelten Ding (z.B. einem Edelstein als Teil der erzählten Welt) ihren Ausgang, um dieses dann quasi-allegorisch auf den Text hin auszulegen. So kann in der Fabel vom Hahn und der Perle der Umgang des Hahns mit der Perle von jeher für den Umgang eines unverständigen Rezipienten mit der Fabel selbst stehen. Welches Kapital der im zweiten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts dichtende Stricker aus dieser Konstellation schlägt, zeigt Silvan Wagner im Rahmen einer vergleichenden Untersuchung dreier Stricker-Texte, in denen die metaphysische Kraft der Edelsteine relativiert, gesellschaftlich analysiert oder – eben – poetologisiert wird.

Zweitens kann es sich bei den textuell vermittelten Dingen selbst wieder um Schriftträger handeln. In gewisser Weise schließt sich damit der Kreis zur eingangs behandelten konkreten Dinghaftigkeit, nur dass hier im Rahmen

34 Seel 2003, S. 134.

erzählter Welten natürlich ungleich viel mehr möglich ist als in der außerliterarischen Wirklichkeit: eine 20 Meter lange Hundeleine etwa, auf der, folgt man dem um 1270 entstandenen *Jüngeren Titurel*, in einer aus kostbaren Edelsteinen gebildeten Schrift eine komplette Tugendlehre angebracht ist. Wie Tamara Elsner in ihrem Beitrag zeigt, entfaltet sich das Drama um das sogenannte Brackenseil im Spannungsfeld von Präsenz und Bedeutung, von Dinghaftigkeit und Textualität, wobei die Botschaft des Textes weitgehend ignoriert werde und das Brackenseil stattdessen als begehrtes Ding (als Liebesgabe, als Tauschobjekt, als Trophäe) das Handeln der Figuren leite.

Um einen vergleichsweise konventionellen Schriftträger handelt es sich dagegen bei der edelsteinverzierten Tafel des Gregorius in der wohl gegen Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts entstandenen Erzählung Hartmanns von Aue. Mit Seitenblicken auf den *Willehalm* Wolframs von Eschenbach (Edelstein-Epitaphe der heidnischen Könige, Arofel-Schild) und den *Wilhelm von Österreich* Johanns von Würzburg (Edelstein-Inschrift auf dem Cupido-Helm) widmet sich Florian Nieser der Frage, ob der Verwitterung der kompromittierenden Schrift auf der zurückgelassenen Tafel tatsächlich eine Vergebung des inzestuösen Geschehenszusammenhangs entspricht oder ob nicht vielmehr die Edelsteine auch weiterhin an die sündhafte Verstrickung des Protagonisten erinnern. Hier wie bei den genannten Vergleichsgegenständen geht es letztlich um die Frage nach dem metonymischen Verhältnis von Schrift und Schriftträger, Textualität und Materialität, Bedeutung und Präsenz.

Soweit der Versuch einer kleinen Typologie von Formen textueller Dinghaftigkeit. Eine spannende Frage, zu deren Beantwortung es aber einer umfassenderen Sichtung des verfügbaren Materials bedürfte, wäre diejenige nach der Affinität bestimmter Textsorten zu bestimmten Formen textueller Dinghaftigkeit oder auch zu bestimmten Arten von Dingen. Was die metaphorische Dinghaftigkeit betrifft, ist etwa zu beobachten, dass sich titelgebende Dingmetaphern wie z.B. *speculum* (Spiegel) seit dem 11./12. Jahrhundert besonders im gelehrten lateinischen Schrifttum durchzusetzen beginnen.[35] Im Bereich der imaginierten Dinghaftigkeit indessen scheinen sich längere Erzähltexte (z.B. der *Jüngere Titurel*) bevorzugt in größeren Dingen (z.B. dem Gralstempel), kürzere Erzähltexte (z.B. Mären) dagegen bevorzugt in jenen kleineren Dingen (z.B. Würfeln, Nüssen)[36] zu spiegeln, deren „Sinn und Sinnlichkeit" die Zeitschrift „Das Mittelalter" ihr jüngstes Heft gewidmet hat.[37] Wie schließlich das Beispiel der *lorica* gezeigt hat, kann eine besondere dingliche Kompaktheit durch die Kombination verschiedener Formen textueller Dinghaftigkeit erreicht werden – auch dies ein Befund, dem weiter nachzugehen wäre.

4. Schluss

Inwiefern können Texte als Dinge betrachtet werden? Auf diese Frage versucht die vorgelegte Typologie ein paar konkrete Antworten zu geben, die sich gewissermaßen unterhalb – Gumbrecht würde sagen: diesseits – der zuvor behandelten Frage nach dem ideellen (religiösen oder ästhetischen) Überbau bewegen. Ein Beobachter zweiter Ordnung würde sich mit all dem vielleicht noch

35 Vgl. Lehmann 1953, S. 27-57, zu *speculum* S. 30-44.
36 Vgl. Mühlherr 2018 u. Mühlherr 2019.
37 Dempsey/Jasperse (Hgg.) 2020.

nicht zufriedengeben, sondern wissen wollen, warum wir die besagte Frage denn überhaupt gestellt haben. Eine mögliche Antwort könnte lauten, dass wir uns der textuellen Dinghaftigkeit in eben jener liminalen Phase vergewissern wollen, in der sie uns ins Digitale zu entgleiten droht – um dort entweder vollends zu verpuffen oder aber ganz neue, ungeahnte (womöglich sogar wieder ‚mittelalterlichere'?)[38] Formen anzunehmen.

38 McLuhan 1962 lässt grüßen: die „Gutenberg-Galaxis" als vorübergehender Ausnahmezustand.

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Textual Thingness
An Introduction

Justin Vollmann

As a preface to MEMO 7 (2020) „Textual Thingness“, this paper asks in what way texts are not only telling about things but may also be treated as things themselves. The first part poses this question in the context of (post-)modern theories of aesthetics while focussing on the concepts of perception (Luhmann), presence (Gumbrecht) and appearing (Seel). The second part directs the attention to the specific features of medieval textuality and mediality, which are much less influenced by aesthetics than by religion (Kiening). Apart from such considerations about the ideational setup, the third part introduces the individual papers of this issue and connects them to concrete suggestions as to what we may understand as ‚textual thingness‘.

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Der Beitrag – der gleichzeitig die Einleitung zu MEMO 7 (2020) „Textual Thingness“ bildet – widmet sich der Frage, inwiefern Texte nicht nur von Dingen handeln, sondern auch selbst als Dinge behandelt werden können. Ein erster Teil stellt diese Frage zunächst in den Kontext (post-)moderner Ästhetiktheorien, wobei die Begriffe der Wahrnehmung (Luhmann), der Präsenz (Gumbrecht) und des Erscheinens (Seel) eine zentrale Rolle spielen. Ein zweiter Teil lenkt dann den Blick auf die spezifischen Merkmale mittelalterlicher Textualität und Medialität, die weniger unter dem Vorzeichen der Ästhetik als vielmehr unter demjenigen der Religion stehen (Kiening). Unabhängig von solchen Fragen des ideellen Überbaus verbindet der dritte Teil die Vorstellung der einzelnen Beiträge mit konkreten Vorschlägen, was alles unter textueller Dinghaftigkeit verstanden werden kann.

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Featured Image
Fresco painting 1420-1430, South Tyrol (Detail). Institute for Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture, REALonline picture N° 002997. Accessible via REALonline, https://realonline.imareal.sbg.ac.at/detail/nr-002997/.

The continuous interest of Arts and Humanities in entities inanimate, materially compact and circumscribable – things,[1] in short – enables literary studies to approach their subject anew by asking to what extent we might consider texts as things, likewise. The seventh issue of *MEMO – Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture Online* entitled “Textual Thingness” considers this question from the perspective of medieval studies. The introduction shall (1) place this question in a theoretical context,[2] (2) explain the medieval studies approach

1 A few recent monographs and edited volumes from the field of medieval German studies alone may testify to this interest: Christ 2015, Mühlherr et al. (eds.) 2016, Selmayr 2017, Glasner (ed.) 2019, Bildhauer 2020.

2 In this part I will take up ideas from earlier publications (Vollmann 2016, pp. 455-457; Vollmann 2019, pp. 248-250).

and (3) integrate the individual papers of the issue into a basic typology of forms of textual thingness.

1. Theoretical Contextualisation

The following passage from Niklas Luhmann's „Art as a Social System" may serve as a first approach to the topic:

> „What distinguishes the art system from other functional systems is that second-order observation occurs in the realm of perception. [Things] or quasi [things] are always at stake in art, whether we are dealing with real or imagined [things], with static objects or with sequences of events. To cover all of these distinctions, we shall speak of forms in terms of their [thing] like determination. The formal decisions embedded in [things] permit us to observe observations by observing the same object."[3]

When – in addition to things, real things and static objects – Luhmann is speaking of quasi-things, imagined things and sequences of events, he is obviously aiming at literature, too. According to Luhmann, sensuous perception (including imagination) is of high importance for the whole art system, which is probably why he chooses the term "thing" as a comprehensive concept, even if at first sight it seems to be more applicable to visual art works.[4]

Evidently, however, mere perception is not sufficient: simultaneously, the perceived thing must enable the observation of observations. Eventually, this is a rather abstract formulation for the fact that an artwork is not to be perceived as a "natural thing" but always needs to be observed as something that was „man-made".

Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht takes up Luhmann's thoughts and rephrases them along his own lead-distinction between presence and sense (presence and meaning respectively)[5]:

> „My own (modest) reaction to these observations, my answer to the question regarding the specific features that mark the objects of aesthetic experience is, then, to say that objects of aesthetic experience […] are characterized by an oscillation between presence effects and meaning effects."[6]

Then, one page later:

> „Essential is the point that, within this specific constellation, meaning will not bracket, will not make the presence effects disappear, and that the – unbracketed – physical presence of things (of a text, of a voice, of a canvas with colors, of a play performed by a team) will not ultimately repress the meaning dimension."[7]

3 Luhmann 2000, p. 74; unlike Luhmann's translator, I put the word „thing" (instead of „object") where the German version has „Ding".
4 Luhmann 2000, pp. 5 and 7 (about imagination).
5 Just like Gumbrecht, I will not make a difference between *sense* and *meaning* in the following section. In Gumbrecht 2004a (translated by Joachim Schulte) the preferred term is *sense* (‚Sinn'), in Gumbrecht 2004b it is *meaning* (‚Bedeutung').
6 Gumbrecht 2004a, p. 106 f.
7 Gumbrecht 2004a, p. 108.

What Luhmann calls „second-order observations in the realm of perception", Gumbrecht labels as "oscillation between presence effects and meaning effects". Here, effects of meaning seem to go hand in hand with second-order observations, whereas effects of presence seem to accompany immediate sensuous perception. Similarly to Luhmann, the concept of things – explicitly related to texts here – comes into play when it is about the presence (not the meaning!) of the objects in aesthetic experience.

Martin Seel makes some more differentiations, which are especially useful for literary studies. Instead of a quotation, two figures shall sum up a few central distinctions in his "Aesthetics of Appearing":

Table 1

	sense objects		
	real		irreal
	present	absent	
sensuous perception	X		
sensuous imagination		X	X

Table 2

being-so (propositional)	appearing (phenomenal individuality)		
	mere appearing (contemplation)	atmospheric appearing (correspondence)	artistic appearing (presentation, understanding)

A first important distinction is the one between real and irreal sense objects. The former are objects of sensuous perception (given that they are present) while the latter are objects of sensuous imagination.[8] Both sensuous perception and sensuous imagination can grasp their subject in the mode of being-so as well as in the mode of appearing. In the former case, the subject is brought together with a concept, whereas in the latter the subject presents itself in its phenomenal individuality; in fact, only in that case may we really speak of *aesthetic* imagination or *aesthetic* perception respectively.[9] Seel further differentiates between three types of appearing[10] whose third type, artistic appearing, is the most interesting for our questions. Especially for works of art, Seel postulates that they „need to be *understood* in their performative intent"[11], which

8 Seel 2005, pp. 71-73.
9 Seel 2005, chapter 2, cf. also pp. 26-29.
10 Seel 2005, p. 90-97.
11 Seel 2005, p. 96.

corresponds directly with Luhmann's second-order observation and Gumbrecht's effects of meaning respectively.

On the one hand, literary works of art are real sense objects which, eg. as sound objects, are immediately available to aesthetic perception. On the other hand, they appeal to aesthetic imagination while using it to make appear irreal sense objects. When, as in the passage quoted at the beginning, Luhmann speaks of quasi-things, imagined things and sequences of events, he seems to have in mind those irreal sense objects. When Gumbrecht, in contrast, points out that, for literary texts, "the presence-dimension of the typography, of the rhythm of language, and even of the smell of paper"[12] may easily coincide with the sense dimension, he obviously refers to the text as a real sense object. Therefore, it seems feasible to differentiate according to real and irreal sense objects within the thing concept.

This differentiation also has its consequences for the concept of presence, which is no less central to Seel than to Gumbrecht:"In the sensuous presence of the object, we become aware of a moment in our own presence. [...] Aesthetic intuition is a radical form of residency in the here and now."[13] However, it would be problematic if one attributed to irreal sense objects their own (physical) presence: "[I]rreal objects are ‚objects' of a special kind. They are ‚given' only in conjunction with projections of them. They lack the self-sufficiency of real objects. We cannot *encounter* them. They do not have a presence of their own."[14] Yet if - like in the case of literary works of art - irreal sense objects are connected to a real sense object (i.e. the text), they can participate in the presence of the latter: „[O]n the one hand, it is a matter of a *borrowed* present and a *borrowed* sensuousness; on the other, the aesthetic imagination finds its way, in the form of a *bounded* imagination, back to a heightened consciousness of the present."[15] Therefore, Seel is able to put it like this: „The appearing of the linguistic object allows an absent presence to appear."[16]

Some of the differentiations introduced here will be taken up again in the third part. However, here is what should have become clear by now: The question for the thingness of texts is not quite an innocent one. It joins a tradition which goes back at least to Susan Sontag's famous essay „Against Interpretation"[17] in which she insists that – on the level of sensuous perception as well as on the level of sensuous imagination – the literary artwork makes appear something whose sensuous presence remains more or less out of reach of any hermeneutical grasp. Of course this does not mean that hermeneutics should be completely abandoned, quite the reverse: actually, it is all about the interplay of presence and meaning, of sense and the sensuous. Phrasing "second-order observations in the realm of perception", "oscillation between effects of presence and effects of meaning" or "artistic appearing" is aiming exactly at this.

12 Gumbrecht 2004a, p. 109.
13 Seel 2005, p. 32 f.
14 Seel 2005, p. 71.
15 Seel 2005, p. 78.
16 Seel 2005, p. 80.
17 Sontag 1966.

2. The Perspective of Medieval Studies

Luhmann, Gumbrecht, Seel: In the previous section I took (post-)modern aesthetic theories as a starting point[18] to outline the topic of this issue in a first step – in the firm conviction that modern theories may well be applied to pre-modern texts, too. Yet obviously, the mentioned theories rest on explicit or implicit premises not applicable to the Middle Ages,[19] like for example the idea of fine arts embracing literature while strictly separating literary from non-literary texts. Therefore, the following section will ask how this topic could be handled from the historical perspective of medieval studies.

Once again, Gumbrecht could perhaps lead the path as he uses his seminal distinction between presence and meaning for a prototypical distinction between cultures of presence and cultures of meaning.[20] Since today we live in a culture which emphasizes meaning while triggering a "massive need for presence" (and this need, by the way, obviously motivates Gumbrecht, too), it might perhaps be "rewarding to experiment with the thesis of the Middle Ages as the exceptional case of a balanced relation between a culture of presence and a culture of meaning"[21]. Gumbrecht uses, among other things, the Eucharist to illustrate this:

> „The early modern history of Christian theology leads us to the assumption that the Eucharist, the central rite of the Middle Ages, was simultaneously experienced as an evocation of the real presence of God and as an emblematic reminder of the incarnation of God."[22]

The Middle Ages as the historical exceptional case of a balanced relation between a culture of presence and a culture of meaning: If this is true, the thing-like dimension of texts in premodern times must have been far more distinct than in modernity, which is affected by the Cartesian separation of spirit and matter. Besides, one may assume that the appearing of sensuous presence in the Middle Ages was rather understood under religious than aesthetic signs. In this context, Christian Kiening's media historical study "Abundance and Lack" offers rewarding insights and a smooth link-up to Gumbrecht's Eucharist example.[23]

Kiening is looking for the absolute medium, in which the represented is not only represented, but also ontologically present. The paradigm for this is Jesus Christ who, synergizing divine and human nature, acts as a true intermediary between divine and human sphere and who, through the proceedings of the Eucharist, is made present in the hic et nunc of the mass.[24] Kiening then asks for forms of medieval writing which at least approximate the outlined „model of Christological mediality"[25]. I will pick three examples in which the connection of writing, divine presence and materiality or thingness becomes particularly evident.

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18 Brown 2001, Harman 2012 and Morton 2012 are worth mentioning in this place, too; cf. Chinca 2016, p. 389 f.
19 In a programmatic manner: Speer 1994.
20 Gumbrecht 2004b, p. 6-9, cf. Gumbrecht 2004a, p. 78-86.
21 Gumbrecht 2004b, p. 15.
22 Gumbrecht 2004b, p. 15.
23 In the following, I will draw on single parts of my review of Kiening 2016 (Vollmann 2018).
24 Kiening 2019, chapter 2.
25 Kiening 2019, p. 44.

Firstly, the focus can be put on the sacred dimension of writing, as it is evident in the Tablets of the Law, inscribed by God's own finger. Time and again, the materiality of writing is transcended like e.g. when Paul reframes the Tablets of the Law into a the concept of Christ as a divine inscription into the human heart. At the same time, however, this materiality plays a central role in a theological context, be it in the figural poems of Hrabanus Maurus or in sacred acts of reading and writing.[26]

Secondly, writing can be brought together with material artefacts such as the church building and its interior. An example would be Suger of Saint Denis: in his writing *De administratione* he gives an insight into the intended reception of the church building he had initiated. Additionally, he prudently furnishes the building with inscribed instructions in order to ensure the ascension from material splendour to immaterial meaning. However, descriptions and interpretations of artefacts which first have to be imagined by the recipient – such as Noah's Arc interpreted by Hugo of St. Victor – may serve spiritual orientation.[27]

Thirdly, an outright symbiotic connection is observable between writing and relic. Writing „authenticates the relic, and derives its own authenticity from its proximity to the relic".[28] First of all, Kiening shows this by means of the Legend of the vernicle of St Veronica. As *vera icon*, a true image of Christ not made by human hands, it conjures up the imagination of an absolute medium. Then he elaborates on a hybrid narration which interweaves secular and sacred elements in an idiosyncratic way: the tale of the Grey Robe of Christ, „[a] textile text as the representation of a textile that was, for many years, only available in textual form".[29]

Mose's Tablets of the Law, Suger of St Denis and his sacral building captioned with inscribed instruction manuals, the close relationship between writing and relic: All these are aspects of a strong textual thingness rather characterized by religious than aesthetic aspects. However, Kiening shows how the concepts he carved out – namely those of a writing focused on presence – also find their way into texts which today we would call literary in a narrower sense. The model of a participation in the Eucharist in the *Tristan* prologue,[30] the way in which writing in the sphere of the Grail's secret becomes auratic, dynamic and transcendent in *Parzival*,[31] or the broadly laid-out and strongly media-reflexive description of the Grail temple in the *Jüngerer Titurel*,[32] are all worth mentioning here. These cases and similar ones would be apt to show that the (post)modern theories discussed in the beginning are quite relevant for medieval texts.

3. Presentation of the Individual Papers and Basic Typology of Textual Thingness

The texts treated in this issue – mostly German, but also Latin or Italian – cover a period from the Early Middle Ages up to Early Modern Times, while

26 Kiening 2019, chapter 5.
27 Kiening 2019, chapter 7.
28 Kiening 2019, p. 233.
29 Kiening 2019, chapter 9, quotation p. 255.
30 Kiening 2019, pp. 102-105.
31 Kiening 2019, pp. 140f.
32 Kiening 2019, pp. 198-203.

the spectrum of text types is ranging from inventory, prayer and gloss over didactic speech, *maere* and fable to legendary narration and courtly romance. We considered this variety in order not to narrow down the scope too much on certain forms of textual thingness as they might prevail at a certain period or in a certain genre. Thus, we are confident that our collection of relevant phenomena is comprehensive enough to enable a basic typology of different forms of textual thingness. This typology determines the order of the papers in the issue and shall be briefly presented along with them.

When talking about textual thingness one will probably first think of the concrete thingness of the material medium, which Christina Antenhofer in her paper about late medieval and early modern inventories focuses on. Ironically, research interested in the material culture of premodern times has long limited itself to reading inventories as mere texts which – hopefully – revealed something about the things listed in them. Only recent research has begun to be aware that inventories always tell a story, the understanding of which is essential for grasping the things they contain – or perhaps don't contain. According to Antenhofer, however, inventories must not be seen as texts alone if we want to decipher these narratives, but they need to be taken serious as things whose layout can imply e.g. an administrative or a representative function.

Apart from this concrete thingness, there is a metaphorical thingness discernible whenever a text – either by its own author or by some other party – is called a thing or equated with a thing. Based on their armour imagery, some early medieval prayers for example are named *lorica* (breastplate) by contemporary poets themselves; first of all, this points to their apotropaic function. Sophie Marshall, who in her paper analyses a Latin example of this Genre containing Old High German glosses, refuses to make do with this functional explanation and searches the *lorica* for further aspects of "plating".

What she finds pertains to a phenomenon we may call media thingness. It encompasses certain visual or sonic qualities of a text that stay more or less the same even with different writing materials, scripts, or different voices realizing a text. Media thingness is particularly interesting where it is used ostentatiously by the text itself, e.g. by calligrams on the visual level or by rhymed texts on the sonic level. Marshall argues that the *lorica* is characterized by an extreme over-structuredness of the textual surface, which is caused by rhymes and other relations of equivalence. Thus, the prayer obtains the impermeability of an almost magic armor of sound by far exceeding the mere metaphorical thingness. The Old High German gloss reacts to both metaphorical and media thingness in a meticulous way, however, not in the visual mode (as glosses usually do) but also in the mode of sound.

Concrete, metaphorical, medial: the forms of textual thingness mentioned so far all relate to the text as a real-present sense object. However, „[t]he appearing of the linguistic object allows an absent presence to appear":[33] a present full of irreal – or real, yet at the time of reception only textually available – sense objects like e.g. a precious gemstone, a dog lead inscribed with gems or a tablet ornamented with jewels. In the case of these things, which are not objects of sensuous perception but of sensuous imagination (even though they are, of course, bound by the sensuously perceptible text), one could speak of

33 Seel 2005, p. 80.

an imagined thingness. In the following, I will mention two (combinable) possibilities to turn this imagined thingness into a decidedly textual thingness.

Firstly, textually mediated things can be made transparent at the mediating text in a poetological way. The method is similar to that of metaphorical thingness but working vice versa. While metaphorical thingness is starting from the text and in a second step equates with a thing (e.g. a breastplate), imagined thingness emerges from a textually mediated thing (e.g. a gemstone as part of the narrated world) whose quasi-allegorically interpretation is then applied to the text. Thus, the Fable of the Rooster and the Pearl traditionally equates the rooster's handling of the pearl to an uncomprehending recipient in the face of the fable itself. In a comparative analysis, Silvan Wagner shows how Der Stricker, a poet of the second quarter of the 13th century, uses this constellation: the three short pieces discussed by Wagner relativize the metaphysical power of gems, analyse it in terms of social aspects, and – in the case of the fable – show its poetological dimension.

Secondly, textually mediated things may themselves be media of writing. In a way, we have come full circle ending up at concrete thingness again, though the realm of possibilities in the narrated worlds is by far wider than in the world outside the text. A more than twenty-yard-long dog-lead makes a case for this when, as the *Jüngerer Titurel* from around 1270 has it, a whole treatise on the courtly virtues is inscribed in precious gemstones on it. In her paper, Tamara Elsner shows how the drama around the so-called "Brackenseil" unfolds between the opposing poles of presence and meaning, of thingness and textuality. At the same time the message of the text is more or less ignored, while instead the Brackenseil as a desired thing (love token, barter object, trophy) directs the characters' actions.

In contrast, the gemstone-trimmed tablet of Gregorius in the homonymous narration by Hartmann von Aue, probably composed towards the end of the 12th century, is a comparatively conventional medium of writing. Florian Nieser asks if the weathering of the compromising writing on the left-back tablet indicates forgiveness of the incestuous ensnarement or if, quite reversely, the durable gemstones are continuous reminders of the protagonist's sins. Through a comparison with other texts like the *Willehalm* by Wolfram von Eschenbach (the gemstone-epitaphs of the heathen kings, Arofel's shield) and the *Wilhelm von* Österreich by Johann von Würzburg (gemstone inscription on the Cupido-helmet) Nieser shows how all the things analysed point out the metonymic relationship between writing and writing medium, textuality and materiality, meaning and presence.

I attempted to present a basic typology of forms of textual thingness. Subsequently, we might ask whether certain text types show an affinity to certain forms of textual thingness or to certain kinds of things. To answer this interesting question, however, we would have to look at the extant material more thoroughly. With regard to metaphorical thingness we may observe, for example, a rise in titular thing metaphors such as *speculum* (mirror) from the 11th and 12th century onwards in learned Latin writing.[34] As far as imagined thingness is concerned, long narratives (e.g. *Jüngerer Titurel*) seem to prefer larger things (e.g. the Grail Temple) while short narratives (e.g. the *maere*) seem to

34 Cf. Lehmann 1953, pp. 27-57, about *speculum* pp. 30-44.

choose those small things (e.g. dices, nuts)[35] which were at the focus of the latest issue of the journal "Das Mittelalter".[36] Finally, the example of the *lorica* has shown that a combination of different forms of textual thingness can result in an exceeding material compactness – another observation worth pursuing.

4. Conclusion

In what ways can we treat texts as things? The typology presented above seeks to give some concrete answers to this question one level beneath the overarching ideational (religious or aesthetic) aspects. A second-order observer would probably not be satisfied yet; he or she would want to know why we ask this question at all. One possible answer would be that we want to get hold of textual thingness in exactly the liminal phase of its impending slip sliding away into the digital. Once there, it will either blow out or take on new, unimagined (perhaps even increasingly "medieval"?)[37] forms.

(English translation by Gabriele Schichta.)

35 Cf. Mühlherr 2018 and Mühlherr 2019.
36 Dempsey/Jasperse (eds.) 2020.
37 Greetings from McLuhan 1962: the „Gutenberg-Galaxy" as a temporary state of exception.

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Inventories as Material and Textual Sources for Late Medieval and Early Modern Social, Gender and Cultural History (14th-16th centuries)

Christina Antenhofer

With the renewed interest in material culture, not only the objects but also the written sources in which objects are documented get increasing attention. However, the focus is most often not directed to the sources themselves but rather to what they convey on objects of the past. Such an approach tends to reduce the sources to mere 'quarries' for information. This observation is particularly true for the paradigmatic source on objects, the inventory, which so far has received little attention as a specific type of source. Starting from a sample of 138 princely Italian and German inventories from the 14th and 16th centuries, which are complemented by a comparison with urban inventories, this paper points out the quality of textual thingness of inventories regarding them both as texts and objects. The thesis I propose is that inventories can become primordial documents for social, gender and cultural history if their narrative quality is taken seriously.

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Mit dem erneuerten Interesse an der materiellen Kultur geraten nicht nur die Dinge, sondern auch die schriftlichen Quellen über Objekte in den Fokus. Das Interesse ist jedoch meist nicht auf die Dokumente selbst gerichtet, sondern auf ihre Aussagekraft über historische Artefakte. Ein solcher Zugang reduziert die Quellen zu reinen Steinbrüchen für Informationen. Dies gilt in besonderem Maß für die paradigmatische Quelle zu Objekten, das Inventar, das als Quellengattung selbst kaum Aufmerksamkeit erfuhr. Ausgehend von einem Korpus von 138 fürstlichen Inventaren aus dem italienischen und deutschen Kontext des 14. und 16. Jahrhunderts, ergänzt um Vergleiche mit städtischen Inventaren, arbeitet dieser Beitrag die spezielle Charakteristik von Inventaren in ihrer textuellen Dinghaftigkeit heraus, indem sie sowohl als Texte wie als Artefakte betrachtet werden. Nur wenn Inventare in ihrer narrativen Qualität ernst genommen werden, so die These, können sie als erstrangige Quellen für die Sozial-, Geschlechter- und Kulturgeschichte fungieren.

memo

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Featured Image
Fresco painting 1420-1430, South Tyrol. Institute for Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture, Image No. 002841. Accessible via REALonline: https://realonline.imareal.sbg.ac.at/detail/nr-002841/.

Textual Thingness stands at the core of the following contribution with regard to the most typical type of document for investigating historical objects, namely inventories. Despite the fact that inventories have attracted the interest of researchers since the 19th century in search for historical artefacts and curiosities, they have hardly ever been at the focus as historical sources in

their own right. When speaking about textual thingness, however, inventories are among the most fascinating sources regarding this question from at least two points of view: 1) Despite their great variety, inventories as a matter of principle can be classified as documents which translate objects into words.[1] They are therefore the document par excellence concerning the question how historical texts produced and reproduced material objects. 2) Moreover, beside its textual quality, the inventory itself can be looked at as a material object. In fact, inventories are more than just the written texts. Their material form conveys a whole range of information which adds to the narration of the inventory and is vital for interpreting the inventories and the textual things named there. This paper therefore aims at presenting inventories both as textual and material sources regarding historical objects.

However, the focus here will not be on the objects per se, but on objects brought back into their manifold relationships existing basically between people, things and spaces. In doing so, the paper wants to stress the fact that inventories are not only important sources for the history of historical objects, but in view of the new approaches to material culture[2] they become primary sources for social, gender[3] and cultural history. Inventories can be read as narratives on people's lives, shaped via the objects they possessed during their lifetime. It is this narrative quality of inventories as sources which stands at the core of this contribution considering both their textual as well as their material quality.[4] While their potential as sources for art and economic history has already been well explored in recent times, the thesis I propose is that the potential of inventories as sources for the social, cultural and above all gender history of premodern times remains yet to be explored. In order to fully exploit the capacity of information inventories offer in this perspective, however, they need to get attention as historiographic sources in their own right.

In the following, I will start with a brief overview on research on inventories (chapter 1). In a second step, attention will turn to inventories as texts: chapter 2 explores basic differentiations of different types of inventories, chapter 3 considers functions of inventories while chapter 4 treats different occasions for inventorying processes. The final chapter of the paper will then address the material quality of the inventory as an object.

This analysis is based on research I conducted on inventories, testaments and marriage contracts from German and Italian courts of the 14th and 15th centuries, involving the houses of the Habsburg, Wittelsbach, Württemberg, Görz, Tirol, Visconti, Sforza and Gonzaga.[5] Altogether I analyzed 138 inventories and lists, and I realized that there are many different forms in which texts survive that we simply call *inventories*. Analyzing the textual as well as the material form of the sources are essential keys to understand the manifold meanings of the inventory as document type and the varied purposes such documents were made for in their original contexts.

1 See Keating/Markey 2011, p. 209: "inventories attempt to translate material things into linguistic statements."
2 See Samida/Eggert/Hahn (eds.) 2014; Latour [1999] 2010a; Latour [2005] 2010b; briefly summarized in Antenhofer 2020.
3 On the importance of a specific gendered look on material culture see Dempsey et al. 2019.
4 See in this respect also Freddolini/Helmreich 2014.
5 This essay is based on core chapters of my forthcoming habilitation thesis: Antenhofer 2021.

1. Inventories as a Research Topic: From Lists of Objects to Historiographic Narratives

Inventories count among the neglected or certainly underestimated historical sources. In fact, for most of the time they have been regarded simply as lists of objects, and historians and art historians have used them above all to identify specific artefacts, most often the very precious ones. Art historians have used them to trace back pieces of arts, identify collected items or to search for pieces of arts that no longer exist.[6] Linguists on the other hand have used them as lists of words, and unsurprisingly, the *Glossarium mediæ et infimæ latinitatis* by Du Cange[7] for example often mentions inventories as sources for the use of certain words.

It seems as if for a long time inventories were of little interest for their quality as sources and were only exploited in search of information and data they convey. In fact, there is no valid study on the specific characteristics of inventories as a type of source. Traditional introductions to medieval sources neglect inventories or simply summarize them under administrative sources.[8] Lists – so it seemed – are not texts, but only administrative side products like for instance accounts.[9] Similar to such administrative sources, in the Middle Ages they had little chance to survive and be passed on to the present. A second misunderstanding concerned the view of inventories as very objective and to some extent 'naïve' sources: they were just lists of things, nothing more; therefore, they certainly spoke the truth.[10]

Although interest in inventories has been very articulate starting from the late 19th century with the approaches of the older cultural history (*Kulturgeschichte*),[11] there exist hardly any systematic works on inventories. Starting with the 19th century, inventories were above all searched for and edited for specific social groups or regions with a focus on the mentioned objects.[12] Surviving from this time period there are very important editions of inventories, which had often been published in journals for regional or local history. Starting with the interest in social and economic history of the post war era inventories became an important source for these branches of historical research. Historians, above all those of modern times, subsequently used inventories as serial sources.[13] Their highly regular structure made them primary sources for quantitative analyses, and they were often reduced to mere sources of data. Gabriela Signori warned us that with such computer based serial analyses the sources literally die a "formalized" death on the dissecting table of the historian specialized in digital methods.[14]

The new approaches of cultural history and history of consumption have seen a new rise of studies in inventories, and it is now that the inventories

6 Cf. e.g. Lhotsky 1941–1945; see on this focus of art history on inventories from the 19th century to the present Keating/Markey 2011.
7 Du Cange et al. 1883–1887.
8 Briefly mentioned in: Lhotsky 1963.
9 See on the ephemeral quality of accounts Mersiowsky 2000.
10 See for this critique already Jaritz 2009.
11 See e.g. the fundamental work of Schlosser [1908] 1978.
12 For instance Zingerle's work on the Tyrolean inventories can be mentioned in this context: Zingerle 1909, or Ficker's on an early bridal inventory: Ficker 1881; see also the overview on printed inventories of the 19th century: Mély/Bishop (eds.) 1892–1895.
13 See e.g. van der Woude/Schuurman (eds.) 1980.
14 Signori 2001, p. 61.

themselves are regarded under new points of view.[15] Still they remain important sources for the search of objects and get renewed attention with the interest turned to objects in the so called *material turn*.[16] However, it is no longer the search for specific, very outstanding objects but rather for all kinds of objects placed in their contexts and in relations, in networks of human and non-human actors of history which stands at the core of interest.[17] Two main approaches in the newer research on inventories seem above all crucial for an understanding of these documents as sources on social, gender and cultural history:

1. Inventories are texts, and they can be read as such, even if their form is that of a list.[18] The most recent studies pay attention to the fact that inventories like other texts do not give a complete or objective picture of the historical facts, but that they have to be regarded as narratives[19] with their own fictional character[20] and performative quality.[21] Gerhard Jaritz for example spoke about the stories inventories tell. He paid attention to the fact that inventories neither tell everything, nor do they necessarily tell the truth. They hide objects, most often because they only mention precious artefacts. People wanted to show off with the precious objects they possessed, and the inventory serves this special rhetoric. You will not find simple things made of wood or terracotta in inventories, although this is exactly what we find in archaeological excavations.[22] Edoardo Rossetti and the authors of his volume on Milanese inventories of patrician houses also highlight the blanks in inventories of Renaissance households. They, however, stress legal reasons: people did not want to mention all the objects they possessed in the presence of authorities. Especially in the case of inheritance or attachment of property people tried to hide the most precious objects so they might not have to give them away.[23]

2. Inventories talk about the lives of the people who owned the objects – and they are neither complete nor are they neutral.[24] Inventories convey perspectives of the people who owned the artefacts but also about institutions who forced people to record their belongings for different reasons. One such reason could be that they were forced to attach property or even sell it, e.g. in cases of guardianship. Very often inventories are part of legal procedures and thus part of power regimes resulting in conflicts over mobile property. We should never forget that it must have been humiliating in many cases to list one's own property out of need, property linked to personal stories and meanings or generally property that built people's social status.[25] Evelyn Welch has directed our attention to the fact that Florentine patrician women were often forced by their husbands to pawn their jewels, and consequently they refused

15 To mention some of the most important: Fey 2007; Friedhoff 2006; Seelig 2001; Rossetti 2012; Riello 2013; Ertl/Karl 2017.
16 See Samida/Eggert/Hahn (eds.) 2014.
17 See Antenhofer 2020.
18 See also Freddolini/Helmreich 2014.
19 Normore 2011.
20 Orlin 2002.
21 Wilson 2018.
22 Jaritz 2009.
23 Rossetti (ed.) 2012; above all Covini 2012.
24 See Antenhofer 2019b.
25 Handzel mentions that for nobles inventorying processes could be regarded as humiliating their sense of honour, Handzel 2011, p. 66 with reference to Pelus-Kaplan/Eickhölter 1993, p. 284 on behalf of inventories of Lübeck.

to leave their houses for shame of being seen in public without their jewels.[26] This is illustrated by the example of Bianca Maria Sforza, the second wife of Emperor Maximilian I, who in 1505 could not meet ambassadors any more since out of lack of money she did not possess any clothes worthy for that.[27] The history of objects is thus also a history of shame and power, of being visible or invisible, especially in the gendered perspective regarding the visibility of women.

2. Inventories as Texts: Basic Typology of Inventories

How can inventories be defined? Generally speaking they are lists of things; however, such lists can have different forms and the question arises on how lists, registers, inventories and catalogues[28] interrelate. In fact, there is no clear definition of what an inventory is, and different types of sources can be subsumed under this notion. This becomes evident regarding how the term is used in literature on the topic and also in the sources.[29] In a very specific sense *inventory* can be regarded as a legal term.[30] However, in the practical use as to be found in historical sources and respective terminologies the term is applied in a far broader sense, as will be shown in this essay. To organize the different meanings I suggest to look at three basic distinctions:

1. One basic aspect regards the difference between inventories with explicit *legal* character and other registers (*Verzeichnisse*) of things as instruments of administration.[31]

2. A second aspect is the *temporal horizon* of the inventory, i.e. the question if it is a completed document which (only) records the status quo of recorded things in a given moment in time, or if it was a register considered to be continued. This results in the distinction between the *static* and the *dynamic* inventory – a difference I will further work out in the second part of this essay.

3. Finally, a third fundamental difference concerns the *semantic* horizon of the inventory. In fact, there are inventories which relate to a given *space* (most often a house) while other inventories relate to a *person*. I therefore distinguish between *space-related* and *person-related* inventories, a difference which

26 Welch 2008, pp. 45–65.

27 Antenhofer 2019a; Weiss 2010, p. 122.

28 On the question of the catalogue see above all Findlen 1996, pp. 36–37; on the relationship between inventory and catalogue see Freddolini/Helmreich 2014; on questions of terminology see also Fey 2007; Andermann 1987; Friedhoff 2006; as well as the introduction of Ertl/Karl 2017.

29 See e.g. Barbot 2011. Literally inventory simply means the "ensemble of what has been found" („Gesamtheit des Gefundenen"), cf. Kluge 1999, p. 405.

30 „1. INVENTARIUM, Descriptio rerum, quæ post alicujus decessum in illius bonis reperiuntur. Ulpianus leg. 1. D. de Administ. et periculo tutor.: (26, 7.) Tutor, qui repertorium non fecerit, quod vulgo Inventarium appellatur. Occurrit non semel in Legibus Wisigoth. et apud Scriptores practicos." Du Cange et al. 1883–1887, t. 4, col. 409b, http://ducange.enc.sorbonne.fr/INVENTARIUM1.

31 I do not distinguish between the use of *object* and *thing* given the different discussions on this question. To sum up two opposing approaches: Bruno Latour speaks of *things* in an active sense, while *object* is regarded as the passive reified term in opposition to the human active subject, a negative term, usually rejected in new approaches which tend to highlight the agency of things. See Latour 2010a, 286; 295. Another view regards *things* as the general unspecific term for (unimportant) items, while individual items, which are given more attention and meaning can be called *objects*. See on this distinction in view of items recorded in bills Gruber 2019, pp. 42–43. – For a general view on the philosophical impact of the term *thing* (above all via Heidegger) see Daston 2004. – On the legal aspects of inventories see Löffler 1977.

has important implications from the point of view of gender history. Typically probate inventories are space-related in so far as they record objects stored in a house. They usually follow a spatial structure along the way on which the scribes responsible for the inventorying processes went through the house.[32] These kinds of inventories are more often related to the belongings of men, since they usually owned the house and remained there,[33] leading to the fact that male post mortem inventories in the case of princes tend to become court inventories.[34] Person-related inventories on the other hand typically record belongings of women, namely brides who were not (entirely) bound to a given house. These source types are highly dominated by female belongings, above all in Italian Renaissance archives, leading to the fact that Edoardo Rossetti guesses in his volume on inventories that the mobile interior of houses was mostly provided by women.[35] Person-related inventories usually do not follow a spatial structure but are rather organized along categories of objects, such as silver, textiles, etc.[36]

This fundamental distinction is essential for understanding the limited perspective of inventories: In fact, personal items belonging to individual people and other mobile items often are not recorded in space-related inventories since they were not considered as part of the buildings. A fact which led some historians to the wrong assumption that late medieval Tyrolean castles were hardly furnished.[37] This (wrong) impression resulted from the fact that castle inventories only recorded items that permanently belonged to the single castle.[38]

Basically, we can thus distinguish the following three main types of inventories.

Inventory (in the strict sense)	**Register (broader concept of inventories)**
Legal instrument	Instrument of administration
Static – concluded (given moment of time)	Dynamic – to be continued (open temporal horizon)
Person-related	Space-related

Table 1 Three basic types of inventories.

These types are not to be considered as strictly separate, but they usually overlap, as has been shown before. This is above all evident in the case of probate inventories, which at the same time register belongings of a person and objects in a building; they are static, and of course legally binding. Therefore,

32 A good example is the post mortem inventory of count Eberhard of Württemberg, edited in Molitor 2008, pp. 322–334. However, Handzel points out in his study on Austrian probate inventories of the 16th century that some of them were organized according to categories of objects, and some others mixed spatial structures and object categories. Nevertheless he assumes that in a first step probate inventories always were recorded following spatial structures. Likewise, inventories recorded in the case of changes of administration (*Pflegschaftsinventare*) show both kinds of organization, see Handzel 2011, pp. 61–62. Normore points out mixed principles of organization according to spaces and/or categories of objects for Burgundian inventories, see Normore 2011, pp. 219–220.

33 See the results of Riello 2013 who, however, generalizes his argument concluding that inventories mostly record male belongings, see p. 136.

34 Ferrari (ed.) 2003.

35 Rossetti 2012, p. 15. This is very similar in the Jewish context, see Olszowy-Schlanger 1998.

36 See the bridal inventory of Paula Gonzaga, countess of Görz, from 1478, edited in Antenhofer 2019b.

37 Maleczek 1982. Handzel notes that inventories of tutelage (*Pflegschaftsinventare*) were always "poorer" than probate inventories, see Handzel 2011, p 63.

38 See for castles also Herrmann 1998, esp. p. 87.

these types should be rather considered as extreme vertices of a continuum which covers the entire range of possible forms.

3. Inventories as Texts: Functions of Inventories

The basic function of inventories results from the term itself: They are instruments used to find objects. For this purpose items needed to be recorded as exactly as possible.[39] Therefore, objects had to be described in such detail to be identifiable. As Fey already pointed out, it was then a secondary aspect to record the value of goods as well.[40]

As the newer approaches to inventories have highlighted, they are, however, not neutral, objective sources which only "record things in lists". Like other historiographic texts inventories, too, are shaped by intentions of authors and strategies.[41] Similarly, the recent works on the *urbarium* have likewise stressed that they need to be read from the perspective of cultural history and therefore must be integrated into their communicative contexts.[42] It is only by integrating inventories in the contexts of their making and thus reading them as texts and narratives that they can be interpreted in a broader sense, offering insights into social, gender and cultural history.

In order to systematize the functions linked to the contexts of the inventorying processes we can distinguish three basic purposes: 1) legal reasons, 2) administrative purposes and 3) representative aspects. The final category also includes functions of memoria and historiography as well as symbolic communication and the iconic quality of the text.[43]

The *legal* function is the easiest to identify. Legally binding inventories need to have forms of accreditation. These can be seals, the mentioning of witnesses, accreditation by a notary or the form of a chirography. The latter applies for instance to the bridal inventory of Blanca of England from 1402.[44] These forms of accreditation can be reinforced by the naming of the issuer or even writer of the inventory, the date and place and the circumstances of its making. Often such information is given at the beginning or the end of the inventory. However, even if inventories do not show such signs of verification they can still be used for legal purposes. This for example applied to inventories and account books of merchants, which could be used in legal cases of e.g. insolvency, even though they were penned by the merchants themselves.[45] Generally speaking, inventories were always drafted to account for a stock of goods.

39 Metz mentioned already for the Carolingian *Brevium exempla* the close connection with Latin glossaries. They were used for recording the agricultural reality for economic purposes and at the same time provided lexicographic lists of plants and animals or tools inspired by ancient tradition, see Metz 1953; from a legal perspective Mohrmann 2012.

40 Fey 2007, p. 473.

41 Jaritz 2009; Freddolini/Helmreich 2014. On the historiographic quality of lists see also Certeau 1991, esp. pp. 115–129. Lazzari talked about writing as a form of conservation, see Lazzari 2008.

42 Sablonier 2002, pp. 97–98; generally Meier/Sablonier (eds.) 1999.

43 For the *urbaria* Sablonier and others have distinguished 4 basic functions: 1) marking sovereign claims, 2) guaranteeing process safety and reliability, 3) internal organizing and arranging, 4) building of tradition and historiography, cf. Sablonier 2002, esp. pp. 98–112; Egloff 1999.

44 Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (BayHStA) München Geheimes Hausarchiv (GHA) Hausurkunden (HU) 2560, 8 July 1402; BayHStA GHA HU 2559, 7 July 1402.

45 See Tonelli 2012, pp. 49–69, with examples from Milan of the 17th century.

All questions regarding the *representative* function of inventories are related to its material shape, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Moreover, also the opening or concluding part of the inventory – which we might call *protocol* and *eschatocol* as it has been suggested for account books[46] – can provide information concerning this representative function of inventories. The bridal inventory of Antonia Visconti from 1380 for example opens with blessings and quotations from the bible and humanist authors in order to underline the cultural capital of the bride and her family.[47]

The *administrative* function is closely connected to the first two purposes. Mere registers of administrations (which I tend to call registers instead of inventories) are marked by the absence of signs of verification as well as by the lack of representative elements. Here we can find all forms of simple concepts on single sheets of paper, smaller books or even larger codices. Often such registers as well as inventories were first prepared via single lists which were then later bound to books.[48] Frequently the final inventory mentions different books which had been used to compile one final document, similar to procedures known from accounting. This was the case for the register of the wardrobe of Bianca Maria Sforza, second wife of Maximilian I., which covered nearly her entire life as Roman queen from 1494 to 1508. Her head of wardrobe compiled it most probably after her death using different books he had obviously kept continuously to document his work.[49] Often people responsible for the administration of goods – such as the head of wardrobe – name themselves in the inventory as the ones who had these goods in their custody. Frequently we find dates which record when goods entered or left the custody of the administrator, and we find cancellations and notes. Even such (simple) registers of administration can show forms of *invocationes* not least because administrators had to give an account of their work.[50] Very often such inventories are then written from the perspective of the administrator using the *ego*-form, such as did Francesco di Vegy, head of Bianca Maria Sforza's wardrobe: *Conto de la guardaroba de la serenissima m(aes)tà de la regina de veste et altre / robe portate da Milano in Alamagnya, consegnate a my, / Francesco di Vegy, guardaroba de la m(aes)tà serenissma, a 3 de / desembr(e) 1493 in el castello de Milano (videlicet).*[51]

To conclude, the main functions of inventories with their respective features can be roughly summarized as follows:

Functions of inventories		
Legal function	**Representation**	**Administration**
concluded	concluded	ongoing
naming of issuer	naming of issuer	naming of administrator

46 Riedmann 1984, p. 317; Mersiowsky 2000, p. 40.

47 See on this inventory the catalogue on the exhibit dedicated to her: Rückert 2005; I am preparing the edition Antenhofer 2022.

48 Genet has stressed the importance of lists as "documentation intermédiaire" with the purposes of memoria, administration, identity, law and representation, see Genet 2013, p. 421.

49 Tiroler Landesarchiv (TLA) Innsbruck Inventare A 1.2, 1494–1508. See also Sailer 2011; Antenhofer 2021.

50 The importance of the *invocatio* had already been stressed in the first systematic guideline on how to conceive an inventory by Luca Pacioli, Pacioli [1494] 1994.

51 TLA Inventare 1.2 f. 1v: „This is the account of the wardrobe of the most serene majesty of the queen of clothes and other (textile) goods taken from Milan to Germany, given to me, Francesco di Vegy, head of wardrobe of her majesty, on 3 December 1493 in the castello of Milano (videlicet)." (All translations are mine if not otherwise noted.)

Functions of inventories		
Legal function	**Representation**	**Administration**
witnesses	blessings, quotations from the bible, humanistic quotations	ego-perspective
notary as issuer	naming of owner	naming of responsible people
date	date	chronologically ongoing dates / no dates
place of issuing	place of issuing	place of storing of goods
signs of verification, seals, chirograph…	decorations, calligraphic writing, harmonic layout	broad margins for notes, cancellations, notes, columns, indices
different formats	cover, sewing, large format	small format, different formats
parchment and/or paper	parchment and/or paper of high quality	paper

Table 2 Main functions of inventories and distinctive features.

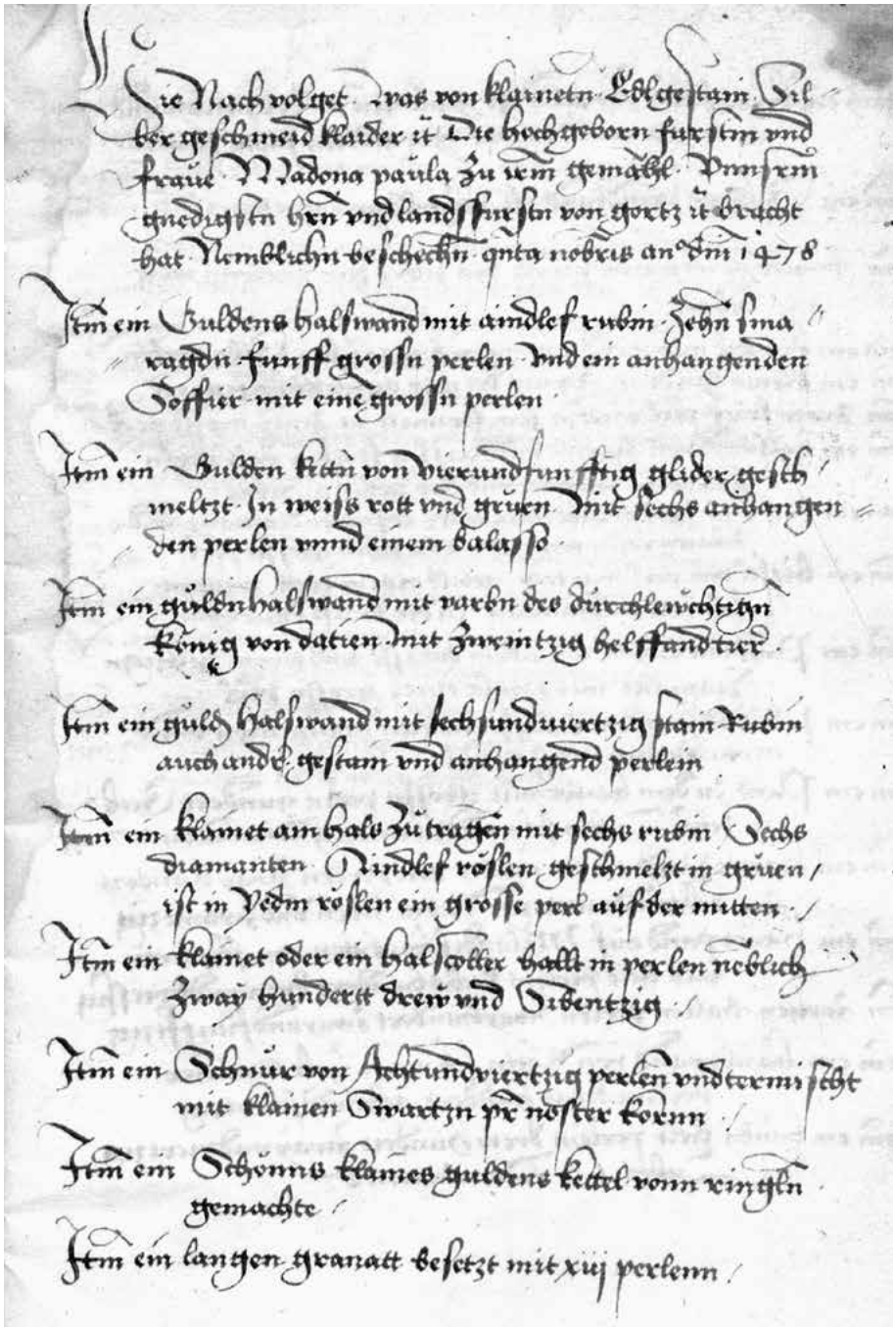

Fig. 1 Inventory of the bridal treasure of Paula Gonzaga, 1478. Inventory in the form of a booklet (*Libell*). Tiroler Landesarchiv Innsbruck A Inventare Nr. 202/8 f. 1r. Courtesy of Tiroler Landesarchiv Innsbruck.

4. Inventories as Texts: Occasions for Inventorying Processes

Considering the occasions for inventorying, we can distinguish even more different types. Based on the corpus of princely inventories form late medieval Italian and German courts mentioned at the beginning, I will outline some recurrent types of occasions for inventorying, without aiming at giving a complete picture.[52]

Space-related inventories – such as inventories of entire buildings like castles or churches, individual chambers (e.g. for silver or weapons) or of an entire court – were generally compiled when the administration changed[53] or in the context of post mortem inventorying processes. In the last case, there is a close relationship to person-related inventories. Typical cases for person-related inventories are accordingly all types of probate inventories. They regard the belongings of a person, however, they tend to follow the rooms and spaces where goods were stored. The categories of the inventories in this case reflect a spatial organization, which is why I would still talk about a space-related form in such a case. Probate inventories thus establish relationships between people, objects and rooms.[54] In the case of princely inventories, they can become entire court inventories, and they can include belongings from other people as well – such as for example belongings of the wives.[55] Sometimes they can even devolve into inventories of pawns, such as e.g. the post mortem inventory of duke Otto I of Tyrol from 1310.[56] Occasionally they only mention parts of the belongings, such as the inventory of jewels compiled after the death of duke Frederick IV of Tyrol in 1439.[57] They can even take on the form of a simple administrative note like the record of the belongings found in the personal chest of duke Christoph of Bavaria after he had died on the island of Rhodos in 1493.[58]

Often such post-mortem inventories are regarded as the prototype of inventories, considering the definition of the medieval term *inventarium*.[59] In the urban context, such inventorying processes were made by notaries or testamentary executors who went through the houses and recorded what they found.[60] However, such inventories do not necessarily include all belongings.[61] In the huge Gonzaga inventory compiled after the death of Federico II from

52 See also the overview in Riello 2013. For an overview on different types of inventories from the Middle Ages up to the 20th century see the forthcoming special issue on inventories: Inventories as Texts and Artefacts: Methodological Approaches and Challenges: in ÖZG 2 (2021).

53 This was very often the case in the considerable stock of late medieval castle inventories from Tyrol and Vorarlberg, ed. in Zingerle 1909.

54 See on this spatial quality of inventories e.g. Russo 2011; Riello 2013; Matschinegg 2019.

55 See the inventory of Eberhard III of Württemberg, ed. Molitor 2008.

56 Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (HHStA) Wien Handschriften (HS) B 123 Tirolisches Kanzleibuch 1303–1319 (= olim Wiener Codex 383; Q.) f. 51v–53r, ed. in Mayr-Adlwang 1898, pp. 166–168, n. 339.

57 Kleinodieninventar des Nachlasses von Herzog Friedrich IV. von Habsburg, HHStA Familienurkunden (UR FUK) 559, 1439; TLA Inventare A 1.1, 1439; ed. Schönherr 1883, pp. 202–208.

58 BayHStA GHA HU 830.

59 *inventarium* du Cange, t. 4, col. 409b, online http://ducange.enc.sorbonne.fr/INVENTARIUM1.

60 See Rossetti (ed.) 2012; van der Woude/Schuurman (eds.) 1980; Mannheims/Roth 1984; Baulant et al. (eds.) 1988; Simon-Muscheid 2004, pp. 177–179.

61 On the different reasons for the lacking completeness of inventories see the summary of the most important arguments in Handzel 2011, pp. 64–71.

1540–1542 by several notaries, for example, all the clothes are missing.[62] Both Herrmann and Andermann have outlined for administrative inventories that objects related to people's bodies, such as jewels and clothes, were generally missing in inventories of buildings compiled by notaries.[63] Andermann has noted that neither the belongings of administrators nor those of even the bishops as owners of the castles he looked at were recorded.[64] Handzel has pointed out for the Austrian tutelage (*Pflegschaft*) inventories of the 16th century that personal belongings were missing, but they could be found in probate inventories.[65]

A second important distinction has to be made between male and female belongings, which leads us directly to the prototypical form of person-related inventory: the inventory of the bridal trousseau. In the Italian cases these inventories, too, were issued by notaries.[66] Unlike probate inventories they do not follow a spatial structure, but they follow categories of objects the bride took with her to her new court (and later eventually to her widow retreat). Since for the Italian context the objects of the bridal trousseau counted as part of the dowry, they were usually recorded in inventories. These inventories on the one hand served an internal purpose for the natal family of the bride, namely to document what they had given to the bride and which value the objects had. Since wedding contracts usually specified that the objects of the bridal trousseau had to be given back to the native family in the case of a childless death of the bride, the families were keen on recording these objects.[67] In the case of widowhood, on the other hand, the inventory made sure the widow could take her own goods with her to her widow retreat.

The case of Bianca Maria Sforza again beautifully illustrates how an inventory as text could take on several different forms as a material object according to the different purposes it served. In fact, the inventory on her immense dowry worth 100.000 ducats[68] issued in 1493 survives in four different forms. Two simple sheets of paper written in Italian still exist in the State Archives of Milan. They can be looked at as the lists compiled by the Sforza court administrators. One of the sheets even gives the financial value of most of the objects and was used to account the value of the trousseau.[69] Surviving in the State Archives of Vienna there is the huge notary instrument of the inventory written in Latin, which was recorded on two pieces of parchment sewn together to acquire the impressive length of 1,84 m.[70] This was the legally binding form of the inventory which documented the handing over of the treasure.[71] Moreover, in Vienna we also have an Italian version of the inventory written in a

62 Ferrari 2003, pp. 17–18.
63 Herrmann 1998, pp. 86–87.
64 Andermann 1987, pp. 141–142.
65 Handzel 2011, pp. 44–73.
66 See again the bridal inventory of Antonia Visconti from 1380 compiled among others by the notary Johannes Falconus.
67 See Antenhofer 2019b; see generally Spieß 2008.
68 The value of the trousseau is mentioned in the notary version of the inventory, HHStA UR FUK 830/1,2, as well as in the wedding contract HHStA UR FUK 829/1,2; see also Weiss 2010, p. 56.
69 Archivio di Stato di Milano (ASMi) Archivio Visconteo-Sforzesco (ASforz) potenze sovrane (pot. sovr.) carteggio (cart.) 1467 f. 45, 18 November 1493; ASMi ASforz pot. sovr. cart. 1467 f. 63.
70 Weiss 2010, pp. 58–59, image p. 60.
71 HHStA UR FUK 830/1,2, 2 December 1493; ed. Herrgott 1760, pp. 61–67, n. 60. An edition of the Latin version based on a lost Milanese document is given by Ceruti 1875. An edition of the Italian version is given by Calvi 1888, pp. 131–146.

calligraphic humanist hand writing on paper bound to a small booklet.[72] Most probably this was the representative version of the inventory for Bianca Maria's personal use, compiled in a form more convenient to handle than the huge instrument on parchment.

In the German contexts, only few examples of bridal inventories from the late Middle Ages survive and usually take on the form of simple administrative documents.[73] This can be explained firstly by the fact that German law did not count the objects of the trousseau as part of the dowry,[74] and secondly by a more customary handling of male and female mobile belongings, which is evident in the distinction of the *Gerade* and the *Heergewäte* in the *Sachsenspiegel*.[75]

Another frequent type of person-related inventories are registers of pawns. Above all, jewels were frequently pledged to get money, usually with the intention to solve the pawns and get the jewels back – jewels among which we find such spectacular objects like crowns. In fact, this is the reason why in such registers objects are described in great detail to make sure they could be identified and solved. It is therefore no wonder that such registers are among the earliest and most frequent written sources for princely objects such as e.g. the Habsburg treasures.[76] The earliest Habsburg inventory is in fact a register of pawned jewels belonging to duke Albrecht I, from 10th November 1354.[77]

According to the type of document, the description of the objects may vary.[78] Notary instruments e.g. often give the financial value of objects, which is not always the case in mere administrative forms. In Italian archives we also find lists of objects compiled by goldsmiths, who had to describe the jewels in detail and to estimate their value.[79] Inventories thus can be interpreted as the results of complex practices of administration involving different experts.

The common characteristics of all types of inventories (in the strict sense of static inventory) is that they are bound to a given occasion which made it necessary to record goods at a specific moment. Usually it was the case of a liminal phase with consecutive legal implications: When people, usually women, left their home and moved into a new house, when their husband died and they moved to their widow retreat, or generally when people died and the ownership of their properties changed, or in the case of changing administrators. The temporal and spatial movement of people had consequences on their mobile and immobile goods, which were also set in motion and needed to be reordered. Inventories, though they appear static, accordingly often give a glimpse on objects at a given moment shortly before or after they had to be moved from their places. This is particularly true for registers of pawns. It might not surprise under this perspective that some inventories even register

72 HHStA UR FUK 828.

73 See e.g. Anna of Württemberg, Hauptstaatsarchiv (HStA) Stuttgart A 602 Nr 66 = Württembergische Regesten (WR) 66; Mechthild of Württemberg, HStA Stuttgart A 602 Nr 277 = WR 277, [1454]; Anna and Katherina of Habsburg, HHStA Familienarchiv Familienakten 18 f. 20r–21v, [1443/1447]; Elisabeth of Bayern, BayHStA GHA HU 618.

74 See Spieß 2008.

75 See in this respect also the results of Signori 2001, pp. 104–108; basically also Bungenstock 1971; Bungenstock 1978.

76 See Lhotsky's history of the medieval Habsburg treasure based on archival documents presented above all by Zimerman 1883.

77 HHStA HS B 6 (= olim Ms. 15) f. 66.

78 Not always sufficiently in detail as art historians might wish, see Keating/Markey 2011, pp. 209–210.

79 See on the question of the estimation of value Barbot 2011.

absent objects, like the one of duke Heinrich of Tyrol, king of Bohemia, which mentions a crown currently not in the treasure because it had been pledged.[80]

The constant flow of objects on the other hand becomes visible in the ongoing registers of administration, which record goods entering and leaving the court. Lists could mention gifts given on occasions of feasts, they could mention objects that were taken out to be repaired or estimated,[81] or even record objects that had been stolen or lost.[82] Some of these lists were explicitly addressed as *pro memoria*, as for example the list of things compiled for Ascanio Sforza when he moved to Pavia for studying.[83]

Types of inventories and registers		
Person-related		**Space-related**
Male	**Female**	
post mortem inventory	post mortem inventory	post mortem inventory
	bridal inventory	inventories of castles, churches, buildings, shops, …
register of goods distributed in cases of controversy	register of goods distributed in cases of controversy	court inventories
Special forms of inventories		
inventories of wardrobes, jewels, silver etc.		
registers of pawns	registers of pawns	inventories of single rooms
lists of gifts	lists of gifts	lists of receipts (incoming goods)
lists of losses	lists of losses	lists of losses
special lists on given occasions (travel, goods sent away, study stays, special manufacture of luxury goods, …)	special lists on given occasions (travel, goods sent away, special manufacture of luxury goods,…)	lists of outgoing goods (for repair, estimation, as loan etc. …)
shopping lists[84]	shopping lists	lists of expenses

Table 3 Overview of types of inventories and registers.

Yet, not only spaces and people could be recorded via inventories of objects related to them, even ephemeral events such as feasts could be immortalized via inventories, albeit very rarely. This was undertaken for one of the biggest feasts that took place in Mantova in 1340 to mark a significant moment in the history of the Gonzaga family. The *magna curia* that took place on 2 February 1340 orchestrated the Gonzaga among their most powerful neighbors. Four weddings were celebrated on this occasion and several knights were dubbed. The event was memorized by a unique codex, the *liber magne curie*, made of 18 impressive folia of parchment (497 × 365 mm) in a representative layout and scripture. After a telling proem celebrating the Casa Gonzaga the codex records lists of gifts and expenses on the occasion of the ceremony.[85]

> *Ad honorem sanctissime et individue Trinitatis […] pro hac felici, inclita ac magniffica / domo de Gonzaga, cuius magnificum festum milicie fuit de anno*

80 Herzog Heinrich (1335), BayHStA Auswärtige Staaten Tirol Lit. 24 f. 33r–36r (new counting 35r–38r); ed. Mayr-Adlwang 1898, pp. 188–190, n. 477.

81 See e.g. the many lists in the Archivio di Stato di Milano; some of the lists are presented by Venturelli 1999.

82 See the inventory of precious things stolen from Nicolò d'Este during the sacco of the Castello Conselice before 1395; edited by Toselli (ed.) 1868, pp. 451–454; see also Ehmer 1998.

83 ASMi ASforz pot. sovr. cart. 1484 fasc. 19, without date: *Ricordo de cose necessarie per monsignore.*

84 See Welch 2005.

85 See now the edition and comment of this codex: Buss/Ferrari (eds.) 2016.

> *Domini MCCCXL, die secundo mensis februarii, tempore quo magnificus et excelsus / dominus Loysius de Gonzaga, dominus primus de hac domo […] et nati sui nec non multi alii notabiles cives / facti et creati fuerunt milites. Quod quidem describitur in memoria futurorum […].*[86]

This codex is therefore a striking example for the historiographic quality of the list and the inventory as document type. Lists like other forms of texts thus can take on a multiplicity of functions, and they have to be regarded as textual forms in their own right.[87]

5. Inventories as Objects: Material Aspects of Inventories

Inventories are, however, more than only texts – at the same time they are artefacts which often exist to the present day. Hence it is important to closely look at the material form of the inventory itself to ask what the surviving documents can tell us as objects about their function and the way they have been made.

To look at inventories as material things themselves can also tell us something about the more general question regarding the relationship between people and objects. From this point of view we can ask why certain inventories survive until the present and what significance they had. The recent research on inventories has shown that they seem to appear in significant numbers only starting from the 14th century – some have even claimed that the inventory as source type has been only created in the late Middle Ages.[88] However, in doing so they neglect older forms like for example records of sacred treasures that very often survive in codices where they have been written down in order to protect them from getting lost and at the same time to protect the treasure from being stolen.[89]

This observation on the ephemeral character of inventories as sources allows us to make one first distinction: we have to distinguish inventories that survive as notes written in other sources – mainly *codices* – from inventories that survive as individual texts or textual objects taking on different forms. It is this second form that we will be interested in, and it is this type that apparently only survives from the later Middle Ages. However, the question that has to be asked is if this situation really reflects the fact that only starting from this period inventories were conceived as individual documents, or if it is only from this time onward that these types of documents survive while they had been thrown away in former times.[90] The growing number of surviving inventories starting from the 14th century thus may not reflect the real amount of inven-

86 Archivio di Stato di Mantova (ASMn) Archivio Gonzaga (AG) busta (b.) 393 carta (c.) 1r. See Ferrari 2016, p. 144.

87 On the literary quality of lists for medieval literature see already Huizinga [1919] 2006, pp. 347, 409–415, 435; in combination with visual forms of lists Eco 2011; generally Doležalová (ed.) 2009.

88 See e.g. Fey 2007; Keating and Markey attribute the growing number of inventories in the Early Modern period to a "desire to document" the growing number of goods, "an obsession with capturing these objects in time and space", cf. Keating/Markey 2011, p. 209.

89 See Bischoff on medieval treasure registers, Bischoff 1967, p. 10.

90 Moreover, we have to consider specific legal situations such as for example in England, where from the beginning of the 16th century onwards it became mandatory to issue probate inventories, see e.g. Riello 2013.

tories that once existed, but they are the result of contingent circumstances which lead to their surviving. The literally exploding amounts of inventories that exist from the Early Modern period certainly are the result of new legal frameworks but also of a new interest in archiving documents.[91]

In any case, inventories seem to count among the most fragile types of sources destined to be kept only for a short period of time and not for eternity. This aspect of the temporal horizon of the document – the question if it was conceived as a rather volatile note or as a durable document – is a significant information we can draw from the material form of the inventory much better than by only looking at the text.

If we look at inventories as objects we can apply the methods of the traditional auxiliary sciences (*Historische Hilfswissenschaften*), although they will not allow us to describe the documents extensively. In fact, inventories have been neglected by the traditional auxiliary sciences just like other ephemeral administrative source types such as accounts.[92]

First of all we have to look at the exterior shape of the document: If we analyze sources from the point of view of cultural history, the exterior shape or the type of document is extremely important to reconstruct the communicative and institutional horizon of the source and to integrate the document back in its initial context of emergence.[93] It is helpful to start describing the material quality of the source using the categories of exterior critique of sources.

In principle we can distinguish the following forms:

- Single sheet of paper or parchment – simple note (*Zettel / cedula*) or double leaf
- Rolls[94]
- Simple booklet (*Libell*) made of folded sheet or sheets that were put into another
- Simple booklet (*Libell*) made of tacked sheet
- Book made of different quires (*Lagen*) with or without cover
- Charter or notary instrument

Certain intermediary forms are books which have a *protocol* and an *eschatocol*, thus taking on the form of a charter. Looking at the exterior aspects we may, however, nonetheless talk about books in these cases.[95]

Another possibility of a basic distinction is to question if the inventory was drafted on paper or on parchment, or if both writing materials were used. In this case parchment was mostly only used to serve as cover for a book made of paper or to reinforce the tacking of the paper.[96] Other exterior aspects to note are forms of sealing, notary signets or elaborated scripture, and all kinds of decoration. They are important indicators which tell us about the legal value

91 See for the growing research on archives above all Friedrich 2013.
92 See Riedmann 1984; Mersiowsky 2000. On the potential of bills for the social history of objects see Gruber 2019.
93 See Brauer 2013, pp. 17–19.
94 Above all for the English contexts, see Stratford 2012.
95 An inventory in the form of a book can be analyzed in detail in terms of codicological criteria, whereas diplomatic criteria can be used as a starting point for the description of inventories in the form of charters. Regarding this diplomatic mixed types of Late Medieval and Early Modern administrative writings using the example of the *libell* see Vogtherr 2014, esp. p. 64.
96 On the semantic quality of the use of paper or parchment see Meyer/Schultz/Schneidmüller (eds.) 2015.

of the document and whether it served a representative function or was only used for mere administrative purposes. Further indicators in this regard are the size of the sheets. The bigger the inventory, the more ceremonious it was and the more important for representation.

If we look at the sheet we can distinguish between folio and narrow folio (*Schmalfolio*). Narrow folio was a very common format for administration which emerged when a folio was folded in the middle. Thus, two columns were formed. Very often only the left column was used for recording the items of the inventory, while the right column was left empty to add further notes. If such folios were then tacked and bound into a book, they were again often used in the folio form and only the remaining folding shows that their original use was as narrow folios. However, we can also find such narrow folios where each column was used for recording items and which later were bound into booklets in the narrow form. This is the most common form of (administrative) inventories that has survived in German archives.

Looking at the sheets we can further distinguish if they were organized in columns or not. The use of columns most often showed – as I have just pointed out – that the inventory was conceived in order to be continued. One column then usually remained empty to add notes on what happened with the items of the inventory.[97] Often we find two columns, the right one then usually was used for notes. But I have also found columns that were set in the middle of the page while margins were left on both the right and the left side to add notes.[98]

Looking at the layout of the pages we can see if there were margins or not and if the margins were regular or not, if they were large or narrow, and if the gaps between the lines were large or not. It is also important to note if special effects of layout were achieved via indentments. Very often the title or protocol of the inventory and the first lines of the single entries are written further to the left margin of the page, while the following lines have a broader margin to the left, leaving a visible ordered structures. Often the Latin word *item* is used to begin the single entries of an inventory. It may be abbreviated and calligraphically ornated to add to the visual structure of the inventory. All these aspects talk about the purpose of the inventory, and again we can say: the more meticulously organized and the larger its gaps and margins, the more ceremonious, the more representative the inventory was. Looking at the writing we may distinguish if it was a hastily written administrative list or if the scribes payed attention to produce a nice looking document. Of further great importance are all kinds of traces of editing, above all cancelled parts or marginalia, notes, or supplements in other hand writings.

The exterior form is closely related to the two basic functions connected with the temporary horizon of the inventory I have outlined in the beginning. The static inventory records the situation of the treasure in a given moment, e.g. as post mortem inventory. It gives us a glance of one particular moment in the life of the treasures or a stock of goods. A good example is the huge post mortem inventory which developed into a complete court inventory of the

97 In the wardrobe inventory of Bianca Maria Sforza this principle has been translated into the format of pages: the items were noted on the left page, while on the right page information regarding the single clothes and textiles was added. TLA Inventare 1.2.

98 This was the case for some folios in the ceremonious bridal inventory in book form compiled for Antonia Visconti in 1380. HSTA Stuttgart A 602 Nr 32 = WR 32.

Gonzaga court in Mantova, compiled after the death of Federico II (1540).[99] Static inventories usually have small margins and leave no place for additions.

The second form is the dynamic inventory, which records a stock of objects in a given moment, e.g. the bridal treasure of a princess, but was conceived to be continued. This means that the inventory includes empty space in the forms of large margins or empty sheets to be used either to note what happened to the single items or to record if new objects were added to the treasure. The bridal inventory of Antonia Visconti from 1380[100] is a good example for this type. Ideally this kind of inventory would also note if things were donated to other people, if they were repaired or if they were lost or pawned. This second form of inventory is similar to what I called books of administration, which may above all be found in Italian princely archives.[101]

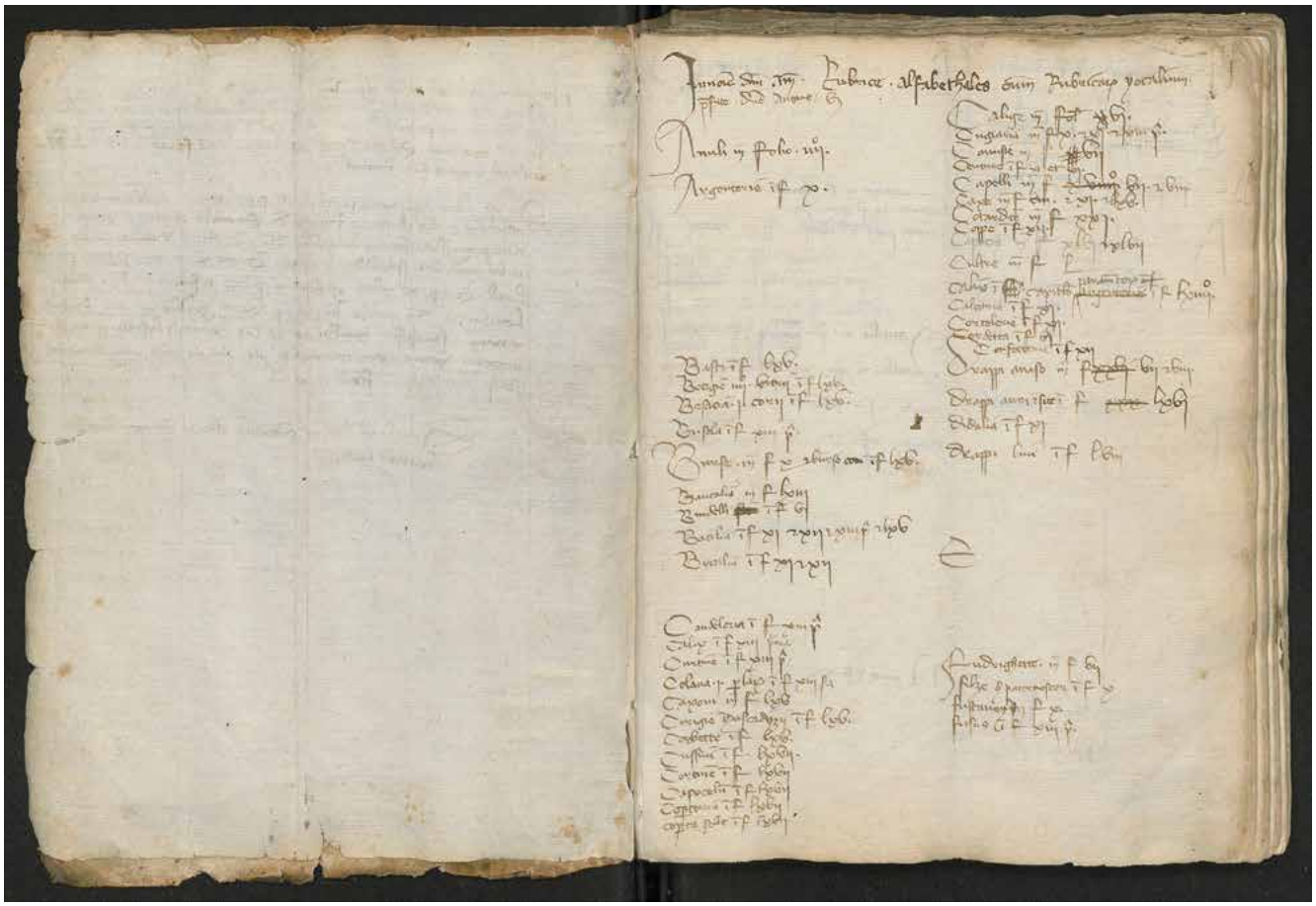

Fig. 2 Liber iocalium, inventory of the bridal treasure of Antonia Visconti. Inventory in the form of a codex, 1380. Index of the inventory. Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart A 602 Nr 32 = WR 32 f. 2r. Courtesy of Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart.

Inventories that take on the form of books may also contain *indices* or even *tables of content*. They give precious information on the use of the book and processes of administration, and they convey important information on terminology, on ways of organizing items as well as regarding the different categories in use to organize objects. See e.g. the index of a Gonzaga court register from 1381–1402:

> *Capitulum bacinorum ~~et bronzinorum~~; capitulum bronzinorum; capitulum ~~candelabrorum~~ caldirinorum; capitulum candelabrorum; capitulum navium; capitulum botaciorum et bochall.; coppe; moyoli et ghotti; vasa auri; vasa*

99 Edited in: Ferrari 2003.
100 HSTA Stuttgart A 602 Nr 32 = WR 32.
101 See on these sources for the Gonzaga court e.g. L'Occaso 2005.

christali; inceso(r)ia; basia et scutele; cuclea(r)ii; forcele; salaroli et busole; confeterie; [16v] capitulum arborum; trombe et cornua; arzenterie pro altari; culteli a tabula; perle; ~~nusche et anuli; balassii~~; anchone; capitulum ymaginum; capitulum lante(r)ne et moyoli; argenteria q. m(agnifi)ce domine Margarite de Gonzaga.[102]

Using all these aspects we can summarize and create the following model which might be helpful when describing the exterior shape of inventories, the inventory as thing, confronted with the interior aspects to describe the inventory as text:

The inventory as object: Exterior or material aspects	book, booklet, roll, sheet, insert in a charter or in a notary instrument (form of transmission)
	parchment or paper (writing material)
	format
	state of preservation
	cover, tacking, folding
	layout of the inventory (sheets, quires, indices)
	layout of the page (columns, margins)
	aspects of decoration or distinction, graphic signs
	scripture and scribes
	seals, notary signet (means of authentication)
	traces of use and editing
	traces of reception and archiving
The inventory as text: Internal or discursive aspects	concept, original (*Ausfertigung*), copy
	structure: protocol, entries, eschatocol
	naming of issuer, scribe, witnesses (narrative perspective)
	naming of place and date
	internal order of the entries: according to material, purpose, responsibility, place,…
	categories and titles
	indices
	layout of pages and organization of the register
	comments, notes, cancellations, additions, rearrangements
	indications of values or forms of accounting
	static or dynamic inventory: issued in one redaction, in several phases, continuously
	language; (technical) vocabulary
	catalogue? > elaborateness of description, higher principles of organization, 'scientific' interest
	content-related focus of the entries: social, material, iconographic aspects, provenience, horizon of the inventory
	discursive signs of redaction and use
	discursive signs of reception and archiving

Table 4 Model of internal and external features of inventories as texts and objects.

102 ASMn AG b. 396 c. 16r/v.

6. Conclusion

This paper started with the observation that inventories count among the most interesting sources with regard to textual thingness: first of all because they translate objects into words and second because they are not only texts but material objects with their own thingness as well. Therefore, the focus was put in a first step on inventories as texts. I argued that inventories, while translating objects into words, do not only create lists of objects but build narratives on the relations between people, things and spaces. Textual thingness thus means that the inventories as texts construct these objects and integrate them into social and spatial networks. These are likewise narrated via hierarchies and relations of objects, as well as through the information inventories give about these networks and the information they hide. One basic distinction has to be made between space-related inventories which basically record objects in determined spaces like houses or castles, and person-related inventories which record objects belonging to people. While the first category – from a gender point of view – tends to be dominated by male belongings, the second category is more characterized by female belongings since women and their possessions were less bound to one house and more characterized by mobility due to different life phases. Inventories are thus promising sources for the reconstruction of material surroundings and life scripts which highlights their quality as sources for social and gender history. The renewed interest in objects as linked with people and spaces points to the relevance of inventories for cultural historical approaches. While extant objects often lack their social and cultural context, inventories are the most important sources for bringing forth the multifaceted networks and meanings of objects. Inventories are therefore neither neutral nor objective sources, but they have to be considered as narrative and to some extent fictional texts like other historiographic sources.

The second focus was put on the inventories as things. I argued that the varying forms inventories take on add to the narratives they produce about objects. Inventories survive in many different forms. Taking into account the textual quality and the exterior aspects of the documents will help us to better understand the different functions inventories could take on. Simple and volatile notes or books of administration served the purposes of the administration. Notes on the margins or in columns tell us if the inventory or list was concluded or laid out to be continued, and how it was used for administrative purposes. Inventories with seals or in the form of notary documents or charters stress the legal function of documents e.g. in the context of post mortem inventories or bridal inventories. Such forms can provide us with precious information on the question if inventories, and thus the passing on of objects, were regarded as legally important.

Carefully written and decorated inventories in the form of bigger or smaller books always tell us that the inventory itself could serve a representative function and convey the status of the person who possessed these objects. Such inventories were displayed in public procedures of inventorying, namely in the display of the bridal trousseau. Thus, precious and representative inventories may also have been used to commemorate significant events. This makes them way more than simple administrative texts: they become part of historiography themselves. It is evident that inventories are far from being the

simple lists of objects as which they had been regarded in the past. The renewed interest in both material culture and in pragmatic writing processes has led to an increased attention on ephemeral and more bulky types of writings which apparently lack the quality of being coherent narrative texts. However, this rather reflects the preeminence which the nineteenth century, above all, had given to epic text forms. Inventories present another quality of narration, the listed telling, stories written in the forms of lists. If we take this potential seriously such apparently austere texts offer immense potential to be explored as textual archives on the stories fossilized in the complex relationships between people, objects and spaces.

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An Armour of Sound.
Sancte Sator (*Carmen ad Deum*) and its German Gloss

Sophie Marshall

The paper addresses the Latin poem *Sancte sator* / *Carmen ad deum*, which belongs to the early medieval tradition of *loricae*, and an Old High German gloss accompanying it in the manuscript clm 19410 (Munich BSB) from the 9th century. The focus of the article lies on different dimensions of materiality playing a crucial role in the *lorica* genre and in *Sancte sator* in particular; that the German gloss refers and reacts to these material aspects is an important finding. The basic physical side of language (sound), the physical meaning of the literal content (source domain of thing metaphors), and the physical interaction of gloss and poem (with the options of the gloss leaving the poem untouched, joining it or 'cutting' it) are essential features. The last aspect will allude to the broader question of whether and how medieval glosses treat the glossed texts as material objects.

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Das lateinische Reimgebet *Sancte sator* / *Carmen ad deum* steht in der frühmittelalterlichen Tradition der *loricae*; in der Handschrift clm 19410 (BSB München) aus dem 9. Jahrhundert wird es von einer althochdeutschen Glosse begleitet. Der Aufsatz fragt nach unterschiedlichen Dimensionen von Materialität, die für die Gattung der *loricae* und im Besonderen für *Sancte sator* zentral sind; es lässt sich zeigen, dass die Glosse auf diese physischen Aspekte Bezug nimmt und reagiert. Wesentlich sind die grundlegende physische Dimension der Sprache (Klang), die materielle Bedeutung der Signifikanten (Herkunftsbereich der Dingmetaphorik) sowie die materielle Interaktion von Glosse und Gedicht (welches von der Glosse unberührt bleiben, begleitet oder ‚zerschnitten' werden kann). Letzteres führt zu der Frage, ob und inwiefern mittelalterliche Glossen die Auctortexte als materielle Objekte behandeln.

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The poem *Sancte sator*, named after its incipit, but also known as *Carmen ad deum* for its title in the first modern edition,[1] dates back to the 7th or 8th century. It draws on an originally Irish tradition of poems called *loricae* (sg. *lorica*). In the manuscript clm 19410 (Munich BSB) from the 9th century, *Sancte sator* is accompanied by an Old High German gloss. In the following, I would like to show (1) how materiality is crucial to the *lorica*-genre and, in this particular

1 This title was invented by John A. Giles, who edited the Text in 1850, see Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 13.

case, to *Sancte sator*; (2) how the special sound of *Sancte sator* can be understood as another dimension of materiality; and (3) how the Old High German gloss complements or reacts to these aspects. The latter will allude to the broader question (4) of whether and how medieval glosses treat the "text proper"[2] as a material object.

1. Prayers as Breastplates: *Loricae*

Loricae are Christian apotropaic prayers of an originally insular tradition in Latin and Celtic languages (a famous example is the Irish *Lorica of St. Patrick*); they also influenced medieval Anglo-Saxon poetry.[3] *Lorica* means 'breastplate', and often this very word appears in the texts, among other lexemes of armour. The prayers usually begin with an invocation of the Trinity,[4] and then they call up pieces of armour in order to save the speaker's body and soul from evil. Sometimes a litany of every body part, even hair and finger nails, is placed under the protection of 'God's shield' (e.g. in the *Lorica of Laidcenn*). The conceptually central term *lorica* was "extended [...] to refer to the prayer and the act of its recitation [...] by scholars and the contemporary poets"[5] – so the poem itself is a *lorica*. A fitting German term is "Panzer-Lied"[6].

The main source of this idea is the Bible, namely verses containing figurative armour such as Eph. 6,11–17 (mentioning *arma Dei* 'God's armour'; *loricam iustitiae* 'breastplate of righteousness'; *scutum fidei* 'shield of faith'; *galea salutis* 'helmet of hail'; *gladium Spiritus quod est verbum dei* 'sword of the Spirit which is God's word') or 1Thess. 5,8 (*loricam fidei et caritas* 'breastplate of faith and love'; *galeam spem salutis* 'as a helmet the hope for salvation').[7] Inspired by these biblical images, the protective function of a *lorica* poem is achieved by the invocation of protective armour. However, in this very respect, the medieval texts differ considerably from the biblical passages.

The biblical texts make clear that armour vocabulary is only used metaphorically because the terms are disclosed by genitive phrases (or something similar) which explain their actual meaning. For instance, in the phrase *loricam fidei et caritas* ('breastplate of faith and love'), *lorica* is unmistakably a metaphor just characterizing *fidei et caritas* which the text is actually directed at. In medieval *loricae*, such disclosures are often remarkably reduced or even omitted, e.g.:

2 The term is coined by Wieland 1983, p. 7, who distinguishes between 'text proper' and 'gloss'. His rather loose definition of a gloss as "anything on a page which is not text proper, but which is intended to comment on the text" includes contextual glosses as well. In this regard it conforms to the definition by Henkel 2007, p. 727: "Glosse[:] Instrument der Texterschließung, bezogen auf das Einzelwort oder einen umfänglicheren Textzusammenhang. [...] Die Glosse kann zwischen den Zeilen stehen (Interlinearglosse; Interlinearversion), innerhalb der Zeile (Kontextglosse) oder am Rand (Marginalglosse)" ('gloss: instrument for exploring texts, referring to a single word or a more extensive section. The gloss can be placed between the lines [interlinear gloss; interlinear version], within the line [contextual gloss] or at the margin [marginal gloss]'). Restricting the term 'gloss' to those metatexts having visually a paratextual position on the page makes contextual glosses an exception (cf. Bergmann 2020, p. 125; Stricker 2009a, pp. 20–32; see below, note 64).
3 Cf. Hill 1981, esp. pp. 264-266; Reid 2002, pp. 142f., 151f.
4 Cf. Hill 1981, pp. 259–266; Reid 2002, p. 141.
5 Reid 2002, p. 141; cf. Stifter 2007, p. 507f.
6 Haubrichs 1995, p. 220; Brinkmann 1960, p. 68.
7 A comprehensive overview of these biblical passages is given by Stifter 2007, p. 506f.

Deus […]
undique me defende potentia
Meae gibrae pernas omnes libera
tuta [B: *tua*] *pelta protegente singula*
Ut non tetri demones in latera
mea librent ut soleant iacula
Gigram cephale cum iaris et conas
pattham liganam sennas atque michinas
Cladum crassum madianum talios
bathma exugiam atque binas idumas

('God, […] from all sides defend me with power, deliver the whole trunk of my body with thine own protecting shield that foul demons may not hurl, as is their wont, their darts at my flanks, skull, head with hair and eyes, forehead, tongue, teeth and nose, neck, breast, side and reins, thighs, bladder and two hands.')

(*Lorica of Laidcenn/Gildas*, paragraphs 15–19)[8]

The case this article focuses on, *Sancte sator*, at first uses weapon terms metaphorically (v. 12: *et piacla dira iacla* ['and sins, the cruel darts']; v. 15: *carnis nexu* ['bonds of flesh'])[9], but, when introducing the protective armour, it soon spares metaphor clarifications, e.g.: *Christi umbo meo lumbo / sit, ut atro cedat latro* (v. 16f.) ('May Christ's shield be on my loins so that the robber with his dark may yield'); *pater parma procul arma / arce hostis* (v. 19f.) ('father, with the shield ward off the enemy's weapons far away'). As in the *Lorica of Laidcenn* (see above), these armour terms are not presented as rhetorical devices. Whereas the biblical texts describe the invisible values as armour, the medieval *loricae*, as apotropaic prayers, implore the armour to be there, or we could say: implore it to materialise in order to achieve the protective function of the poem. As researchers have often pointed out, "the *loricae* are as much magical as they are religious"[10]; to Haubrichs, a *lorica* is "gleichsam wie eine aus magischen Worten geschmiedete Brünne [, die] den Schutz des Beters gegen Angriffe des Bösen gewährleistet"[11] ('like a shirt of mail, forged of magic words, warranting the supplicant's protection against attacks by the evil'). On that score, the materiality of the words' denotations cannot be overemphasised. The lexemes of protective armour are supposed to evoke material that saves the physical body in the material world, as well as it protects the soul against invisible attacks. Spoken in terms of metaphorology,[12] the target domain matches with the source domain, in a magic-invisible way. The *loricae* aim at a materialisation of imagined material, they aim at a magic shield.

Haubrich's naming of this phenomenon as 'magic' seems to be adequate, even more so if Strohschneider's definition of 'magic' is consulted. Strohschneider uses the term referring to a real presence ("Realpräsenz") of the signified in the signifier, which means a paradoxical identity ("ontische[] Iden-

8 Quotations (with translation from paragraph 16 on) from: Singer 1919, p. 138.
9 Quotations of *Sancte sator* from: Hellgardt 2008, p. 10.
10 Hill 1981, p. 266; see also p. 267, and Reid 2002, pp. 143, 145, 152.
11 Haubrichs 1995, p. 220.
12 For a brief introduction into the technical terms in use see Kohl 2007, pp. 30–37.

tität und Nicht-Identität") of sign and thing.[13] Thus, in the case of hagiographic books which state Mary's real presence, he defines this dissolution of categorial differences, which cannot be transgressed on the premise of scientific rationality, as 'magic'.[14] In the case of the *loricae*, a similar 'real presence' can be assumed for the material references of the metaphors – which thereby stop being metaphorical.

The fact that these images were inherited from the Bible might have encouraged this view of words as 'true things' – God's speaking is creating and acting as if word and thing were the same.[15] A German example shows how sacred words were considered material, namely the *Münchener Ausfahrtsegen* ('departure blessing of Munich'): *unde wil mih hivt gurten / in des heiligen gotts worten* […]. *Min haupt sei mir hivt stelin / dehainer slaht waffen snide dar in.* […] *der heilig himeltrvt / der si hivt min halsperch gvt* ('And I will gird myself in God's holy words today […]. My head be steel today, no kind of weapon may cut into it. […] The holy beloved one of heaven be my good breastplate today').[16]

Against the background of occasional medieval charms that use shield words and sometimes were, written on material, worn as amulets,[17] Reid argues that the *loricae* were "a conceptual evolution of written words to the status of invisible sentinels".[18] In contrast to the pagan tradition of "protective amulets and wearable charms", the Christian "symbolization […] takes the literalness out of the Pagan equation. The iconic physicality of words is no longer required".[19] Certainly, a *lorica* does not require being written on material; however, in many cases, the words' literalness seems to be exactly the point which the conjuring poems aim at; the body parts are commended to this physicality for their protection. Instead of 'symbolisation', one might speak with Haubrichs and others of a 'magic' material. The materiality of the denotations of the words (instead of their being signs, being symbols) is crucial to this genre, albeit, admittedly, there might be a scale of varying examples and varying sections within the same *lorica*.

As a complement, *loricae* also describe the attacks of evil in a material manner (e. g. as 'darts', 'spears'), and here, too, I would question a conventional concept of metaphors. These invisible entities of the 'spiritual world' do not seem to be considered very metaphysical in the early Middle Ages, but rather physical as well. At least presentations of the Devil during this time point to this notion. In the Old Saxon *Heliand* (9th century), for instance, the Devil must use a *heliðhelm*[] (helmet which makes invisible) in order not to be seen by Pilatus' wife,[20] apparently due to his very physical nature.

In light of this, a Latin preface of the *Lorica of Laidcenn* in the manuscript RIA (Dublin) MS 23 P 16 gives another revealing insight into medieval notions of *loricae*. To expand on the history of that *lorica*, the account describes how Laidcenn *uenit ab eo in insolam Hiberniam; transtulit et portauit super altare sancti Patricii episcopi, saluos nos facere* ("came from him to the island of Ire-

13 Strohschneider 2004, p. 263, highlighting ibid.
14 Strohschneider 2004, p. 263; see also Haeseli 2011, pp. 189–194, 201.
15 Cf. Schulz 2000, p. 186f.
16 BSB, Munich, Clm 23374, fol. 15v f. (quotations 16r), with conjecture (*himeltrvt* instead of the manuscript's *himelbrvt*) according to Holzmann 2001, p. 270f. Cf. also Schulz 2000, p. 187.
17 Cf. Reid 2002, p. 152.
18 Reid 2002, p. 153.
19 Reid 2002, p. 153.
20 *Heliand*, v. 5452 (Behagel [ed.] 1996, p. 192).

land; he brought it [the *lorica*] over and placed it upon the altar of Saint Patrick the Bishop, to make us whole")[21]. Herren reads this as a clear "emphasis […] on the lorica as an object".[22] He assumes:

> "[T]he lorica […] was venerated not only as the text of an efficacious prayer, but also as a sacred relic – one worthy, at least according to legend, of the altar of the church at Armagh. Is it possible that loricae were meant not only to be recited, but also to be carried on the person, or even worn (perhaps like a scapular with a long inscription)? Such a hypothesis would place an entirely new construction on St. Paul's words: *induti loricam fidei*!" [23]

Herren's hypothesis is also based on his idea that pagan amulets served as generic models for the *loricae*,[24] which, however plausible, cannot be proved. Nevertheless, according to its contemporary preface, this protecting *lorica* indeed seems to have been conceived an object like a sacred relic given to the altar – similar to weapons and armours of saints.[25] At this point, a decision cannot be made whether this 'thingness' is tied to the materiality of parchment and letters (see below, chapter 4). It seems clear, however, that this verbal object was deemed special because of its content in the first place. One might conclude that the content made the poem a sacred object; the words that conjure a material-like shield are not words as signs, but object-like as well – signifier and signified coincide. This matches Strohschneider's definition of 'magic'.

There is another characteristic of *loricae* which can be defined as 'magic' as well as 'physical': their special sound. Many of these prayers – *Sancte sator* at the extreme end – are structured by devices of repetition (e.g., anaphors, alliteration, rhymes, rhythm),[26] which draw the attention to the empirical sound side of language. Some (again, *Sancte sator* in an impressive fashion) contain obscure words,[27] which, lacking a meaning, also foreground their sound side. The following analysis of *Sancte sator* shows how these sound effects contribute to the physical protective function of the shielding terms, and how one medieval writer thought this 'sound-object' required a physical reaction.

2. The Thingness of *Sancte Sator*

Sancte sator is a Latin work handed down to us in eight manuscripts from England and the continent, the oldest from the early 9th century.[28] It consists of octosyllables with a pronounced trochaic rhythm, a medial caesura in each

21 Latin text and translation quoted from Singer 1919, p. 137.
22 Herren 1987, p. 30.
23 Herren 1987, p. 31.
24 Herren 1987, p. 31.
25 E.g. the lance said to be either St Mauritius' (patron saint of the armourers and soldiers) or St Longinus' (the Roman captain who wounded Christ's body) and then emperor Constantine's; this lance was believed to have saved the city of Modena from the Hungarians in 899 and to have helped Heinrich I and Otto I to win battles in the 10th century (cf. Wolf 2005, pp. 25–44; Worm 2000, pp. 183–197; Suckale-Redlefsen 1987, pp. 34–36). Other examples are St Wenzel's helmet, mail shirt, sword and lance (cf. Podlaha/Šittler 1903, pp. 9–16; Naegle 1928, pp. 13, 135–137; Machilek 2018, p. 65) and St George's lance tip (Braunfels-Esche 1976, p. 78).
26 Cf. Brinkmann 1960, pp. 70, 72.
27 "Some *loricae* tend to use unusual terminology culled from the 'holy' learned languages (Hebrew and Greek); this is the case of the *Lorica of Laidcenn*" (Reid 2002, p. 141).
28 Cf. Hellgardt 2008, p. 5f.; Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, pp. 9–11.

line, and bisyllabic rhymes. The cluster of these features is also found in some poems by Theodor of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury († 690), who, therefore, is discussed as the author.[29]

Rhymes are not to be taken for granted in poems of that time.[30] Brinkmann assumes that in the early Middle Ages the realm of rhymes is 'magic language', for, in his survey, he consistently finds a co-occurrence of rhymes with magical, adjuring, imploring, religious and cultic contents of verses.[31] "Reim ist eine Erscheinungsform sprachlicher Analogie, die magischer Wirkung dienstbar gemacht wird; mit seiner Hilfe wird Macht ausgeübt."[32] ('Rhyme is a form of verbal analogy that serves a magic impact; with the aid of it, power is exercised.') According to Brinkmann, concerning the early Middle Ages, rhyme could be seen as a 'weapon' ("Waffe") against dark forces.[33] Even though this thesis is based on his impressive empirical survey, it lacks further reasoning. Scholars who study premodern magic spells also claim that diverse structures of repetitions, such as alliterations, anaphors, rhythm, and rhymes, are constitutive factors of magic effects.[34] In this field, Geier tries to explain (following up Lévi-Strauss): The arranged order ("Überstrukturierung")[35] of spell language is meant as an act of interference in chaotic disorder and is supposed to structure and determine physical reality by using analogy.

> "Das magische Denken erarbeitet und bastelt sprachliche Überstrukturen, strukturierte Gesamtheiten, um so den unerkannten Determinismus im Ganzen zu manipulieren […]. Die strukturalen Arrangements der Zaubersprache stehen als evokative Äquivalente für den ontologischen Determinismus. […] [Die] Wirksamkeit verdankt sich der Überzeugung, daß das Arrangement der sprachlichen Ordnung genau jener gegenständlichen Ordnung *ähnlich* ist, die magisch gewünscht, besprochen und supplementiert wird."[36]
>
> ('Magic thinking creates and builds complex linguistic structures, structural unities, in order to manipulate the determinism which is hidden in everything […]. The structural arrangements of incantations, as evocative equivalents, stand for the ontological determinism. […] The effectiveness is based on the notion that the arrangement of the order of words equals the order of objects which is magically wanted, conjured and supplemented.')

To Geier, the nature of this 'magic equivalence' is absolutely non-sensuous and, therefore, far away from any onomatopoetic physique.[37]

Next to these structures of sound repetition (unison, "Gleichklang"), premodern spells show another essential characteristic: *ephesia grammata*, uncommon words ("Fremdklang") that obscure meanings and cause enigmatic

29 Ascription by Lapidge 1996, pp. 225–239; to other scholars, Lapidge's thesis is very likely, see e. g. Hellgardt 2013, p. 67; Hellgardt 2008, p. 3; Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, pp. 9, 25, 33–37.
30 According to Brinkmann 1960, pp. 67–76, it was the Irish tradition that gave the critical impulse for rhyming Latin poetry to the rest of Europe in the early Middle Ages.
31 Brinkmann 1960, pp. 69, 64.
32 Brinkmann 1960, p. 63.
33 Brinkmann 1960, p. 71.
34 E.g. Feulner 1999, p. 131; Geier 1982; Beck 2003, p. 283f., 346f.; Steinhoff, col. 417.
35 Geier 1982 identifies the principle of spells with Roman Jakobson's principle of equivalence, e.g. p. 377.
36 Geier 1982, pp. 381, 383 (highlighting ibid.); see also pp. 380–382.
37 Cf. Geier 1982, p. 384, following up Walter Benjamin.

mystification, are also regular components of 'magic language'.[38] Both features, unison and opacity, have in common that they draw the attention away from the words' semiotic side to their physical side of sound. Therefore, it seems to be the physicality of language that causes power, next to or even more than its abstract quality of significance. This may be the 'missing link' to Geier's explanation, because how else could spell language have determining effects on the material world, if this language itself does not become material-like? One might disagree with Geier's thesis that highly structured language has just a non-sensuous relation to the objects in the world. Even though Geier clearly emphasises a lyrical poem's 'materiality' (he uses quotation marks) which the principle of equivalence draws attention to,[39] he fails to make use of this thought in his work on incantations where he finds the same principle operating.

If unison and opacity can be seen as techniques of bringing the physical side of language to the fore, and if the physicality of words fits as the missing link in the reasoning why magic words cause an effect on the material world, that leads to a view of sound as material. This view can be fed back on historical notions. In the Middle Ages, sound was thought as something almost material: it is *materialior*, to speak with Robert Kilwardby (he uses the comparative to express that, in comparison with numbers, sound is 'more material/physical').[40] For sound is not abstract, but empirical, and – according to Bonifatius and Johannes de Muris – it moves in space like material.[41] That might have facilitated the notion that sound can have power in the material world. This consideration is supported by examples from customs – e. g. screams as non-semiotic sounds are believed to have the power to move the Moon, according to Hrabanus Maurus[42] – as well as from fictional texts, which show how causalities are understood beyond the limitations of empiricism: in the Middle High German romance *Iwein*, a strong knight is thrown to the ground by the mere sound of a thunder; in *Lanzelet*, the mortal danger in the 'crying swamp' is explicitly caused by its sound, independent of the heat.[43] If sound is seen as a moving, empirical reality, then it may also have power over things in space – a power which is concentrated in verbal phrases that foreground the physical sound side of words.

As indicated previously, *Sancte sator* does not only use rhymes; it carries all of the 'magic' features discussed here to the extreme. Turning to this extraordinary case, I will now outline how these characteristics effect a 'thingness' of the poem and how they strengthen the notion that it is a useful tool for material protection.

38 Cf. Brinkmann 1960, pp. 72, 75 (quotations); Schwab 1995, p. 264; Beck 2003, pp. 313, 347; Geier 1982, p. 376.

39 Geier 1979, e.g. p. 57.

40 Robert Kilwardby: *De ortu scientiarum* (Judy [ed.] 1976, p. 57, Nr. 143). – Just as impressions of visible material objects seen by the eye, sound, according to medieval theories, is finally perceived by the *sensus interior*, which produces a synesthetic image in the intellect's chambers of *imaginatio*, *phantasia* and *memoria*. This is why medieval texts can present perception of women's beauty through perceiving sound, as e.g. Schneider 2020, p. 165f., shows (with further research literature).

41 Cf. Bonifatius' Letter 115, MGH Epist.sel. 1; Johannes de Muris: *Notitia artis musicae* II, III, 2 (Michels [ed.] 1972, p. 71).

42 Hrabanus Maurus, *Homiliae de festis praecipuis*, PL 110 78f.

43 Hartmann von Aue: Iwein (Mertens/Haug [eds.] 2004), vv. 650–652; Ulrich von Zatzikhoven: *Lanzelet* (Kragl [ed.] 2009), vv. 7062–7065. – Cf. Marshall/Stellmann 2019.

The poem is cluttered with rhymes – between half-lines (100 %) and sometimes between the ends of lines (30 %)[44] – as well as with alliterations, and it has a pronounced rhythm:

Sancte sator suffragator
legum lator largus dator
iure polens es qui potens
nunc in ethra firma petra
a quo creta cuncta freta
[…]
(vv. 1–5)

This 'network of sound' gives the impression of a dense, impenetrable 'thing' because every syllable is 'bound' to the other syllables in a strict, firm and compelling way by having its obligatory place given by rhythm, rhyme and other sound structures. The half-lines as the smallest rhythmic entities are extremely short so that the individual links are the more fixed: without corroding it, it is not possible to penetrate or change this unity by additions or rearrangements of words. It is not necessary to regard this 'structure thing' as a material one, but clearly, it presents itself as a unitary object. According to Vollmann's system, this is perceived in the oral performance as 'media thingness'.[45]

Next to this high density of elements of unison, the poem also exhibits plenty of uncommon words, sometimes of Greek origin, which have caused great difficulties to medieval and modern translators.[46] The semantic meaning, altogether, is rather obscure, some phrases cannot be reasonably translated at all.[47]

Thus, both features of 'magic language' abound here,[48] distracting from the words' semiotic side (or even impeding it) and foregrounding the physical side of sound. The special sound of this poem has often been admired and described as conjuring or magical, e.g. by Müller: "Der Text stellt eine metrische Reihung ‚magischer' Wörter dar, wobei es weniger auf den Wortsinn ankommt, als auf Klang und Rhythmus"[49] ('The text is a metrical sequence of 'magical' words, stressing sound and rhythm instead of the literal sense') – Müller, as well as Haubrichs,[50] also joins 'magic' with the sound side of words.

The poem starts with an invocation of God and God's son, reminding the audience of his power as the creator, and then, from verse 10 on, it invokes his protection. This invocation is done via many notions of armour (e.g., *et piacla dira iacla / Trude tetra tua cetra*, v. 12f. 'and sins, cruel darts, / thrust

44 Cf. Schröbler 1957, p. 31.
45 See Vollmann 2020 (in this issue of MEMO).
46 See e.g. Schönbach 1898, pp. 113–119; Rädle 1978, col. 1176; Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 21; Müller 2007, p. 367; Hellgardt 2013, p. 69f.
47 E.g. v. 20f.: *uti costis / immo corde*; v. 29: *Sicque ab eo me ab eo*. Cf. Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 14: "All in all, considering the extremely difficult language of *Sancte sator*, it seems remarkable that it has not suffered more in the course of its transmission".
48 Cf. Brinkmann 1960, p. 72.
49 Müller 2007, p. 367.
50 Cf. Haubrichs 1995, p. 220: "[Das] 'Panzerlied' sollte – gleichsam wie eine aus magischen Worten geschmiedete Brünne – den Schutz des Beters gegen Angriffe des Bösen gewährleisten. Daher erklärt sich die eindringliche, in ihrem steten, fast monotonen Gleichlauf von Alliteration und Binnenreim gestützte litaneiartige Form" ('The 'armour poem' – like a shirt of mail, forged of magic words – should warrant the supplicant's protection against attacks by the evil. This explains its forceful form, which due to its monotony of alliterations and rhymes is litany-like'). Haubrichs and Müller do not clarify, however, why the protective function actually should explain this form.

the odious aside with your shield'; *Christi umbo meo lumbo / sit, ut atro cedat latro / mox sugmento fraudulento / pater parma procul arma / arce hostis*, vv. 16–20 'May Christ's shield be on my loins so that the robber with his dark *[51] may straightway yield; father, with the shield ward off the enemy's weapons far away'). In line with the definition presented above, the poem may be called a *lorica* beyond doubt.[52] It conjures protecting armour via the *lorica*-'metaphors' which target their material source domain, as shown in chapter 1. However, the special sound of *Sancte sator* contributes considerably to the material that is needed for the protection of the body in the material world. Its sound could be seen as (quoting Robert Kilwardby) *materialior* 'more material' compared to the sound of texts which focus on their semantic meaning in the first place. With 'media thingness' and magic sound structure which is assumed to be material-like (see above), the prayer offers the use of sound as a quasi-material weapon and protection against evil. Both the denotations of the words and the physical sound are supposed to have the effect of armour. To protect humans in the material world, language becomes close to material in two ways: by metaphors which anomalously target their material source domain and by words that intensely foreground their physical sound side.

3. Doubling the Weapon: the Poem and its Gloss

In Passau, at "some point after 846" A.D.,[53] a German scribe wrote the famous *Sancte sator* along with Old High German translations into the manuscript clm 19410 (Munich BSB), pp. 39–41. These German translations are reasonably called "gloss" in parts of research literature,[54] although their special shape, as will be shown below, gave also reason to doubt such a categorisation.[55] One may accept the term not only for pragmatic but also for two other reasons. The first is their formal appearance in the context of the manuscript, as Voetz stresses: "Die […] althochdeutschen Eintragungen zum 'Carmen ad deum' unterscheiden sich äußerlich demnach im Ganzen in keiner Weise von den von demselben Schreiber innerhalb der Handschrift vorgenommenen Glossierungen, wie sie sich unter anderem auch auf der dem 'Carmen ad deum' unmittelbar vorausgehenden Seite 38 zu verschiedenen alttestamentlichen Büchern finden lassen"[56] ('The Old High German entries with the *Carmen ad deum* do not differ in their appearance in any way from the glosses written by the same scribe in the very same manuscript, as those on books of the Old Testament on page 38 immediately preceding the *Carmen ad deum*') – these glosses have

51 I skip *sugmento* which is highly disputed; Lapidge 1996, p. 243, thinks of a misspelling of *augmento* and translates "with his black, deceptive growth" (p. 241); Schönbach 1898, p. 114f., takes it for *sagmentum* (the form *sugmentum* is documented by another gloss), stemming from the Greek word *σάγμα*, and translates "in seinem dunklen trügerischen kleide" ('in his dark deceitful vesture') (p. 114).

52 Cf. also Rädle 1978, col. 1176; Haubrichs 1995, p. 220.

53 Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 22. Cf. Hellgardt 2013 pp. 1249–1251 (Nr. 660).

54 E.g. Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 16, 18, 21 passim; Hellgardt 2008, p. 2 ("Glossierung"); see also below, note 64.

55 In the *BStK Datenbank der althochdeutschen und altsächsischen Glossenhandschriften*, the text is not listed: https://glossen.germ-ling.uni-bamberg.de/texts and https://glossen.germ-ling.uni-bamberg.de/glossed_contents/12812.

56 Voetz 2009, p. 893f.

always been categorised as 'contextual glosses',[57] and the scribe did not make a difference. Secondly, scholars agree that both text and translation are a copy of another, now lost manuscript where the translation, at least most likely, had been a regular interlinear gloss (see below). In this sense, being 'gloss-like' and probably a former interlinear gloss, the German translation can be called 'gloss' as Gretsch, Gneuss[58] and others do. As it is, clm 19410 contains the only glossed version of *Sancte sator* that survived.

The Old High German gloss translates every word of the Latin poem. So, at first sight, the gloss seems to strengthen the poem's semantic side. However, the gloss does not make the obscure phrases clearer (as do, for instance, the Old High German translations by Notker III of St Gallen which explain and interpret obscure images)[59]. It is rather a word-by-word annotation which does not lighten the dark phrases of the poem at all.[60] So the 'magic' mysteriousness of the poem is preserved. The glossator's errors even contribute to the opacity, e.g. *fana demo kamahhot sint alle uuagi* […] *de fana skeffe forrent plomun* (v. 5f.)[61] ('by Whom are created all waves which carry flowers from the ship') translate the Latin verses *A quo creta cuncta freta / quae aplaustra uerrunt flostra* ('by Whom all seas which ships pass through were created – the calm seas'). That both the original glossator and the scribe of Passau did not hesitate to hand down that translation as an appropriate one is not just a sign of helplessness or carelessness (as some researchers judge)[62] but demonstrates that they expected and counted on the opacity of the poem rather than on comprehensible semantics. To them, the poem was not supposed to make ordinary sense in detail. This contemporary reception strengthens the notion that opacity may have caused the special impact and popularity of this verbal object.

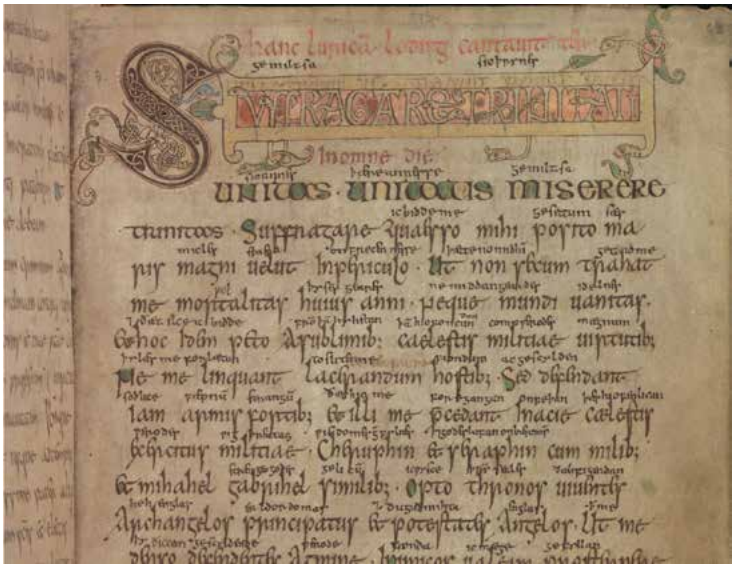

Fig. 1 Example of an interlinear gloss: *Lorica of Laidcenn* with Anglo-Saxon (Kentish) gloss of the 10th century, Cambridge, University Library, MS L 1.1.10, fol. 43. Online: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-LL-00001-00010/139, copyright University of Cambridge.

The scribe of Passau who copied the poem and the German gloss presumably made a significant change vis-à-vis the master copy. According to the majority of researchers,[63] it is most likely that the master copy presented an interlinear gloss, written between the lines of

57 Cf. BStK Online: https://glossen.germ-ling.uni-bamberg.de/glossed_contents/12812 with further research literature.

58 See Gretsch/Gneuss 2005.

59 See e.g. Hehle 2003, p. 187–190, 196–198, 202; Hehle 2002, pp. 116, 120–123, 125–127 and passim.

60 Cf. Rädle 1978, col. 1176; Schönbach 1898, p. 117.

61 Quotations (Latin text and OHG gloss) again from Hellgardt 2008, p. 10.

62 Even if scholars do not think as little of the glossator's skills as Baesecke, Koegel and others (for an overview see Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 21, Schönbach 1898, p. 113), they do not consider that the glossator understood exactly and in a deeper sense how the poem worked and very well perceived its opacity, which can be adapted in Old High German.

63 Only Voetz 2009, p. 894, is sceptical about any presumptions. Favourers of an original interlinear gloss are e.g. Hellgardt 2013, p. 67; Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 21 passim; Wisniewski 2003, p. 110; Henkel 1996, p. 70f.; Rädle 1978, col. 1176; Schönbach 1898, p. 117. To Gretsch and Gneuss, this first (lost) Old High German interlinear version is very likely grounded on Latin glosses because there are indications that sometimes "the glossator translated a Latin explanatory gloss to the lemma and not the lemma itself" (Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 22). Some of these errors could even be "possible evidence for lost Anglo-Saxon glosses and annotations" the German glossator had access to (Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 21).

the Latin poem. The scribe of Passau then transformed it into an '*intra*-linear gloss', alternating with the Latin phrases in the same line (see **fig. 2**); it attained the shape of a contextual gloss,[64] which is the form of gloss the scribe uses throughout the manuscript.[65]

This is a rare phenomenon. Usually, contextual glosses are found in glossaries and commentaries, not in literary works.[66] The reason is quite obvious: this form of gloss impedes the reading process, it disturbs the unity of the main text which, in case of an interlinear or a marginal gloss, is visually intact (as, e.g., above the glossed *Lorica of Laidcenn*)[67]. The scribe of Passau disrupts the poem verse by verse with the gloss. With regard to the quasi-magic quality and physicality of this special sound-object, this glossing is a remarkable interference in its integrity and impact. The scribe must have known that to other readers of the manuscript (apparently it was brought to Ilmina, Ilmmünster, in the same century)[68] the poem could be unknown; his contextual gloss would make it difficult to get access to the poem then. Moreover, the gloss presents itself in the fashion of a word-by-word-annotation, as is typical of interlinear glosses which were read in a vertical direction, each interpretament targeting the lexemes of the primary text.[69] Therefore, the scholars' thesis about the master copy of the gloss of Passau seems to be justi-

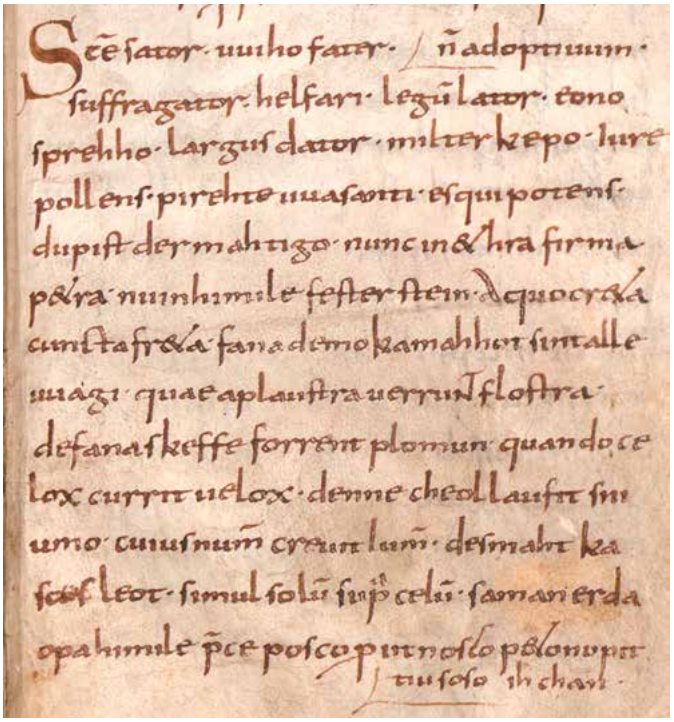

Fig. 2 Extract from *Sancte sator* with the gloss inserted into the lines (Latin and Old High German alternating within the line). Photo: BSB Clm 19410, p. 39. Online: https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/presentation/v2/bsb00061517/canvas/43/view.

64 Cf. Müller 2007, p. 368: "Beim Abschreiben wurde das Deutsche dann in Form einer Kontextglosse in den lat. Text integriert." Hellgardt 2008, p. 2 with note 6: "[E]s wechseln innerhalb der Zeile, also intralinear, lat. Text und ahd. Glossierung ab[.] [note 6:] Man spricht in solchen Fällen, die allerdings selten sind, auch mit einem wenig passenden Terminus von 'Kontextglossen'; in den Glossenteilen von E [manuscript of *Sancte sator*] begegnet diese Aufzeichnungsform noch mehrfach"; Henkel 1994, p. 70: "die deutsche Version ist in Art der Kontextglosse in die Zeilen eingefügt"; Haubrichs 1995, p. 220: "'Carmen ad deum', das Zeile um Zeile (in der Manier der Kontextglossen) das aus insularer Tradition sich herleitende [...] Schutzgebet [...] in die Volkssprache übertrug"; Müller 2003, p. 317: "wie eine Kontextglossierung". Some of the quotations show that the term 'contextual gloss' is met with some reserve in this case; for a general discussion of the term see Bergmann 2020, showing interesting cases, for instance the German vocabularies found within the lines of the Latin *Herzog Ernst C*: "Den Schreibern [...] ist der Status der deutschen Wörter als Erklärung der speziellen lateinischen Vokabeln bewusst gewesen, wie die durchgehende explizite Einbettung mit *.i.* 'das heißt' zeigt. Sie stehen zwar linear im Kontext, wurden aber offensichtlich nicht einfach als Textbestandteile angesehen" (p. 122). The term 'contextual gloss' is disputed, though (ibid.). Some call the Old High German *Sancte sator* material simply "gloss", e. g. Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 16, 18, 21 passim; because of its originating from an interlinear gloss, this is an adequate term. With regard to its special position within the lines I use the term (in line with the quotations above) 'contextual gloss' although this is not a standard instance because contextual glosses are mostly found in glossaries and commentaries (see below, note 66).

65 Cf. Voetz 2009, p. 893f. and BStK Online: https://glossen.germ-ling.uni-bamberg.de/glossed_contents/12812 with further research literature.

66 Cf. Bergmann 2020, p. 125f.; Stricker 2009a, p. 24f.; Hellgardt 2008, p. 2 note 6; https://glossen.germ-ling.uni-bamberg.de/abbreviations/310. The contextual glosses in *Herzog Ernst C* show that there are exceptions to this rule (cf. Bergmann 2020, p. 122).

67 As it is the case in the manuscript of Cambridge (see Fig. 1), other vernacular glosses also translate each word of the *Lorica of Laidcenn* above the lines in the manuscripts Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 P 16, pp. 241b–242b, and London, British Library, Harley MS 585, f. 152r–152v (Grattan/Singer (eds.) 1952, pp. 130–147).

68 Cf. Brunhölzl 2000, p. 32f.; Hellgardt 2008, p. 5; Bergmann/Stricker 2005, p. 1249; Bischoff 1971, p. 125f.

69 See the fundamental work by Henkel 1996 (about the *Carmen ad deum* pp. 65f., 70f.); Henkel 2009, p. 495 and passim.

fied. Often lacking a reasonable word order and syntax,[70] it is unlikely that this gloss was meant to be read as a syntagma on its own. Being integrated into the lines, the interpretaments' affiliation to a particular Latin lemma is nevertheless loosened; the German words are to be read sequentially as if they, too, were coherent verses, although frequently they have hardly any syntactical coherence.[71] This is the more noticeable in the main section of the poem (from verse 4 on) when the gloss alternates with the primary text every full verse. Being neither a syntagma, nor a single vocabulary, these glosses differ significantly from other contextual glosses, which refer to a single word (lemma)[72] or, occasionally, offer syntactically coherent translations.[73]

To the scribe of Passau, perhaps that very quality - the opacity of a sequence of somehow conjuring words - made the gloss so equal to the *lorica's* Latin verses that it could seem almost of equal value. Along the same lines, some modern scholars have perhaps overemphasised the rhythm and alliterations of this German 'text' in order to treat it as a poetic work as well.[74] Such views of vernacular glosses have been criticised, for glosses are supposed to require the quality of textuality only in affiliation with the primary text, not per se.[75] Especially in its shape of a contextual gloss, the work of Passau cannot be continuously read as a work of art because of its regular interruptions by the Latin phrases. In the following, the assumption that the gloss of *Sancte sator* was not meant to be a self-reliant text will be confirmed; it supplements and interacts with the poem. In this function, however, its own beauty of sound and opacity might have been seen as quite appropriate.

There is one difference between an interlinear and a contextual gloss which has not yet caught much attention in research. It is known that, in the early Middle Ages, reading was not a quiet doing; usually they read aloud or 'murmured'.[76] It can be assumed that an interlinear gloss, written in small letters (sometimes only carved without ink) above the text which is to be read, was only meant as a visual help and was not articulated. Entering the same line of the 'text proper' and getting equal size, the contextual gloss is included in the linear (sonorous) reading process.

With this in mind, the purpose of the manuscript is also of importance. Wisniewski thinks of a teacher reciting the Latin verses as well as the German words between them, to make his students understand;[77] this is one possible usage. The manuscript clm 19410 has been defined as an episcopal book for

70 E.g. v. 15: *in hoc sexu carnis nexu* ('in this sex in the flesh's bondage') · *in desemo heite fleisc kapunta* ('in this shape flesh [nominative!] bound'); v. 28: *dicam deo gratis geo* ('I may say I give/pour out thanks to God') · *ih quidu* · *cote dancha* · *toon* ('I say to God thanks to do' [infinitive! The first person is *tom*, see v. 14 and AhdGr, p. 310]). So just annotating lemma after lemma, the glossator sometimes chose the uninflected forms (nominative, infinitive) and strictly adhered to the poem's word order (see also v. 17!).

71 See above, note 60 and note 70.

72 Examples in the very same manuscript, pp. 58–60; see also the *Glosses of Kassel*, e.g. Schmid 2009, p. 1080, and the glosses in *Herzog Ernst C*, cf. Bergmann 2020, p. 122.

73 E.g. the *Glosses of Reichenau Rb*. For coherent syntagms in glosses see Schmid 2009, pp. 1079–1088; Bergmann 2009, p. 1090.

74 To Sonderegger 2003, p. 101, 108, 124–126, 154, the gloss is poetically designed (p. 108) and impressive by means of its rhythmic impetus (p. 124f.). Cf. also Haubrichs 1995, p. 220 ('contrafactum'). This view has been criticised by Henkel 1996, p. 70f., and Murdoch 2008, p. 10.

75 Cf. Henkel 1996, esp. p. 66–68, 70f.; Schiegg 2013, pp. 48, 65; Bergmann 2009, pp. 1090–1093; Murdoch 2008, p. 10.

76 Cf. Schiegg 2013, pp. 26, 143, 170; Green 1996, pp. 15–17, 31–35, 148 f.; Illich 1991, pp. 57–60; Schreiner 1997, pp. 2–6. This also applies to the writing process, see Green 1996, pp. 16, 148.

77 Cf. Wisniewski 2003, p. 110f.

studying.[78] It contains glossaries, for example, i.e. lists of Latin vocabularies with Old High German translations as contextual glosses (pp. 24, 32f., 36–38, and 58–60);[79] texts with stress marks for recitation (e.g. pp. 51–53);[80] and, directly following *Sancte sator*, basic knowledge about dactyl and trochee as well as Latin set phrases for letters (p. 41). Those were skills expected from priest examinees.[81] The gloss form used for glossaries (contextual gloss) connects the poem with its context in the manuscript. The manuscript's glossaries, e.g. about "parts of the body, ultimately from Isidore" and "utensils and implements in household and agriculture"[82] on the same page, are not visually distinguished from each other, they lack any headings and are not collated alphabetically as for example in the *Abrogans*. Therefore, these lists were rather unsuitable as a dictionary for consulting *ad hoc*; the monks must have used them for extending their vocabulary,[83] for learning by heart (a common way to study for exams and to prepare lessons).[84] Hellgardt and Rädle suppose that the Latin poem *Sancte sator* once was generated in school contexts for practising special and poetic vocabularies, e.g. words from the Vulgate and from Vergil's *Aeneis*, which are found in the poem.[85] Indeed, *Sancte sator* could have been seen as an excellent mnemonic instance. Here one could learn vocabulary in a rhymed and rhythmic order. The function of extending vocabulary is *a fortiori* the aim of the glossed version. It is likely that the German gloss was not a silent help (in contrast to an interlinear gloss which does not disrupt the reading process); its placing within the lines in the context of vocabulary lists suggest that, at least during the learning phase, the gloss was meant to be spoken or whispered aloud or 'heard by the inner ear', but not to be skipped in favour of the Latin verses. The purpose of advanced Latin learning does not mean that the content of the poem was neglected; on the contrary, the belief in its spiritual beneficing as well as its fame (it was part of the devotional book *Enchiridion* compiled by Alcuin)[86] made it worth learning. Studying and learning by heart was a crucial part of the spiritual life in monasteries.[87]

In this context, the scribe must have been aware that he determined how the learner and/or teacher preceded and what they, repeatedly, articulated. The following analysis substantiates this and, eventually, shows that the scribe prudently made use of special potentials given by the form of a contextual gloss: he makes it join the poem not only as a commentary but as an additional – and even active – tool supporting the poem's function in a way which an interlinear gloss would not have facilitated.

78 Cf. Hellgardt 2008, p. 7f. For the problematic terms 'classbook' and 'library book' see Schiegg 2013, pp. 125–178; Wich-Reif 2009, p. 661f. To Haubrichs 1995, p. 219f., the poem served metrical lessons and the collected texts of the manuscript were typical of school books; similarly Brunhölzl 2000, pp. 36, 47; Braun 2017, pp. 160–162, 262, 266; Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 34f., also guess that the former copies of *Sancte sator*, being glossed, were available in Theodore's and his students' (e.g. Aldhelm's) "classroom".

79 These glosses are edited by Frank 1984, pp. 129–136. For further studies see Bergmann/Stricker 2005, p. 1250f.

80 Cf. Hellgardt 2008, p. 7; Brunhölzl 2000, p. 36.

81 Cf. Schiegg 2013, p. 175.

82 Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 17; see the edition of these glosses by Frank 1984, p. 133f.

83 For the use of biblical and antique glossaries for advanced studying see Wich-Reif 2009, p. 662; also in cases of every day vocabulary, this is a common purpose of such glossaries, cf. Stricker 2009b, p. 598.

84 Cf. Schiegg 2013, pp. 134, 138, 175f.; Wich-Reif 2009, p. 662; Glauch 2003, p. 209.

85 Cf. Hellgardt 2013, p. 69; Rädle 1978, pp. 117–119; Schönbach 1898, p. 118f.

86 Cf. Hellgardt 2013, p. 67f.; Hellgardt 2008, p. 6f.; Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, pp. 14–16, 36.

87 Cf. Schiegg 2013, pp. 145, 169–178; Illich 1991, pp. 22, 55–65.

It is significant that the intervals of the glosses differ throughout the poem. At the beginning, there are short intervals: every half-line of the Latin poem is followed by the translation, separated by a small dot: *Sancte sator · uuiho fater · suffragator · helfari · / legum lator · eono sprehho · largus dator · milter kepo · / Iure pollens · pi rehte uuasanti · es qui potens ·* (vv. 1–3). The German phrases are interlocked with the poem in such a close-meshed way that the Latin rhymes embrace, and thus enclose, the German words as if they were part of the verses. The technique equals a close-meshed chain. However, the interruptions within the Latin verses would endanger the solid 'magic sound' of the poem if it were not for the particular four-time-rhyme (*-ator*) at the poem's beginning, generating an overall sound unity. Thus, the interpolated German words can become part of the armour poem the learning monk repeatedly articulates, which would not have been possible with an interlinear or a marginal gloss.

After the Latin four-time-rhyme, the gloss disrupts the 'magic sound' in a more precarious way (*Iure pollens · pi rehte uuasanti · es qui potens · du pist der mahtigo · / nunc in ethra* […], v. 3f.). To avoid (so it seems) these disturbances of the Latin rhymes, the glossing technique then changes. From verse 4 on, the intervals of the gloss are longer – the Latin rhyming couplets are left unseparated: *nunc in ethra firma petra · nu in himilie fester stein · / A quo creta cuncta freta · fana demo kamahhot sint alle uuagi · / quae aplaustra uerrunt flostra ·de fana skeffe forrent plomun* (vv. 4–6), and so on. The 'magic sound' of the Latin rhyming couplets is preserved now while the interlinkage of the German phrases with the poem is slightly looser but still evident.

That this structural change takes place in verse 4 (instead of verse 3) does not seem to be accidental; it coheres with the meaning of this verse. Whereas the beginning of the poem calls God a father and helper who is mighty, generous and just, verse 4 contains the first thing metaphor of the poem, and that is a metaphor which describes maximal material solidness and stability (a 'firm rock'): *nunc in ethra firma petra*. Like the firm object of the semantic side, the sound of the rhyming couplet is left intact as a firm integral unit. To be more precise: the verse starts with the spiritual world (*ethra* 'heaven') and connects it with the picture of most solid material. This is exactly the poem's point of transition between the human-like or abstract representations of the spiritual and the thing metaphors which dominate the text from now on and become essential for this *lorica* and its effect of protective ability (by 'magic' materialisation). This quasi-material ability is apparently linked to the sound effect of the rhyming couplets because these become undisturbed units of sound once the thing metaphors emerge. The material solidness of the content matches the solidness of the sound (which can be considered as material, see chapter 2).

The principle of alternating text and gloss every full line is then consistently carried through in the whole text. It is varied only one time, and that is a meaningful exception. In verse 23, the gloss suddenly interrupts the Latin verse in the cesura:

> *Tunc deinceps · denne frammort · Trux et anceps · / catapulta cedat multa · ungahiuri · enti zuifoli*[88] *· allaz sper*[89] *snidit*[90] *managiu ·* (v. 23f.).
>
> (Latin text: 'then thereon may the fierce and double-faced one / yield to many a missile, or: abandon the missile')[91]

Verse 23 describes the enemy of this imagined war, the Devil or evil, for the last time in the poem, at the very (desired) moment of his final defeat.[92] This very verse (*Tunc de-inceps Trux et anceps*) is an extraordinary piece of art with its interlocking rhymes, alliterations and sound correspondences (*Tunc–trux*; mirroring *de–et*; *inceps–anceps*). Just here, an interruption disturbs the sound-unity, which therefore does not have a chance to take effect. The gloss interferes and breaks the 'magic' powerful sound impact of this verse describing the evil. It seems as if the scribe did not want to grant the Devil such a powerful sound (and he makes sure that a teacher or 'murmuring' learner breaks the verse up halfway, just in case the sound had power). Thus, the gloss damages the powerful sound of the Devil's emergence just as the content of the next verse of the poem describes his defeat. The technique of glossing imitates exactly the semantic meaning of the gloss: *cedat* is translated with *snidit* ('cuts'), and this is what the gloss itself physically performs. On the level of the word-by-word-gloss there is hardly any semantic coherence (*ungahiuri enti zuifoli* are uninflected annotations, *managiu* just literally corresponds to *multa*), but on the level of the poem's sound, verse and gloss structure, it is clear: the enemy's power should be 'cut' by the 'spear' – (gloss:) *sper snidit* – just as his powerful sound, the physically sonorous verse, is 'cut' into two pieces (by the gloss) und thus 'disarmed'. In this way, the gloss itself becomes the 'cutting spear' on the level of the materiality of the text, a weapon just as the *lorica* itself was meant to be. Through the way in which gloss and poem interact, the armour built against evil becomes even more powerful.

4. Conclusion

Sancte sator achieves its apotropaic power through invoking the material side of its armour metaphors (neglecting their semiotic structure and figurative nature). It is meant as a *lorica*, a shield against evil, and intensely uses features

88 This translation is likely to have derived from a Latin *scholion* or gloss to *anceps* and not from the lemma *anceps* itself, see Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 23.

89 *sper* is the translation of *catapulta*, apparently misled by a Latin *scholion* on the Greek loanword *cata-pulta* that the glossator had access to, see Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 25.

90 The glossator apparently understood *cedat* as a form of *caedere*, see below note 91; an object is missing because all nouns in the gloss are nominatives.

91 Scholars' emendation of *cedat* (all manuscripts, except F: *cedit*) to *cadat* ('may collapse') (e. g. Gretsch/Gneuss 2005, p. 12f.) is not necessary; Müller's translation (Müller 2007, pp. 215, 369) – deriving *cedat* from *caedere* – with 'Möge der Grimmige und Trügerische durch viele Wurfgeschosse stürzen' ('May the fierce and deceitful one fall through many missiles') is not possible either, because *caedere* 'stürzen' is always a transitive verb ('jemanden stürzen' = 'to make somebody fall'). So I agree with Wipf 1992, p. 113, that *cedat* is a form of *cedere* 'yield'; however, as Müller, I do not take *catapulta* as nominative, but as ablative (either *ablativus instrumentalis* or dependent from *cedere* 'yield to', 'relinquish / abandon / give up [possession]', 'cease from', cf. NG, vol. 1, col. 817; Prinz et al. 1999, vol. 2, col. 424). *multa* can also be used adverbially (Lapidge 1996, p. 241, 243: 'straightway'). Or is it (cf. Wipf 1992, p. 113) *multa* f. 'penalty, penitence' ('may he relinquish the missile as a penalty / due to my penitence')?

92 Following, there are just prayers to (probably) Mary for blessings and a prospect of thanks to Christ.

(rhymes, alliterations, strict rhythm, uncommon words, obscure phrases) which stress the (in medieval view material-like) physical sound of language instead of the semiotics. In this way, on several levels, *Sancte sator* gains 'thingness' as a physical shield and weapon. The presumed lost Old High German interlinear gloss annotated the poem word by word, without enlightening the enigmatic opacity, and left it unchanged for the (sonorous) reading process as an intact object of sound. The scribe of clm 19410 (Munich BSB) found this gloss, lacking transparent coherence and meaning just as the Latin poem. He joined the two of them into the same lines, creating one verbal object for meditating and learning purposes. The close-meshed interlacing slightly disturbs the powerful sound. However, the intact sound-object (untouched rhyming couplets) unfolds just at the moment when the invisible (*ethra*) is connected with the first thing metaphor of the poem, whose source domain is not by chance firm and unbreakable material (*firma petra*). Thus, the material meaning of the words is linked to the special sound effect of the poem and its 'magic' ability to protect. When it comes to the final defeat of the enemy, 'his' rhyming couplet (his material sound-power) is 'cut up' by the prematurely intervening gloss which imitates its own content, a cutting weapon against evil (*sper snidit*). In its interaction with the *lorica*, the gloss becomes a *sper* at the critical moment of the imagined fight.

In conclusion, diverse dimensions of materiality are essential for the *Sancte sator* in the manuscript clm 19410: the basic physical side of language (sound), the physical meaning of the words (source domain of thing metaphors; the real presence of the signified in the signifier), and, on both levels, the physical interaction of gloss and poem (the sound-object is not left untouched, but carefully joined and even 'cut' by the spear-imitating gloss). This finally leads to the question as to what extent the visual materiality of the manuscript is determinant as well.

We might, therefore, take a broader perspective and ask whether and how medieval glossators treated the texts they commented on, and even the glosses, as material objects. Famous examples of *Glossae Ordinariae* (extensive marginal comments on and interlinear glosses between the lines of the main text) present aesthetic visual constructions; different colours and sizes of characters as well as elaborate decorations and frame features of the written emphasise the materiality and its value (a value which is also attributed to the glosses)[93]. Significantly, these examples are to be dated in later centuries when, according to Ivan Illich, a book page transformed from a 'score for murmurers' to a 'visual construct for thinkers'.[94] However, for the early Middle Ages the materiality of scriptural artefacts has often been stressed in other contexts as well, especially in the case of spells which were effective as characters,[95] e.g. as amulets, and also in the case of the *Lorica of Laidcenn* (see above, chapter 1). Hartung and others even guess that in the early Middle Ages, when only a few people could write and the alphabet was used especially for the tradition of sacred texts, the mere characters in their material presence were consid-

93 Cf. Schiegg 2013, pp. 162–164, 266–271. For examples of *Glossae Ordinariae* see e.g. Cologny, Fondation Martin Bodmer, Cod. Bodmer 31, f. 2ff.; Munich, BSB Clm 28163 (see e.g. fol. 124r).

94 Cf. Illich 1991, p. 8.

95 Cf. e.g. Haeseli 2011, pp. 49–59, 105f., 165–167, 187, 200–202; Hartung 1993, pp. 109, 113–120, 124f.

ered magic entities.[96] The gloss of Passau, visually unified with the *lorica* poem, might be seen as completing the 'magically' effective artefact of letters. However, the owners and users of this manuscript – advanced scholars and learners – seem to have had a different view of this codex. Features which bring the materiality of the written to the fore are rare in the whole part of the manuscript; it virtually lacks any differentiating marks, headings, character size distinctions, non-verbal signs or decoration. The gloss of *Sancte sator* contrasts the presumed former interlinear gloss of the master copy which left the 'text proper' visually intact and treated it as a two-dimensional 'artefact proper' or *textus* ('fabric, text') into which the gloss was woven as a visibly distinct, thinner 'thread'. In the case of the Passau version, given its purpose in the monastic school context (learning, murmuring, reciting, praying), one might ask if the construction of the text suggests neglect of the written in favour of other dimensions of materiality: the palpable sound and the shield meaning. So, in order to approach the relation of glosses and primary texts, I would hesitate to generalise a visual materiality focus of a 'manuscript culture' because that focus too easily distracts from other forms of the materiality of words in a culture which is, to a great extent also in monasteries, primarily 'vocal'.

96 Cf. Hartung 1993, pp. 113–120, 124f.; Schulz 2000, p. 186f.

5. Abbreviations

AhdGr: see 'Reference Works'.

DVjs: Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte. 1923 ff.

MGH: Monumenta Germaniae Historica. https://www.dmgh.de/

NG: see 'Reference Works.

PBB: Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur. 1874 ff.

PL: Patrologia Latina. Ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne. 161 vols. Paris 1857–1866.

VL: Verfasserlexikon. Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Ed. by Kurt Ruh, 14 vols. Berlin, 1977–2008.

ZfdA: Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur. 1841 ff.

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Performative Ding-Bedeutung: Der Stricker und sein metaphysisches Dinge-Verständnis in seiner Kleinepik

(*Von Edelsteinen*, *Der wunderbare Stein*, *Der Hahn und die Perle*)

Silvan Wagner

In seiner Kleinepik behandelt der Stricker die Macht von Preziosen in kritischer, dialektischer und unterhaltsamer Art und Weise. Bislang wurde in der Forschung dabei vor allem sein aufklärerischer, magiekritischer Impetus betont. Im hermeneutischen Vergleich seiner Kleinepik zeigt sich aber, dass der Stricker durchaus an einer magischen Dimension der Dinge festhält, die sich allerdings nur im Zusammenspiel der Physis der Dinge, der Erzählungen von ihren Mächten und der weisen Performanz mit ihnen entfaltet.

***

Within his short narratives, the Stricker tells about the power of precious things in a critical, dialectical, and – last but not least – entertaining manner. Research has hitherto emphasized his modern way of thinking whilst criticizing magical practices. But comparing his short narratives in a hermeneutical way, one can see that the Stricker indeed affirms the magical dimensions of things. However, this magic only develops when the physique of things, the stories about their powers and a wise performance with them come together.

memo

Empfohlene Zitierweise: Wagner, Silvan: Performative Ding-Bedeutung: Der Stricker und sein metaphysisches Dinge-Verständnis in seiner Kleinepik (‚Von Edelsteinen', ‚Der wunderbare Stein', ‚Der Hahn und die Perle'), in: MEMO 7 (2020): Textual Thingness / Textuelle Dinghaftigkeit, S. 68-80. Pdf-Format, doi: 10.25536/20200704.

Dinge sind im Mittelalter bekanntlich wesentlich mehr als Dinge. Dieser scheinparadoxe Satz operiert mit zwei Verständnissen von Dingen, einmal vor und einmal nach der cartesianischen Unterscheidung von *res cogitans* und *res extensa*, die geistesgeschichtlich eine Grenze zwischen vormodernem und neuzeitlichem Denken darstellt. Dinge sind im Mittelalter nicht als *res extensa* auf ihre physischen Dimensionen beschränkt, sondern sind immer auch (und an erster Stelle) Teil der Schöpfung Gottes – des Gottes, den Descartes in seiner folgenreichen Differenzierung ganz dem Bereich der *res cogitans* zuordnet. Die Realität eines Dinges vereint nach mittelalterlicher Vorstellung physische (Form) und metaphysische[1] (Bedeutung) Dimensionen. Sowohl Form als auch Bedeutung sind von Gott vorgegeben, und ist das Wissen über Formen und Bedeutungen vorhanden, kann der Mensch durch Formen und Bedeutungen hindurch seinen Weg zur Weisheit Gottes finden, die dieser in seinen beiden

1 Ich verwende den Begriff Metaphysik in seiner ursprünglichen Bedeutung, in der mit ihm die aristotelischen Schriften „hinter den Büchern über die Natur" bezeichnet wurden. Metaphysisch ist in diesem Sinne die Perspektive auf Entitäten, die nach ihrer Bedeutung, ihrem Sinn fragt und über ihre physische Dimension hinaus zielt.

Titelbild
Eigene Abbildung von Silvan Wagner.

Büchern, der Bibel und der Natur, geoffenbart hat.[2] Mehr noch: Wer fähig ist, die Materialität der Dinge gemäß ihrer Bedeutung zu benutzen, der kann teilhaben an der Schöpfungsmacht Gottes. Im rechten performativen Rahmen können Dinge Sündenvergebung erwirken (das Brot in der Eucharistie)[3], unedle Metalle zu Gold machen (der Stein der Weisen in der Alchemie)[4] oder das Wetter verändern (der Mörser im Wetterzauber)[5].

Die in diesem Beitrag behandelten Texte sind nun keine theologischen, alchemistischen oder magischen Traktate, sondern kleinepische Dichtungen. Und dennoch reflektieren sie die Macht, die im Zusammenspiel von Materialität und Bedeutung von Dingen steckt, in einer Art und Weise, die lehrhaft auf eine lebenspraktische Anwendung zielt. In der Lehrrede *Von Edelsteinen*, dem Märe *Der wunderbare Stein* und dem Bîspel *Der Hahn und die Perle* entwirft der Stricker (ein fränkischer Dichter, der etwa zwischen 1230 und 1250 im österreichischen Raum wirkte) eine kritische, innovative und nicht zuletzt unterhaltsame Sichtweise auf die Macht der Dinge. Er problematisiert darin ein allzu physisches Verständnis ihrer Macht (*Von Edelsteinen*), entwirft exemplarisch die Idee einer metaphysisch-performativen Macht der Dinge (*Der wunderbare Stein*) und plausibilisiert diese schließlich[6] in einem literarischen Meisterstück (*Der Hahn und die Perle*). Auf diese Weise beleuchtet der Stricker die magische Wirkmächtigkeit von Dingen – ihre Potenz, im performativen Einsatz durch einen kundigen Menschen die Wirklichkeit zu verändern[7] – auf eine sehr differenzierte Art und Weise.

1. *Von Edelsteinen:* Kritik bloßer physischer Macht

In seiner Lehrrede *Von Edelsteinen*[8] spricht der Stricker über deren angebliche Mächte und verfolgt dabei einen Skeptizismus, der auf gesundem Menschenverstand und experimenteller Überprüfung basiert. Der Stricker verhält sich damit zu einer magischen Tradition, die seinerzeit bereits seit über knapp zwei

2 Vgl. dazu grundsätzlich Ohly 1958/59, der auch das mittelalterliche Verständnis von Dingbedeutung in ihrer Spannung zwischen Physis und Metaphysis ausführt.

3 Wünsch 2006 betont zurecht, dass ein auf ‚Aberglauben' reduzierter Magiebegriff, der kirchliche Praktiken ausklammert, für das Mittelalter unzureichend ist.

4 Vgl. dazu im Überblick Birkhan 2010, S. 53-59.

5 Vgl. dazu Jakoby 2000, Sp. 1307-1310.

6 Dabei ist zu betonen, dass die hier systematisch erzeugte Reihenfolge keineswegs etwa auf eine historische Abfolge der einzelnen Dichtungen verweist. Das kleinepische Werk des Strickers ist kaum genauer historisierbar. Allerdings sind alle drei Texte in zwei Handschriften gemeinsam überliefert (Wien, ÖNB: Cod. 2705 und Heidelberg, UB: Cpg 341, die einzigen beiden Handschriften, die *Von Edelsteinen* überliefern; die beiden anderen Texte sind darüber hinaus noch in Genève-Cologny: Bib. Bod.: Cod. Bodm. 72 und Cod. Bodm. 155 gemeinsam überliefert). Einen systematischen Bezug zwischen Von Edelsteinen und *Der wunderbare Stein* sehen bereits Scholz 2007 und Witthöft 2004, S. 267-287.

7 Magie ist ein äußerst schillernder Begriff, der kaum definitorisch befriedigend erfasst werden kann (vgl. Bertholet 1986). Ich verwende den Magiebegriff hier heuristisch, um Formen objektiver Wirklichkeitsveränderung durch den performativen Einsatz von Dingen in mittelbarer Auswirkung auf ihre Umwelt zu bezeichnen. Die magische Kraft von Dingen übersteigt dabei ihr physisch erklärbares Potenzial ins Metaphysische (vgl. dazu Anm. 1). Ich halte dafür, dass die Frage, ob der Stricker an Magie glaubt, zu kurz greift, da er einerseits eine einfache dingmagische Vorstellung (Dinge wirken *per se* magisch) rigoros ablehnt, andererseits aber eine komplexe dingmagische Vorstellung (Dinge wirken in ihrem weisen Gebrauch magisch) geradezu propagiert. Einen Überblick über magische Praxen im Mittelalter bietet Birkhan 2010.

8 Ich zitiere nach Moelleken (Hg.) 1974-1978, Band 4, S. 206-214. Grundinformationen und eine aktualisierbare Bibliografie finden sich auf http://wiki.brevitas.org/Von_Edelsteinen_(Der_Stricker).

Jahrhunderten gepflegt wurde:[9] Das lateinische *Liber de gemmis* des Marbod von Rennes aus dem späten 11. Jahrhundert machte das griechische, arabische und indische Wissen um die magischen Kräfte der Edelsteine dem christlichen Abendland zugänglich; als „eines der bekanntesten Steinbücher [... tradierte es] vor allem abergläubische Ansichten in der Art der spätantiken Zauberliteratur“[10]. Seine Absicht, diese Tradition kritisch zu hinterfragen, legt der Stricker schon am Beginn seiner Rede offen und setzt dabei einen kaufmännischen Wert-Begriff an: Er sei in der Lage, den Wert von Edelsteinen einzuschätzen. Dafür solle man ihm die angeblichen Kräfte nennen, welche er überprüfen wolle – denn man sollte nichts Teures unbesehen kaufen (vgl. VV. 1-10). Schleif-, Mahl-, Mauer- und Wetzsteine seien tatsächlich wertvoll, doch bezüglich der Edelsteine – so führt der Stricker seine Kritik pauschal aus – seien wir belogen worden (vgl. VV. 11-23). Im Folgenden unterscheidet der Stricker zwischen den Geschichten („*diu maere*“, V. 24), die man sich von den Edelsteinen erzählt, und ihren tatsächlich experimentell überprüfbaren Kräften; und im Vergleich beider Seiten erwiesen sich die Geschichten schlicht als Lügen (vgl. V. 40). Im weiteren Verlauf des Textes bringt der Stricker zahlreiche Beispiele für die angebliche Kraft und tatsächliche Ohnmacht der Edelsteine:[11] Die Kaiser implementieren magische Edelsteine in ihre Kronen – doch Philipp wurde erschlagen und Otto fiel in Schande, trotz der Steine (vgl. VV. 77-89); Siegsteine sorgen angeblich dafür den Gegner zu überwinden – und trotzdem kämpfen Juden, Christen und Heiden immer noch um das Heilige Land, also dürfte kein Mensch einen funktionierenden Siegstein besitzen (vgl. VV. 129-156); der Saphir soll Hautblasen zum Aufplatzen bringen, was aber auch zwei Nadeln im Wert eines Eis an 500 Beulen bewirken können (vgl. VV. 177-190). Die Quintessenz dieses mit 220 Versen vergleichsweise umfangreichsten Textes ist simpel: Vielfältig exemplifiziert der Stricker, dass Edelsteine entweder keine oder doch nur äußerst geringe Kräfte zeitigen, und er wird nicht müde zu betonen, dass nur ein Narr viel Geld für sie ausgeben würde.

Diese Attitüde mutet aus der heutigen Perspektive gleichsam modern an: Der Stricker fokussiert sich gänzlich auf die physischen Dimensionen der Edelsteine – ihre Farbe, ihr Gewicht, ihre Konsistenz, ihren mechanischen Einsatz – und er scheint den gesamten Bereich metaphysischer Kräfte als eine einzige große Lüge zu bezeichnen. Entsprechend wurde die Lehrrede bislang von der Forschung auch gelesen: Sabine Böhm vergleicht die Vorgehensweise des Strickers mit dem modernen Empirismus der Wissenschaften[12], Ines Heiser bescheinigt ihm eine „[f]ast schon aufklärerische[] Attitüde“[13] und Manfred Günter Scholz feiert den Dichter unumwunden als Aufklärer: Dem Stricker ginge es „um den Kampf für den Ausgang des Menschen aus einer selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit [...], er steht für den Versuch, etwas Licht an die Orte zu tragen, wo das Mittelalter eben doch finster war.“[14] Doch diese Lesart wäre wohl doch ein modernes Missverständnis, wie der Blick auf die beiden anderen Texte des Strickers zeigen soll, in denen Preziosen jeweils enorme, die Wirklichkeit verändernde Kräfte eigen sein können – insofern ihre Eigenschaften und die

9 Ausführlich dazu vgl. Scholz 2007 und Heiser 2008.
10 Friess 1980, S. 17.
11 Ausführlich dazu vgl. Scholz 2007, S. 237-239; Böhm 1995, S. 87.
12 Vgl. Böhm 1995, S. 86.
13 Heiser 2008, S. 173.
14 Scholz 2007, S. 243.

unterschiedlichen Perspektiven auf sie geschickt eingesetzt werden. Vorerst jedoch wäre festzuhalten, dass der Stricker in dieser Lehrrede entweder die metaphysischen Kräfte der Edelsteine selbst leugnet oder sie im Vergleich zu Alternativen als nichtig erklärt. Bei letzterem wäre allerdings zu betonen, dass der Stricker durchaus nicht abstreitet, dass der Hahnenstein Durst vertreibt, der Topaz heißes Wasser abkühlt, der Saphir Blasen heilt und der Rubin nachts leuchtet; er führt nur ins Feld, dass ein Schluck Wein, eine Schüssel voll kaltes Wasser, zwei Nadeln oder ein Stück faules Holz dieselben Effekte zeitigen, bei ungleich geringerem Preis (vgl. VV. 157-198).

2. *Der wunderbare Stein*: Die Magie kluger Performanz

Das Märe *Der wunderbare Stein*[15] ist kürzer als die Lehrrede, doch diskutiert es dasselbe Thema – die Wirksamkeit von Edelsteinen – weitaus komplexer und dialektischer:[16] Ein alter, gerechter und beliebter König stirbt, und sein Sohn wird König. Dieser aber erweist sich als schlechter Herrscher, indem er niemanden durch seine Verbeugung ehrt[17] und zudem kein Recht spricht.[18] Entsprechend unterlassen auch bald alle Untertanen ihre Ehrbezeugungen ihm gegenüber. Nun fragt der junge König seinen weisen Ratgeber, warum die Menschen ihn hassen würden. Der Weise erzählt ihm eine Geschichte:

„iwer vater het einen edelen stein;	„Euer Vater besaß einen Edelstein.
swa den daz lieht anschein,	Wo auch immer sich das Licht so in ihm brach,
daz in die lute mohten sehen,	dass es die Menschen sehen konnten,
da must alez daz geschehen,	da lief es alles so,
daz iwrn vater erte.	dass es Eurem Vater Ehre einbrachte.
den furt er, swa er cherte;	Er trug den Edelstein, wo er auch immer hin ging:
der stunt uf sinem hu(o)te.	Er war Teil seiner Krone.
wær ez in iwerm mu(o)te,	Wenn Ihr es wünscht,
er solt uf iwerem hu(o)te sten;	dann soll er auch Eure Krone zieren.
so moht iu nimmer missegen.“	Damit kann es Euch nicht mehr schlechtgehen.“[19]
(VV. 41-50)	

Also lässt der junge König den Edelstein – den der Weise erst aufgrund seiner schönen Farbe aussucht – in seine Krone implementieren und beugt sein Haupt vor allen Untertanen, um seinen schönen Stein zu zeigen. Diese sind glücklich, da sie denken, dass Gott den Herrscher von seiner Arroganz geheilt habe, der ihnen nun die Ehre seines Grußes zukommen ließe. Der junge König wiederum ist über die fröhliche Gesinnung seiner Untertanen erfreut und fühlt sich von den Reaktionen seinerseits geehrt, so dass er sein Haupt umso häufiger beugt. An dieser Stelle schaltet sich wieder der Weise ein und erklärt, dass der Edelstein seine Kraft verlöre, wenn der König nicht gerecht richten würde.

15 Ich zitiere nach Moelleken (Hg.) 1974-1978, Band 3,2, S. 324-332. Grundinformationen und eine aktualisierbare Bibliografie finden sich auf http://wiki.brevitas.org/Der_wunderbare_Stein_(Der_Stricker).

16 Dieser direkte Zusammenhang von Kürze und Komplexität ist ein Grundzug der gesamten Kleinepik und lässt sich unter dem Begriff der Prägnanz fassen, vgl. Dimpel/Wagner (Hg.) 2019.

17 Zur rituellen Bedeutung des Herrschergrußes vgl. Witthöft 2004, S. 271f.

18 Vgl. VV. 19f. – vgl. Witthöft 2004, S. 271

19 Die Übersetzungen stammen hier und im Folgenden von mir.

Entsprechend erweist sich der junge König fortan als gerechter Richter bis zu seinem Tod.

Dieses Märe stellt nicht etwa das Gegenteil der Lehrrede *Von Edelsteinen* dar, sondern wirkt eher wie dessen dialektische Revision: Der Edelstein in der Herrscherkrone hat keinerlei übernatürliche Kraft an sich, und der Weise lügt schlicht, als er die Geschichte seiner Magie erzählt. Aber paradoxerweise erweist sich der Edelstein zugleich als extrem wirkmächtig, und der Weise hat – vom Ausgang der Geschichte her gelesen – völlig wahrheitsgemäß von seiner Magie erzählt.

Wie bereits in der Lehrrede referiert der Stricker dabei mit seinem diesmal zentral gestellten Requisit auf den „Waisen", den äußerst wertvollen und angeblich magischen Edelstein der Reichskrone.[20] Und auch die Geschichte um die Wirkung des Steines im Märe ist stark vom „Waisen" inspiriert: So führt etwa schon Walther von der Vogelweide im *Ersten Philippston* aus, dass den „Waisen" zu tragen bedeute der richtige Herrscher zu sein.[21] Ein magisches Wunder, das in der Physis des Edelsteins die Metaphysik seiner realitätsverändernden Wirksamkeit trägt – und der Stricker zeigt detailliert auf, wie dieses Wunder funktioniert:

Wie bereits bei der Lehrrede sind die Elemente des Geschehens auf der einen Seite ein kostbarer Edelstein und auf der anderen Seite die Erzählung seiner magischen Kraft. Und, ebenfalls wie dort, wissen wir, dass der Edelstein lediglich ein schön anzusehender, farbiger (vgl. V. 71) Stein ohne besondere Zusatzeigenschaften und die Geschichte eine Lüge ist. Entsprechend steht es nicht zu erwarten, dass der Edelstein als Summe seiner physischen Eigenschaften und seiner Geschichte irgendeine nennenswerte Kraft entfalten würde – und dennoch ist die Wirklichkeit im Ausgang des Märes nachhaltig verändert. Wie bereits Christiane Witthöft herausgearbeitet hat, ist die durch den weisen Ratgeber listig angeregte Performanz rund um den Edelstein von entscheidender Bedeutung[22], doch halte ich dafür – in Ergänzung zu Witthöfts ritualtheoretischer Interpretation –, dass nur alle drei Komponenten zusammen die Wirklichkeit auf gleichsam magische Weise verändern: Die Physis, die Geschichte und die Performanz des Edelsteins, wobei ich letzteres im Sinne einer eng mit dem Edelstein verbundenen Handlung verstehe.

Die Geschichte ist eine Lüge; aber der Herrscher glaubt an sie (wobei nicht nur das Wort seines Ratgebers, sondern die gesamte Lapidarientradition[23] ausschlaggebend ist) und lässt ihretwegen den Edelstein an seiner Krone befestigen. Entsprechend ist die Geschichte unabdingbar für die Wirkung des Steins. Die Eigenschaften des Edelsteins selbst sind auf seine Physis beschränkt, wie der Stricker deutlich macht: Seine Auswahl durch den Ratgeber erfolgt auf Basis seiner schönen Farbe. Und dennoch muss es offensichtlich ein Edelstein sein, der teuer ist und darüber hinaus äußerst kostbar in Gold gefasst wird, so „*daz er vil richlichen stu(o)nt, / so kuniges steine in golde tu(o)nt*" (VV. 77f., „dass er äußerst kostbar in Szene gesetzt wurde, wie es bei in Gold gefassten königlichen Edelsteinen üblich ist") – ansonsten könnte der Stein nicht Teil der Krone werden. Und ohne die Performanz des Beugens des Oberkörpers des

20 Vgl. Witthöft 2004, S. 275; ausführlich Margetts 2000, S. 227-231.
21 Vgl. Walther von der Vogelweide 18, 29-19, 4.
22 Vgl. Witthöft 2004, S. 267-287.
23 Zur Lapidarientradition als Hintergrund des Märes vgl. ausführlich Margetts 2000 und Scholz 2007.

Herrschers – dem von Seiten des Königs die Funktion eines Zeigens und von Seiten seiner Untertanen die Funktion eines Verbeugens zukommt – würde sich die gelogene Geschichte für den Herrscher nicht als Wahrheit erweisen, wodurch er selbst schlussendlich zu einem guten Herrscher nach dem Vorbild seines Vaters wird.

Der weise Ratgeber formt aus diesen Komponenten – Physis, Geschichte und Performanz – in seinem Ratschlag einen zweiteiligen Versuchsaufbau, der Physik und Metaphysik miteinander verschränkt, aber nichtsdestoweniger mit geradezu mechanischer Verlässlichkeit abläuft: Wegen der gelogenen Geschichte um die Kraft des Steines lässt ihn der Herrscher an seiner Krone befestigen, er beugt sich vor seinen Untertanen, um ihnen die Pracht zu zeigen – was diese als Hulderweis verstehen und ihrerseits den Herrscher ehren – was wiederum die Geschichte um die Kraft des Steines bewahrheitet und in einen Zirkel dauerhafter Wiederholung von (Ver)Beugung und Ehrerweisung führt (vgl. VV. 110-115). An dieser Stelle schaltet der Ratgeber eine zweite Geschichte in den Versuchsablauf ein, die wieder gelogen/ungelogen ist: Die Kraft des Steines würde vergehen, wenn ihm der Herrscher nicht „*sin reht*“ (V. 127) zukommen lassen würde und fortan Recht spräche (vgl. VV. 125-133). Entsprechend wird der König ein gerechter Herrscher bis zu seinem ehrenvollen Ende.[24] Das doppelgesichtige (Ver)Beugen fungiert in diesem komplexen Versuchsaufbau als Scharnierstelle zwischen physischer und metaphysischer Dimension: Aus Perspektive des Königs dient es dem Zeigen der physischen Pracht des Steines, aus Perspektive der Untertanen transportiert es die Huld des Herrschers und löst Ehrbezeugungen aus, die der Herrscher wiederum als (jetzt metaphysische) Wirkung des Steines wahrnimmt. Die physische Pracht des Edelsteines verursacht – gemeinsam mit der Geschichte des Steines – also tatsächlich das Existent-Werden der metaphysischen Kategorien Huld und Ehre, zu denen sich später noch Recht gesellt. Und diese für eine gute Herrschaft zentralen Kategorien existieren objektiv und *de facto*, unabhängig von Intention oder Einsicht des Herrschers oder seiner Untertanen.[25] Freilich verursacht die Aktualisierung von Huld, Ehre und Recht auf der anderen Seite auch erst die Macht des Steins: Mit dem geschlossenen Versuchsaufbau liegt eine Art Möbuisband vor, auf dem die Kraft des Steins einmal als Ursache und einmal als Wirkung erscheint. Das zentrale Ding dieses Märes ist zugleich das Wirkende als auch das Bewirkte, wie es idealtypisch in der Formulierung des Weisen angelegt ist, dem Edelstein „*sin reht*“ zukommen zu lassen und fortan ein gerechter Herrscher zu sein.[26] Das Perfide des Textes liegt darin, dass ihm eben nicht eindeutig ein aufklärerisch-entlarvender Impetus eigen ist, sondern dass er bestens mit dem magischen Denken des Mittelalters korreliert: Wie in der Lithotherapie gefordert, wird der Stein an das erkrankte Körperteil gebun-

24 Nina Nowakowski führt aus, dass das Märe damit einen rein formalistischen Rechtsbegriff unterstütze, da der Ratgeber nicht inhaltlich berate (vgl. Nowakowski 2018, S. 96). Der Text verneint eine inhaltliche Beratung des Weisen aber keineswegs und lässt sie sogar anklingen, vgl. VV. 141-146.

25 Vgl. Witthöft 2004, S. 227: „Die Absicht oder der freie Wille des Ausführenden scheinen keine Auswirkung auf die Wirksamkeit des Gezeigten zu haben“.

26 Analog dazu kommt es in der Ritualhandlung des Grußes (und – *mutatis mutandis* – auch des Rechtsprechens) zu einer Verschmelzung von Schein und Sein: „Der Ritualformalismus bedeutet, dass das Äußere für das Innere genommen wird, ungeachtet der wirklichen Intention einer Handlung. Im Ritual ist das Außen das Innen, das Bezeichnende das Bezeichnete, Inhalt und Form sind untrennbar miteinander verbunden.“ (Witthöft 2004, S. 278)

den (Haupt) und heilt es (bringt es dazu, sich zu neigen);[27] und gemäß der magischen Funktion von in Kronen applizierten Edelsteinen bringt der Stein bei seinem Träger christliche Herrschertugenden hervor (Huld, Recht).[28] Entsprechend hebt auch das Epimythion nicht etwa auf die Narrheit des Herrschers, die Lüge des Weisen oder die Machlosigkeit des Steines ab (wie *mutatis mutandis* in der Lehrrede),[29] sondern empfiehlt den Ratgebern heutiger Herren ein analoges Vorgehen und verspricht den gerecht richtenden Herrschern ein positives Schicksal im Jüngsten Gericht, wodurch „die vorgetäuschte Wunderwirksamkeit des Steins durch die Heilswirksamkeit des Rechtsprechenden in gewisser Weise legitimiert"[30] wird. Die Handschriften H, K, d und N machen diesen impliziten Zusammenhang zwischen Epimythion und Narratio explizit, indem sie innerhalb des Epimythions (!) die zweite Geschichte des Weisen fast wörtlich aufgreifen und so *ex posteo* als Wahrheit legitimieren:

Swen si gerichtes gern	Wenn sie (die Bedürftigen) eine Verhandlung wollen,
Des sol er si dvrch got gewern	so soll er (der Herrscher) sie ihnen um Gottes Willen gewähren.
Ist er dar an ernsthaft	Wenn er mit Fleiß dabei ist,
So beheltet der stein sine chraft	dann behält der Stein seine Macht.
(Mehrverse nach V. 162)[31]	

In Summe seiner Physis, seiner Geschichte und seiner Performanz erweist sich der Edelstein im Märe damit als äußerst wirkmächtig, indem er nachhaltig die metaphysische Wirklichkeit (im Sinne der Herrschaftslegitimität des Herrschers) verändert. Unabdingbar für diese Summenbildung ist freilich die Klugheit des Ratgebers, die das Pendant zur Dummheit derjenigen darstellt, die in der Lehrrede als Blindgläubige der Steinkräfte vorgeführt wurden. Der Stricker setzt in gewisser Weise der dummen, monokausalen Magie der Lehrrede eine kluge dialektische Magie im Märe entgegen, die alle Erwartungen an die magische Wirksamkeit eines Gegenstandes tatsächlich erfüllt. Und er nutzt dazu Elemente der Lithotherapie und der Lapidarienkunde, um einerseits eine monokausale Magie als nichtig zu entlarven, andererseits aber eine komplexe Magie im Zusammenspiel von Physis, Metaphysis und Performanz zu plausibilisieren.[32]

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27 Vgl. Friess 1980, S. 29f.

28 Vgl. Friess 1980, S. 44.

29 An der Einordnung des Herrschers und seiner Beziehung zum Weisen scheiden sich (nicht zuletzt vor dem Hintergrund der Lehrrede) die Geister: Hedda Ragotzky sieht einen Erkenntniszuwachs beim Herrscher, der vom Weisen lerne (vgl. Ragotzky 1981, S. 120), was Christiane Witthöft und Nina Nowakowski kritisieren (vgl. Witthöft 2004, S. 274; Nowakowski 2018, S. 94) und Sabine Böhm konterkariert, indem sie den Herrscher – vor dem Hintergrund der Lehrrede – als „*tump*" bezeichnet (vgl. Böhm 1995, S. 88, die in einer Fußnote allerdings anmerkt, dass der Begriff der *tumpheit* im Text nirgends fällt). Der Kernpunkt dieser Frage nach der Einordnung des Herrschers ist das Verständnis der Manipulation, der er durch den Weisen ausgesetzt ist (vgl. ausführlich Nowakowski 2018, S. 90-97, v.a. S. 97). Anstatt einer Einschätzung des Geisteszustandes des Herrschers zu treffen (über den sich der Text ausschweigt), möchte ich darauf hinweisen, dass der König objektiv ein guter König nach Vorbild seines Vaters wird, was das Märe im Epimythion mit aller religiöser Vehemenz bestätigt; zudem legt der Weise die Abhängigkeit der Kraft des Steins von der Performanz des Königs durchaus offen (vgl. VV. 90-95; 125-140), und der König wird keineswegs als Blindgläubiger inszeniert, sondern überprüft die Kraft des Steins empirisch (vgl. VV. 65-70; 85; 88f.) – ganz im positiven Sinne der Lehrrede.

30 Nowakowski 2018, S. 95.

31 Vgl. Moelleken (Hg.) 1974-1978, Band 3,2, S. 331. d und N überliefern dabei nur die – allerdings entscheidenden – letzten beiden Verse.

32 Auch Christiane Witthöft erkennt im Märe tatsächlich magische Elemente: „Die List in dem Märe ‚Der wunderbare Stein' liegt letztlich darin, mit der völligen Destruierung der Wirkung des Edelsteins zu zeigen, dass die vermeintlich magische Kraft des Steins eigentlich die ma-

3. *Der Hahn und die Perle*: Ein versäumter Fall magischer Macht

Die an der Lehrrede und am Märe herausgearbeiteten Verständnisweisen von Macht und Ohnmacht einer Preziose sollen nun den Hintergrund bilden für die abschließende Interpretation des kürzesten und zugleich komplexesten Textes dieser Untersuchung: das Bîspel *Der Hahn und die Perle*.[33] Die Narratio für sein Bîspel adaptiert der Stricker von einem alten Fabelstoff:[34] Vor einem Stadel, wo man Korn gedroschen hat, sucht ein Hahn nach Nahrung. Er findet eine Perle und überlegt, dass er über den Fund froh wäre, wenn er einen Nutzen aus der Perle ziehen könnte; da dies aber nicht der Fall ist, würde er ein Getreidekorn der Perle vorziehen. Im umfangreichen Epimythion vergleicht der Erzähler den Hahn mit einem Menschen, der närrisch handelt und keinerlei negative Konsequenzen befürchtet. Wenn eine solche Person eine Perle fände, würde sie sie wie der Hahn liegen lassen. Offensichtlich ist die kleine Störung, dass mit der Perle ein Bild der Narratio im Epimythion nicht in übertragener Bedeutung genannt wird, absichtlich gesetzt, denn der Erzähler beeilt sich aufzuklären, was genau mit der Perle gemeint sei:

was sint die mergriezzen?	Was bedeuten die Perlen?
diu wort, der wir niezzen	Es sind die Worte, die wir an Gott richten
gegen got und nach den eren.	und mit denen wir Ehre gewinnen wollen.
(VV. 25-27)	

Diese mit dem retardierenden Moment und der wörtlichen Frage doppelt markierte Aufklärung wirft jedoch mehr Fragen auf als sie beantwortet, und diese beginnen beim bloßen Textverständnis: Das Verb „*niezen*“ kann aktivisch „benutzen“, passivisch aber „genießen“ bedeuten. Letzteres fügt sich assoziativ zur Perle, die auch hier (wie schon in biblischer Tradition) Worte bezeichnet, die mit Gott in Verbindung stehen und mitunter gegessen, verinnerlicht werden. Dieses assoziative Konglomerat aus dem Jesuswort „Perlen vor die Säue werfen“, dem Gleichnis vom Sämann und dem Verspeisen der Schriftrolle in der Johannesapokalypse[35] mag Pate gestanden haben bei der Paraphrasierung der Lehre des Bîspel durch Franz-Joseph Holznagel: „Der Hahn sei einem Menschen vergleichbar, der glaube, sein Leben ohne geistliche und weltliche Unterweisung gestalten zu können“.[36] Die Phrase „*gegen got*“ allerdings widerspricht dieser Lesart, dass die Perlen/Worte passivisch aufgenommen werden sollen: „*Gegen*“ bedeutet zunächst räumlich „hin zu“, womit die Worte aktivisch an Gott gerichtet würden; und auch die Phrase „*nach den eren*“ spricht für dieses Verständnis, da „*nach*“ als Präposition mit Dativ ebenfalls die Richtung einer Aktion bezeichnet. Entsprechend übersetzt Otfried Ehrismann korrekt:

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gische Kraft des vollzogenen Grußrituals ist.“ (Witthöft 2004, S. 282). Ich denke, dass diese Konzentration auf das Ritual (in diesem Aufsatz etwas breiter als Performanz gefasst) zu einseitig ist: Erst im Zusammenspiel von Physis, Geschichte und Performanz des Steines entfaltet er magiegleiche Wirksamkeit.

33 Ich zitiere nach Moelleken (Hg.) 1974-1978, Band 3,1, S. 177-179. Grundinformationen und eine aktualisierbare Bibliografie finden sich auf http://wiki.brevitas.org/Der_Hahn_und_die_Perle_(Der_Stricker).

34 Zur Stoffgeschichte der Fabel vgl. ausführlich Speckenbach 1978.

35 Vgl. Math 7,6; Math 13,1-8; Off 10,10. Auch der mittelhochdeutsche Begriff „*mergriezen*“, der wörtlich „Korn des Meersandes“ bedeutet, leistet dieser Assoziationskette Vorschub.

36 Holznagel 2003, S. 300.

„Es sind die Worte, die wir an Gott richten und mit denen wir nach Ehre streben".[37] Die Perle steht also nicht für Worte, die der Mensch empfängt, sondern für die Worte, die er zu Gott spricht (im Gebet, in der Lobpreisung etc.) um Ehre zu bekommen.

Irritierend ist diese Lesart, weil sie scheinbar nicht zur Narratio passt: Dort nimmt der Hahn die Perle ja beinahe auf, lässt sie dann aber – ungegessen – liegen, um nach Körnern zu suchen. Zudem stellt sich spätestens jetzt dringlich die Frage, was der Hahn mit der Perle denn hätte anfangen sollen? Das Epimythion perspektiviert die Perle als Worte, die an Gott gerichtet werden, doch der Hahn in der Narratio scheint niemanden zu haben, dem er die Perle geben könnte. Er handelt zunächst seiner Natur gemäß[38], hat aus seiner Perspektive Recht und scheint keinen Kommunikationspartner zu haben – eine denkbar schlechte Narratio zur Bebilderung des Epimythions, wie es scheint.

Bei genauerem Besehen freilich versteckt der Stricker einen möglichen Empfänger der Perle in der Narratio: den Bauern, der vor der Scheune das Korn gedroschen hat. Die bäuerliche Szene zu Beginn geht in der Tat auf den Stricker selbst zurück, der sie nicht aus der Tradition übernehmen kann.[39] Und der Bauer (der im Text nur passivisch und erschließbar in der Formulierung „*da man drasch*" (V. 1) vorkommt) fungiert tatsächlich bestens als Pendant zu Gott: Er ist der Herr des Hahnes, welcher sich – wie die Hunde von den herabfallenden Brosamen am Tisch des Herrn[40] – von dessen übriggebliebenen Körnern ernährt. Für den Bauern würde die Perle einen immensen Reichtum darstellen, für dessen Gabe er den Hahn sicherlich ehren würde. Und genau diese Logik – etwas Wertvolleres zu bekommen für die Gabe von etwas Wertvollem – bestimmt auch die Dingbedeutung der Perle nach dem *Physiologus* (wenngleich mit vertauschten Rollen):

> „[D]ie Perle deutet auf unseren Erlöser Jesus Christus; er nämlich ist die kostbare Perle, die der Mensch gewinnen soll, indem er all das Seine verkauft und den Armen gibt und so die kostbare Perle erwirbt."[41]

Mit dieser Perspektivierung werden die drei behandelten Texte kohärent: Wie in der Lehrrede *Von Edelsteinen* besitzt die Perle keine magischen Kräfte an sich, und der Hahn hat recht, wenn er meint, dass ihm ein Getreidekorn mehr nützen würde. Allerdings bedenkt er nicht die performative Kraft von Preziosen, wie sie im Märe *Der wunderbare Stein* ausgeführt ist: Das weise Handeln mit wertvollen Dingen verleiht ihnen Kraft, die großen Nutzen verspricht.

Folgt man dieser Lesart, dann wird auch das Epimythion des Bîspels selbst kohärenter, denn nur scheinbar setzt der Stricker nach der komplexen Aufklärung um die Bedeutung der Perle ein zweites Thema:

37 Ehrismann (Hg.) 1992, S. 33.
38 Vgl. Ragotzky 1981, S. 169. Ich halte jedoch dafür, dass diese *ordo*-orientierte Lesart letztendlich doch am Bîspel – konkret an dessen zweitem Teil – vorbeigeht, s.u.
39 Vgl. Speckenbach 1978, S. 194.
40 Vgl. Math 15,27.
41 Schönberger (Hg.) 2001, S. 87 (Übersetzung durch Schönberger). Beim Stricker wird aus dem Dualismus weltlich-geistlich freilich ein dialektisches Sowohl-Als auch.

beginnet man in leren,	Wenn man einen belehrt,
wie er werben solde,	wie er handeln sollte,
ob er sich liebe wolde	wenn er sich bei Gott
beidiu got und den luten,	und den Menschen beliebt machen will,
so mag man imz diuten,	dann muss man es ihm erst auslegen,
ê er sich daran iht chere.	bevor er sein Handeln danach richtet.
des æffet er sich sere,	Der macht sich zum Narren,
der den wisheit leret,	der demjenigen Weisheit lehrt,
der sich an die rede niht cheret.	der sich um die Geschichte nicht kümmert.
swer nicht wisheit wil pflegen,	Wer Weisheit nicht gebraucht,
funde er si ligen an den wegen,	wenn er sie am Weg liegen findet,
er moht ir niht mer geniezzen	der kann nicht mehr Nutzen aus ihr ziehen
denne ouch der han der mergriezzen.	als der Hahn aus der Perle.
(VV. 28-40)	

Plötzlich geht es nicht mehr um den unklug handelnden Menschen, sondern um denjenigen, der ihn in seinem Handeln[42] belehrt (V. 28, 35) und ihm die Geschichte (V. 36) auslegt (V. 32). Ich denke, dass der Stricker hier tatsächlich in einer autopoietischen Pointe den Interpretationsakt der (überkommenen und als Fabel gänzlich traditionellen) Geschichte inszeniert. Er stellt diesen Interpretationsakt als eine Gemeinschaftsarbeit von Erzähler (Vermittler von Weisheit) und Publikum (im Idealfall Anwender von Weisheit) dar; um es von hinten aufzurollen: Nutzen aus der Perle ziehen heißt, die Weisheit, die man am Wege findet,[43] anzuwenden, in Handlung umzusetzen; dies gelingt aber nur, wenn man dazu bereit ist, sich mittels Geschichten weise belehren zu lassen[44] – wer das freilich mit einem daran uninteressierten Publikum versucht, der macht sich zum Narren. Und vor dem weisen Handeln muss die Lehre durch Auslegung erfolgen – genau wie bei der eben erzählten Geschichte: Erst mit der Perspektivierung durch den Erzähler im Epimythion wird das Publikum auf die Möglichkeit gestoßen, wie der Hahn mit der Perle hätte *weise* handeln können[45] – für eine *dumme* Handlung (die Perle liegen lassen) bedarf es keiner Lehre.

Die Entdeckung, dass der Hahn tatsächlich etwas Sinnvolles, Weises mit der Perle hätte anfangen können, bietet ein Aha-Erlebnis, das die intensive Auseinandersetzung mit einem äußerst prägnanten[46] Bîspel als überraschend

42 Hier verwendet der Text mit „*werben*" dasselbe Verb wie bei der Einführung des Hahnes und unterstreicht damit den Perspektivenwechsel.

43 Sehr reizvoll irritiert der Stricker hier scheinbar seine eigene parabolische Auslegung von der Perle als Worte, die an Gott gerichtet und um der Ehre willen gesprochen werden, wobei er auch hier einer vulgärmagischen Interpretation zu wehren scheint: Es geht nicht im eigentlichen um die Worte (als gleichsam magisch wirkende Sprüche etwa), sondern um ihren weisen Einsatz. In diesem performativen Verständnis ist es kein Widerspruch, dass die Perle Bild sowohl für die Worte als auch für die Weisheit ist.

44 Vgl. Dworschak 2003, S. 97: „Der Nutzen der Lehre hängt also davon ab, ob sie richtig vermittelt wird, was offenbar die Bearbeitung des Willens des Zuhörers mit einschliesst: andernfalls wäre es wie Perlen vor die Säue geworfen."

45 Ich lese das Bîspel entsprechend nicht als Plädoyer für *ordo*-Treue, wie dies Hedda Ragotzky nahelegt: „Während das *werben* des Hahns *art*-gemäß und in diesem Sinne richtig ist, verfehlt der *tumpliche werbende* Mann gerade seine Ordo-Bestimmung und wird so zur exemplarisch negativen Figur" (Ragotzky 1981, S. 170f.). Der Stricker kehrt in seinem Epimythion immer wieder zum Bildteil des Bîspels zurück und legt damit eine grundsätzliche Parallelität des Hahns mit seinem Publikum nahe: Sowohl im Bild- als auch im Sachteil des Bîspels gibt es je zwei mögliche Umgangsweisen mit der „Perle".

46 Zur Prägnanz als entscheidende Kategorie der Kleinepik vgl. Dimpel/Wagner 2019.

lohnenswert erscheinen lässt – und dies nicht zuletzt für den Stricker selbst, der seine Perlen der Weisheit nicht für sich behält, sondern in Form großartig konstruierter Geschichten einem Publikum weitergibt, das ihm dafür im Idealfall den topischen *lôn* gewährt. Insofern sind die vier Abschlussverse wieder schillernd sowohl auf das Publikum als auch auf den Erzähler der Geschichte zu beziehen: Wer Weisheit nicht gebraucht (ein Publikum, das sich der Interpretation versperrt, ein Spielmann, der seine Geschichten nicht weitergibt), der hat ebenso viel davon wie der Hahn in der Geschichte von der Perle. Die Perle (in der schillernden Bedeutung von hilfreichen Worten, weiser Auslegung, der klugen Geschichte selbst und schließlich ihrer Anwendung im Alltag) erweist sich als in der Tat magischer Gegenstand, der seine Magie aber nur in seinem weisen Einsatz entfaltet.

4. Zusammenfassung

Der Stricker setzt sich in seiner Lehrrede *Von Edelsteinen*, seinem Märe *Der wunderbare Stein* und seinem Bîspel *Der Hahn und die Perle* sehr unterschiedlich und doch kohärent mit der Kraft wertvoller Dinge auseinander. In der Lehrrede weist er eine den Dingen innewohnende Kraft zurück, die auf ihrer Physis und ihrer Narratio aufbaut: Die physische Kraft von Edelsteinen ist nichtig, und die Erzählungen davon erweisen sich als Lüge. Dies bedeutet jedoch nicht, dass Dinge überhaupt keine Kraft zeitigen würden: Im Märe übt ein Edelstein auf Basis seiner Physis, seiner Narratio und seiner weisen Performanz eine immense Kraft aus. Mit dem weisen Einsatz entfaltet der Edelstein große Macht, für die auch seine Physis und seine (dann wahre) Narratio unabdingbar sind. Und das Bîspel schließlich funktioniert wie eine Verbindung zwischen Lehrrede und Märe: Bisweilen erhält man ein Ding, das aus der eigenen Perspektive völlig wertlos ist und dem keine Kraft innewohnt; doch wenn man es jemandem gibt, der es gebrauchen kann, dann kann es sich als äußerst machtvoll erweisen. Entscheidend dabei ist – und dies ist die eigentliche Pointe des Bîspels – sich der komplexen Interpretation seiner Narratio nicht zu versperren. Im Erzählen seiner Kleinepik verbindet der Stricker die physische Dimension von Dingen mit ihrer metaphysischen, und er nutzt ihre weise Performanz auf Basis der rechten Interpretation ihrer Geschichte als Leim für beide Dimensionen.

In diesem Sinne ist der Stricker in der Tat ein mittelalterlicher Aufklärer – nicht aber in einem ahistorischen, säkularisierten, modernen Sinne: Er klärt darüber auf, wie wahre Magie funktioniert – mit dem erklärten Ziel, ihre tatsächliche, reale Kraft auch zu nutzen.

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Text as thing. The dog lead in Albrecht's *Jüngerer Titurel*

Tamara Elsner

This paper focuses on the dog lead (*Brackenseil*) in Albrecht's *Jüngerer Titurel* and explores the relationship between its specific material qualities and the characters' actions. The *Brackenseil's* features result in different levels of thingness that are related to the course of the story: firstly, as a dog lead, the *Brackenseil* is an everyday object that prevents a dog from running away. It is something restrictive that leads movements and is therefore an instrument to exert power. This action directing feature is clearly visible in the character's pursuit of the thing. Secondly, due to the gemstones and the luxurious design, this specific dog lead is extremely valuable and not made for everyday use, but represents wealth and status, which has also an impact on its significance as a gift. Thirdly, because of the text written on it, the *Brackenseil* becomes an object of communication. As a medium, it possesses a specific mediality that impacts the message. For the characters as well as for possible recipients of the *Jüngerer Titurel*, the thing alters the significance of the text as much the text alters the significance of the thing. Thus, by drawing on theories of gifts and media and exploring the inherent features of the thing I aim to show that the *Brackenseil* as a thing is not only important for the story and character motivation but has poetologic qualities, too.

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Dieser Artikel beschäftigt sich mit der Hundeleine (*Brackenseil*) in Albrechts *Jüngerem Titurel* und untersucht die Beziehung zwischen ihren spezifischen materiellen Eigenschaften und den Figurenhandlungen. Die Eigenschaften des *Brackenseils* führen zu verschiedenen Ebenen von Dinglichkeit (*thingness*), die mit dem Verlauf der Handlung zusammenhängen: Erstens ist das *Brackenseil* als Hundeleine ein Alltagsgegenstand, der einen Hund am Weglaufen hindert. Es ist etwas Einschränkendes, das Bewegungen führt und daher ein Instrument zur Machtausübung ist. Diese handlungsleitende Eigenschaft ist im Streben der Figuren nach dem Besitz des Dinges sichtbar. Zweitens ist diese spezifische Hundeleine aufgrund der Edelsteine und der luxuriösen Machart äußerst wertvoll und nicht für den alltäglichen Gebrauch gedacht, sondern sie repräsentiert Reichtum und Status, was sich auch auf ihre Bedeutung als Geschenk auswirkt. Drittens wird das *Brackenseil* durch den auf es geschriebenen Text zu einem Kommunikationsobjekt. Als Medium besitzt es eine spezifische Medialität, die sich auf die Botschaft auswirkt. Sowohl für die Figuren als auch für mögliche Rezipienten des *Jüngeren Titurel* verändert das Ding die Bedeutung des Textes ebenso wie der Text die

memo

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Featured Image
Sigune, Tschinotulander and the *Brackenseil*. Detail from BSB Cgm 8470, 157r. Accessible online via BSB digital collections http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00035326/image_319.

Bedeutung des Dings. Unter Einbezug von Gaben- und Medientheorie und mit Blick auf die dem Ding inhärenten Eigenschaften soll gezeigt werden, dass das Brackenseil als Ding nicht nur für die Geschichte und die Figurenmotivation bedeutsam ist, sondern auch poetologische Qualitäten hat.

Literary studies have shown an increasing interest in things, objects and material culture over the last years.[1] In sum, it became clear that the status of things in literature cannot be reduced to being pieces of equipment or having symbolic meanings. Rather, the investigation and analysis of things in literature have led to new insights in stories' dynamics, structure, and interpretation.[2] It became clear that due to their *Eigen-Sinn* ('self-will', 'waywardness') or agency,[3] things are often powerful and influential for the course of a story.

One material object in medieval literature that has already drawn attention in research is the so-called *Brackenseil*, a dog lead with a text on it. This dog lead plays a central role in one of the largest Middle High German texts, Albrechts *Jüngerer Titurel* (JT).[4] Drawing on Wolframs *Parzival* and including Wolframs *Titurel*,[5] the *Jüngerer Titurel* recounts the lineage of the Grail's dynasty and how Titurel received the Holy Grail; after that, it focuses on the lives of Sigune and Tschinotulander and their love for each other. Apart from that, the *Jüngerer Titurel* tells of Tschinotulander's orient campaigns, the kidnapping of 300 women by Klingschor, the test of Arthur's *milte* ('generosity', 'benevolence') by Melianz, Tschinotulander's death in combat, and the story of Parzival. After more than 6,000 stanzas, the text ends with the Holy Grail's movement to India.

The *Brackenseil* episode, which had already been partly told by Wolfram in his *Titurel* fragments, is central for the relationship between Sigune and Tschinotulander: while the couple is camping in the forest, Tschinotulander catches a dog running past with an extraordinary lead bearing a text. Clauditte had sent this dog to her lover Ekunat, but it escaped him. Tschinotulander brings the dog with the lead to Sigune who immediately starts to read. However, the dog escapes with the lead before she has finished. Therefore, Sigune asks Tschinotulander to bring the dog lead back to her and promises him her love in return. At this point, Wolfram's fragment ends, but Albrecht's *Jüngerer Titurel* continues, bridging the gap to the mourning Sigune known from Wolframs *Parzival*.[6] While Tschinotulander is searching for the dog with the lead, Orilus wins both in combat. However, the original owner Ekunat wants to reclaim the dog lead, so a combat between Orilus and Ekunat is arranged. In the meantime, the text on the *Brackenseil*, which is both a love letter and a moral treatise, is read aloud at king Arthur's court. After that, Sigune is allowed to read the text on her own, and her desire for the lead is satisfied. However, Tschinotulander insists on his quest before he leaves for an Orient campaign.

1 Mühlherr 2016 gives a good overview over the field's recent development. Cf. also Scholz/Vedder (eds.) 2018, esp. the chapter by Kimmich, Kimmich 2018, cf. Wernli/Kling (eds.) 2018, cf. Glasner et al. (eds.) 2019.
2 Cf. for example Christ 2015, Selmayr 2017, Nieser 2018. A special branch is research on things as gifts, cf. for example Oswald 2004, Sahm 2014, Zimmermann 2020.
3 Cf. Christ 2015, p. 64, pp. 159f, cf. Mühlherr 2014, pp. 261f, cf. Mühlherr 2009, pp. 489–492.
4 Albrecht von Scharfenberg 1955, 1968, 1992.
5 Wolfram von Eschenbach 2006, 2003.
6 Wolfram von Eschenbach 2006, 138,9–142,2;249,11-255,30; 435,12-440,19; 804,21-805,2.

When he returns, the conflict about the *Brackenseil* arises again, combined with fights about Parzivals estates, which Tschinotulander administrates and Orilus occupies. Although Sigune had come into possession of the *Brackenseil* in the meantime and given it back to Ekunat, Tschinotulander still insists on fighting with Orilus and ultimately dies in combat. Ekunat avenges Tschinotulander, and the *Brackenseil*, being part of Ekunats crest, is destroyed.

Research on the *Jüngerer Titurel* so far has mainly focused on the motivational, representational and structural dimensions of the *Brackenseil*, often concentrating on the text on the dog lead and its reception.[7] Although this perspective has given important insights into relationships between intradiegetic text, narration and character action, it has overlooked the potential of the thing itself to influence the characters' actions. Dietl has recently investigated this perspective and demonstrated how the *Brackenseil* as a thing affects characters' desires and emotions.[8] However, a reading of the *Jüngerer Titurel* with a focus on the thing and its agency has to look closer at the link between the inherent features of the *Brackenseil* and the interactions it provokes. An exploration of the relationship between the *Brackenseil's* specific material qualities and the characters' actions shows that, although the textual and material aspects of the *Brackenseil* are closely linked, it is rather the *Brackenseil's* 'thingness' than its status as a text that is influential. Moreover, this 'thingness' provides the *Brackenseil* with poetologic qualities.

1. The *Brackenseil* – general features

The *Brackenseil* is a dog lead of twelve *klafter* length which equates to approximately 20 metres or 65 feet. It is considered the best possible ribbon, made of yellow, brown, green, and red silk, decorated with pearls and rings (JT st. 1185f). On the inside and on the outside of the folded lead is a writing made of valuable gemstones which are riveted with golden nails (JT st. 1187-1189). It is not quite clear how this dog lead has to be imagined as a concrete object,[9] but it is undeniable that the Brackenseil is a very valuable object. The

7 Baisch investigates practices of reading and their functions and aims, drawing on Wolframs *Titurel*, the *Jüngerer Titurel* and their scholarly reception, cf. Baisch 2010, p. 18. Volfing, too, focuses on the representation of literacy and textuality, cf. Volfing 2007. Parshall highlights the symbolic meaning of the *Brackenseil* and its function as a structural element and motivator, cf. Parshall 2011. Kragl, too, points out motivational problems of the *Brackenseil*, cf. Kragl 2010, pp. 146–152. Bußmann argues that the *Brackenseil* is merely a realistic requisite and a legal object of dispute, whereas the text on the *Brackenseil* offers the background for the assessment of the characters' actions, cf. Bußmann 2011. Neukirchen recently focused on the language's beauty, cf. Neukirchen 2019. Philipowski showed the different consequences of reading or hearing the text on the *Brackenseil*. Although she took into account the writing's materiality, she focused on different modes of reception and the didactic intention, cf. Philipowski 2009.
Similar approaches characterize the research on Wolframs *Titurel*: In investigating the relation between love and literature, Kragl focuses on the writing, not the lead itself, cf. Kragl 2013, p. 283. Bleumer, too, does not consider the materiality of the text to be central, the writing is only a metaphor, cf. Bleumer 2011, p. 260. Krotz considers the narrator's focus on the Brackenseil's materiality as a strategy to set the reader on the wrong track, but the writing is more important, cf. Krotz 1999, p. 190. Liebertz-Grün interprets the Brackenseil as caricature on contemporary listeners and readers and considers the writing as access to a metalevel where the characters' fate is decided, cf. Liebertz-Grün 2001, p. 390. Haug, too, argues that Sigune sends Tschinotulander to his death because of a story, not because of a dog lead, cf. Haug 1994, p. 315.

8 Cf. Dietl 2016, esp. pp. 194-199.

9 Cf. Johnson 1989, 517f. Johnson examines the *Brackenseil* in Wolfram's *Titurel*, but as the central stanzas can be found also in the *Jüngerer Titurel*, his results can be transferred.

dog collar belonging to the lead is of similar value. It is made of green velvet with a trimming and gemstones (JT st. 1190), and once again the gemstones form a text, announcing the name of the dog: "Gardiviaz" (JT st. 1190,4), which means "hůte wol der verte" (JT st. 1190,4, 'mind the path well'). This refers to the central message of the text on the lead and the collar that tells the story of Clauditte and Ekunat (JT st. 1191-1200), turning into a lesson on morality, love, and virtues that focuses on moderation (*maze*) as the key virtue (JT st. 1874-1927). The text on the *Brackenseil* gathers all courtly virtues, but, as Guggenberger points out, it transforms their meaning through a Christian perspective and contradicts the Arthurian ethics, because a knightly quest in the service of a lady is not intended (JT st. 1901-1908).[10]

In sum, the *Brackenseil* is an extraordinary object that combines a special text with a high-quality materiality, being text and thing at the same time. Therefore, although the text is of course meaningful for the narrative, it seems reasonable to assume that the material dimension of this special dog lead should not be neglected either. Its materiality or 'thingness' is important and possibly significant.

Research on Wolframs *Titurel* has already followed up with this perspective. For example, the *Brackenseil* is seen as as a reification of the text that makes the text unavailable.[11] Furthermore, research has also drawn on the meaningfulness of the materiality for the text[12] and considered the *Brackenseil* as a medium between nature and culture,[13] as a caricature of contemporary readers,[14] or as a reflection on contemporary media developments.[15] However, although the *Jüngerer Titurel* includes Wolfram's *Titurel* and refers to Wolfram's *Parzival*, Albrecht puts the *Brackenseil* into a larger context, therefore the findings on Wolfram's *Brackenseil* should not be transferred on a one-to-one basis. Albrecht's text is of course closely related to Wolfram and can hardly be read without *Parzival* and *Titurel*,[16] but it should also be acknowledged as individual text[17] which presumably has its own conceptions and semantics of the *Brackenseil*.

There are at least three interesting and promising aspects of the *Brackenseil's* thingness: its status as a dog lead, as a valuable object, and as a medium. First, as a dog lead, the *Brackenseil* is an everyday object that prevents a dog from running away. It is something restrictive that leads the movement of the

10 Cf. Guggenberger 1992, pp. 116–119. Guggenberger focuses on the *Brackenseil's* ethical system and the different virtues.
11 Cf. Marshall 2018, 419-422.
12 Cf. Lieb 2015, 12f. Lieb sees the Brackenseil as the best example for an enhanced link between written materialised text and its material medium, because the materiality of the text cannot be neglected and is meaningful. In a similar way, Kiening showed that dog and lead cannot be separated, because the dog is message bearer and the message's manifestation at the same time. Cf. Kiening 2003, p. 265.
13 Cf. Gephart 2005, p. 123.
14 Cf. Liebertz-Grün 2001, p. 389.
15 Cf. Kiening/Köbele 1998, 262f, cf. Seeber 2010, p. 55, cf. Meyer 2006, S. 469f.
16 Dietl considers Albrecht's *Jüngerer Titurel* as a retelling of Wolframs *Parzival* and *Titurel*, cf. Dietl 2016, p. 170. Zimmermann, too, emphasises the close relationship between Albrecht's text and Wolframs *Parzival*, *Titurel* and *Willehalm* and considers Albrecht's *Jüngerer Titurel* as perhaps the most comprehensive and successful case of an implementation of various forms of retextualisation through strategies of reception, translation, revision, rewriting, *dilatatio*, *abbreviatio*, or intertextual cross-fading, cf. Zimmermann 2020, p. 320. For a closer look on the relationship between *Jüngerer Titurel*, *Titurel* and *Parzival* cf. for example Lorenz 2002; Neukirchen 2006.
17 Neukirchen, too, demands to see Albrecht as critical and autonomous poet, cf. Neukirchen 2019, p. 183 Cf. Neukirchen 2006.

dog or directs the movements of the dog's owner if the dog is out of control. As I want to argue, this specific feature of the thing also applies to the characters' interactions with it. Second, due to the gemstones and the luxurious design, this particular dog lead, however, is not made for everyday use. It is something special, something unique, something valuable, something that represents wealth and status but also immaterial values. This uniqueness and representative function provoke the characters' desires to possess it. Third, because of the text written on it, the *Brackenseil* becomes an object of communication, a medium that conveys a message. As a medium, the *Brackenseil* has a specific mediality that also has an impact on the message and consequently leads the way of understanding. Thus, the capacity to lead the way that the *Brackenseil* has qua its status as a dog lead, i.e. as a thing, constitutes its central poetologic quality and mirrors the text's intention.

2. The dog lead

The material status of the *Brackenseil* as a dog lead is accompanied by specific functions and meanings. As already shortly mentioned, a dog lead directs and restricts movements. The dog has to follow its owner or vice versa if the dog is strong enough and if the owner fails to impose their will (or are willing to let go of the lead and the dog). Furthermore, a lead is able to force something – generally a dog – to stay somewhere. The Brackenseil for example forces the dog to stay with Sigune at least for some time (JT st. 1202,1) and stops the dog's path through the forest when it becomes tangled up in thorns (JT st. 1293). In general, the entity at one end of the lead decides where to go while the entity at the other end is denied any decision-making power.

This feature of leading and restricting decisions and actions, which is also the purpose of the text,[18] applies to the interactions of the characters and the *Brackenseil* in the *Jüngerer Titurel*.

When Tschinotulander catches the dog with the *Brackenseil*, he brings both directly to Sigune (JT st. 1185,1) and shows no interest in them but returns to fishing (JT st. 1201). By giving dog and lead to Sigune, they both become a gift, namely a love token (*minnegabe*).

While some consider the dog to be the main gift in both *Titurel* and *Jüngerer Titurel*,[19] and others argue that dog and lead are inseparable,[20] I want to argue here with Bußmann[21] that it is the *Brackenseil* that constitutes the main part of the gift. First, because a hunting dog would not be a gift suiting a courtly woman, as Brackert and Jolie already point out in their commentary on Wolframs *Titurel*.[22] Second, because the wording of the *Jüngerer Titurel*, too, suggests that Tschinotulander's decision to bring both dog and lead to Sigune

18 The moral treatise and the chorus-like "hůte wol der verte" imply that it is the aim of the text to guide decisions and actions, cf. JT 1874-1927.

19 As Gephart argues for Wolframs *Titurel*, cf. Gephart 2005, 121f. Philipowski, too, considers the dog as the gift in the *Jüngerer Titurel*, cf. Philipowski 2012, p. 108

20 For Wolframs *Titurel*, Kiening argues that dog and lead are inseparable because the dog is message bearer and the message's manifestation at the same time. Cf. Kiening 2003, pp. 265–268. Seeber, too, argues that there is a convergence between dog and text, cf. Seeber 2010, p. 56. However, this close connection between dog and message must not be mistaken for an inseparability of dog and lead.

21 Bußmann, too, considers the *Brackenseil* as *minnegabe*, cf. Bußmann 2011, p. 196.

22 Wolfram von Eschenbach 2003, p. 250.

is led by the *Brackenseil*: its gemstones and splendour are described right before and after Tschinotulander jumps towards the dog (JT st. 1180f) and after he has brought the dog to Sigune (JT st. 1185). This contiguity[23] between the description of the *Brackenseil's* materiality and Tschinotulander's actions indicates that the dog lead as a thing is what attracts his attention. Sigune's explicit demand for "*di strang*" (JT st. 1216,4, 'the lead'), not the dog, supports this impression.

Parallels between the concepts of lead and gift also suggest that the *Brackenseil* is the gift that matters. As Mauss and Kohl have shown, there is a paradoxical logic to the gift: a gift is not given as an object of exchange but requires a gift in return nontheless.[24] As a result, a gift establishes a lasting personal bond and dependencies[25] that direct and restrict actions. This capacity is therefore not only inherent to the lead as a thing but also an important feature of a gift in general. Giver and receiver are related and obligated to each other; their actions (giving, receiving, thanking, giving-in-return, receiving-in-return, thanking, and so on) are led by the gift. The *Brackenseil* as a gift establishes this relationship and at the same time materialises and symbolises this bond[26] by being a restricting connection between two entities and leading each of their further actions.

This starts even before Sigune's explicit demand for the *Brackenseil*. Although it was the dog's noise that first caught Tschinotulander's attention (JT st. 1173,1), it is then the lead that "*wundert in vil harte*" (JT st. 1180,2, 'astonished him very much'). When he hears that something is wrong (JT st. 1206,4), Tschinotulander immediately interrupts his current action (fishing) in order to re-catch the dog with the lead (JT st. 1206-1208). Thus, even before Tschinotulander is asked for any action, the binding and action directing features of the *Brackenseil* unfold to some extent.

They intensify when Sigune asks Tschinotulander to bring her the *Brackenseil* in order to earn her love (JT st. 1216-1219). The *Brackenseil* arouses Sigune's desire, making her demand it and consequently motivating Tschinotulander to set out for his knightly quest[27] "*zu werben nach dem seile*" (JT st. 1275,3, 'to campaign for the lead'). The former gift is now explicitly an object of exchange and becomes the key to Sigune's love: her *minne* will "*wilden*" (JT st. 1216,4) Tschinotulander, i.e. depart and become estranged from him, unless he brings her the *Brackenseil*. Only then, so she promises, she will give him "*Genade und swaz ein maget sol gen lieben vrůnt verenden*" (JT st. 1219,1, 'favour and whatever a maiden shall do for her dearly beloved'). In accordance with the general function of a lead to exert control over something or somebody, the *Brackenseil* has the power to control Sigune's love, making it 'accessible' with its presence and 'inaccessible' in its absence.

It has been argued both for Wolframs *Titurel* and for Albrecht's *Jüngerer Titurel* that Sigune's desire is rather directed towards the text than towards the

23 For contiguity as a central characteristic of medieval narrative cf. Schulz 2010, 2015, pp. 333-343.
24 Cf. Mauss 2016, p. 18, cf. Kohl 2003, p. 133.
25 Cf. Kohl 2003, p. 133f.
26 Thus, while Gephart understands lead and dog in Wolfram's *Titurel* as a symbol for a crisis of social bonds, the lead alone and the actions that it causes establish social bonds. Cf. Gephart 2005, p. 124.
27 The motivating power of the *Brackenseil* has also been observed by Parshall, cf. Parshall 2011, p. 146, p. 153.

Brackenseil because she starts reading immediately (JT st. 1191,1) and identifies with the story of Clauditte and Ekunat.[28] In this perspective, the *Brackenseil* is just the medium that she needs to obtain in order to reach her main goal, the text. However, this point of view does not consider that the wording of the *Jüngerer Titurel* suggests once again a greater influence of the thing. The narrator clarifies that it is "[d]*iu strang*" (JT st. 1216,1, 'the lead') that her heart is bound to, and that it is "*umb die strang*" (JT st. 1231,3, 'for the lead') that she risks Tschinotulander's life. Furthermore, when Tschinotulander returns after unsuccessfully trying to catch the escaping dog, the first thing Sigune worries about is "*diu strange, verloren und nicht vunden*" (JT st. 1210,1, 'the lead, lost and not found'). In the following dialogues with Tschinotulander, Sigune expresses her desire for the *Brackenseil* as bearer of the text, not the text alone (JT st. 1214f, st. 1229,3f.), and expects Tschinotulander to fight "*umb di strangen*" (JT st. 1235,4, 'for the lead') for her love. At King Arthur's court, too, her "*herze ringet nach dem edeln, tiuren bracken seile*" (JT st. 1855,2, 'her heart strives after the precious, valuable *Brackenseil*').

Although Sigune's interest in the *Brackenseil* is motivated by the text on the thing, it is the thing her actions are directed towards; the thing leads her actions. The scene at King Arthur's court supports this view. Sigune is not content with only hearing the text read aloud by Jeschute (JT st. 1505f) and in doing so, receiving the contents. Instead, she wants to read "*in ir gewalt fur eigen di schrift* […] *an dem seile*" (JT st. 1624,4, 'in her own control the writing on the lead') and is only satisfied when she can hold the *Brackenseil* and read the story three times herself (JT st. 1869,3). Without its materiality, the text alone apparently is not enough. Although the reasons for this desire remain obscure,[29] it is evident that Sigune is attracted by the thing, and this thing allows her to have the text at her disposal. To be in control of the *Brackenseil* as a material fixation of the text is necessary for being able to control the text and to choose an individual way of reception. The thing does not only direct the characters' actions by attracting attention and desire, it also allows the characters to control the text. Similar to the typical relation that a dog lead establishes between the two entities at both its ends, the *Brackenseil* allows its owner to be both subject and object of control and power at the same time.

Even after Sigune's interest declines, the *Brackenseil* still has a significant impact on her and her actions because Tschinotulander insists that his quest is not fulfilled "*biz si* [Sigune] *gewalticlichen daz bracken seil fur eigen mocht behalten*" (JT st. 1957,4, 'until she may keep the *Brackenseil* in her own control'). Sigune cannot stop Tschinotulander's pursuit of the thing despite her explicitly telling him that she considers the quest fulfilled and offers her love (JT st. 1946, st. 1955). To such a degree, the *Brackenseil* restricts her power over Tschinotulander. Whereas once, she could persuade him to search for the

28 Concerning Wolframs *Titurel*, cf. Brackert 1996, p. 161, cf. Gephart 2005, p. 122, cf. Haug 1994, p. 315, cf. Kragl 2013, p. 283, cf. Krotz 1999, 192f, cf. Dietl 2016, p. 190, cf. Liebertz-Grün 2001, 389f. Concerning Albrechts *Jüngerer Titurel*, cf. Baisch 2010, p. 14, cf. Volfing 2007, p. 52.

29 Viehauser argues that the reason for Sigune's desire for possession of the *Brackenseil* is her identification with the text; she can only desist from her desire when it becomes clear that through the general *lêre* ('lesson'), the text is meant for everyone, cf. Viehhauser 2015, p. 67, p. 75. However, this view does not consider that after Jeschute's reading, Sigune's identification should have decreased as she then should know that there is more to the Brackenseil than a love story similar to her situation. Philipowski sees the reason for Sigune's desire in the gemstones, cf. Philipowski 2009, p. 60.

Brackenseil against his initial reluctance (JT st. 1213, st. 1267,4), now, she cannot convince him to quit. She does not have the power to influence him and his actions anymore. Instead, his actions are led by the *Brackenseil* because it remains the way to Sigune's love.

Although it is the intention of the text on the *Brackenseil* to lead the characters' actions, Sigune's and Tschinotulander's actions are rather directed towards and by the *Brackenseil* as a thing used as a gift and object of exchange. Consequently, the *Brackenseil's* impact on the story lies not only in its status as a text but also in its status as a thing. As the intrinsic features of this specific thing are to lead and to restrict actions, the thing works in its intended way, doing exactly what a lead is supposed to do. This is also true for the other main characters. Quite literally, the *Brackenseil* leads Teanglis as he decides to follow it and the dog through the forest (JT st. 1295-1297). It also leads Orilus and Jeschute, who want to keep it, and Ekunat, who wants to have it back. Some reasons for this leading and restricting lie within the object's value.

3. The valuable object

Due to its materiality, the *Brackenseil* is not any common dog lead but a very valuable object. Nevertheless, it is not its material value that attracts the characters but rather the value they attribute to it throughout the story. Although the valuable materials of which the lead is made are described in detail as outlined above, no one wants to possess the *Brackenseil* just because it is made of gemstones, gold, and silk. Instead, the *Brackenseil* becomes valuable because of what it represents.

As a dog lead, the *Brackenseil* is technically an everyday object. However, it represents prosperity and preciousness because of the valuable material. Whoever possesses an object like this can be expected to possess even more treasures. As a result, the *Brackenseil* represents its owner's wealth. Yet, there is more to the *Brackenseil's* value than that. Its material value has an impact on its status as a gift, as an object of exchange, and as a trophy as well.

Like every gift, the *Brackenseil* creates and represents a relationship between giver and receiver, not least because a part of the giver is inherent to the gift.[30] Furthermore, any gift renders the relationship at least for some time asymmetric, raising the giver's status.[31] This representation and dynamic of the relationship is connected with what the materiality of the gift represents because a gift made of valuable material suggests that the giver considers the receiver and their relationship to each other to be valuable.[32] Besides, the more valuable the gift, the more asymmetric the relationship becomes as the overspending leads to a superiority of the giver. The *Brackenseil* as a precious object consequently represents the value of the relationships in which it is given as a gift and has an impact on the relationships' symmetry.

For Clauditte and Ekunat, the *Brackenseil* is not only a valuable but also a personalised gift because their story and their names are written on the lead

30 Cf. Kohl 2003, 133f, cf. Oswald 2004, p. 14.
31 Cf. Gregory 2015, 46f.
32 Of course, something without material value can also become valuable as a gift because of the emotional connection. However, it is unlikely that someone gives something valuable to someone when the giver does not consider the relationship as valuable in some kind.

(JT st. 1193-1200, st. 1469f). By giving the valuable object to Ekunat, Clauditte is not trying to raise her status by overspending; as a queen, she is of higher rank than Ekunat already. Instead, she illustrates with the valuable gift that the social difference in rank is not a flaw of the relationship. In the text on the *Brackenseil*, Clauditte emphasises that she appreciates Ekunat "*ob aller keiser wirde*" (JT st. 1877, 'above all emperors' dignity'), that no one would be "*baz zu nemende*" (JT st. 1878,2, 'better to take'), and that she can never "[s]*in wirde gar vol prisen*" (JT st. 1881,1, 'fully praise his dignity and worth'). The *Brackenseil* as a valuable object is the material equivalent to this appreciation. Ekunat and her love for him deserve the best object only, regardless of his lower rank. However, as "gift giving was a key source of honor"[33] in medieval societies, the value of the gift increases the existing asymmetry between them, giving Clauditte the superior position of the giver and Ekunat the inferior position of the receiver. Maybe this is one reason why they both feel uncomfortable about the reading of the text (JT st. 1469, st. 1942): it reveals who gave the *Brackenseil* to whom, thus making public that Clauditte increased her already existing superiority by giving Ekunat such a valuable gift. This could be understood as threat to his integrity and thereby be dishonourable for both.[34]

For Sigune and Tschinotulander, the *Brackenseil* is a rather spontaneous gift that becomes an object of exchange; its acquisition is the "*dienst*" (JT st. 1243,3, 'service') that Tschinotulander has to and wants to fulfil in order to earn Sigune's love as *lôn* ('reward'). In a relation of exchange, one object (or action) is equated with another object (or action). They can be exchanged because they are considered to be of the same material or immaterial value and both giver and receiver feel that they benefit from the exchange, acquiring something they desire.[35] Sigune considers the *Brackenseil* worthy of her love and makes it its material equivalent (JT st. 1216). Even after she desists from her desire to possess the *Brackenseil*, Tschinotulander adheres to this idea, considering Sigune to be "*des wert, daz ich noch baz nach prise / von rehte werben sol.*" (JT st. 1953,2f, 'Sigune is worth that I shall further campaign for praise'). As a result, the pursuit of the *Brackenseil* equates the pursuit of Sigune's love. Therefore, the *Brackenseil* becomes a valuable object because it is the reification of the immaterial value of Sigune's love. Looking at this from the other perspective, the valuable materiality of the *Brackenseil* supports the value of Sigune's love – justifiably, she is a member of the Grail's dynasty after all and therefore of high rank; it is hardly imaginable that her love could be earned with a worthless thing. By equating and exchanging, the *Brackenseil* becomes a valuable object in the relationship between Sigune and Tschinotulander because it is already a materially valuable object and therefore can be part of the exchange.

Finally, the *Brackenseil* is also a valuable object because it is considered a trophy, representing triumph and *aventiure* ('adventure', 'wondrous incident'), increasing and representing the owner's *êre* ('honour'). As *êre* can be under-

33 Cowell 2007, p. 51.

34 Cowell defines integrity as "something more idealized and more extreme than honor – specifically, a state of freedom from social bonds and obligations, such that the individual is 'whole' (Latin *integer*) and completely self-dependent" (Cowell 2007, p. 21f). Exchanges with or gifts from equals or superiors form a threat to a person's integrity, cf. Cowell 2007, pp. 25–28. Thus, "receiving gifts could be a source of dishonour" (Cowell 2007, p. 51), and forcing Ekunat into a situation of threatened integrity could have negative effects for Claudittes honour as well.

35 Cf. Hillebrandt 2009, pp. 93–100, cf. Kohl 2003, pp. 141–147.

stood as a form of symbolic capital,[36] the *Brackenseil* as a thing is a material manifestation of symbolic capital,[37] not least because with Bourdieu, wealth is always combined with other's recognition and thus implies symbolic capital.[38] This already starts when Sigune's demand makes it the object of a knightly quest and accordingly the material proof that Tschinotulander has earned her love by proving to be the best knight through *aventiure* (JT st. 1229-1235). Teanglis who is the next to find the *Brackenseil* connects it with *aventiure*, too. He understands it as a call to adventure and thinks that "*dirre vremde brief ist uz gesant durch aventiure wunder*" (JT st. 1296,4, 'this alien letter is sent by a wondrous adventure'). Thus, he decides to follow the dog with the lead to find *aventiure* (JT st. 1297) which he ultimately does in a combat with Orilus. Just as Tschinotulander and Teanglis, Orilus, too, finds the dog with the valuable lead by chance when he hunts down the game Gardeviaz is following (JT st. 1298). At once, he takes possession of dog and lead, which leads to the combat with Teanglis (JT st. 1299). Orilus wins and thus enforces his possession of the *Brackenseil* (JT st. 1305,1). From now on, the *Brackenseil* does not belong to the person to whom it has been sent or who found it but to the person who fought for it (JT st. 1495). Whereas Kiening and Köbele argue for Wolframs *Titurel* that the text is *aventiure* because it is an event that changes the situation irreversibly,[39] here, it is the *Brackenseil* as a thing. It is a wondrous event in its appearance, it leads to further *aventiure*, and its possession proves the owner's success in such an *aventiure*. As a trophy acquired in combat, it is a material sign of chivalry and strength, and its value reveals the status of its owner as the best knight.[40] Considering that, as Cowell noted, the "violent taking of the object functioned to further increase the object's symbolic value or rank",[41] its status as a trophy even increases the *Brackenseil's* value. Although in the course of the story the *Brackenseil* is given from Jeschute to Sigune (JT st. 4950-4953) and from Sigune to Ekunat (JT st. 5050f) even before the arranged fights over it take place, there is always someone who considers the *Brackenseil* as the material manifestation of chivalry, power, or symbolic capital in general worth to fight for or because of.

In sum, the *Brackenseil's* material value at the same time is and is not the reason why it becomes a "coveted object".[42] Its materiality alone does not arouse the desire to possess it,[43] but the fact that the materiality of the thing mirrors and affects the value the characters attribute to it. As a valuable gift object, it represents Clauditte's appreciation for Ekunat and their relationship. As a valuable exchange object, it is equivalent of Sigune's favour and love. Finally, as a valuable trophy, it reificates *êre* and status. The *Brackenseil* leads the characters because of its material preciousness that mirrors the immaterial values it represents.

36 Cf. Cowell 2007, p. 37, p. 55.
37 Bourdieu defines symbolic capital as the capital that results from the relationship between any type of capital (here: *Brackenseil* as valuable object) and the actors who are socialized in such a way that they recognize and acknowledge this type of capital. Cf. Bourdieu 2017, p. 337. Cf. also Bourdieu 2001, pp. 309–315.
38 Cf. Bourdieu 2017, p. 338.
39 Cf. Kiening/Köbele 1998, p. 258.
40 The best knight possess the best things, cf. Cowell 2007, p. 61.
41 Cowell 2007, p. 54.
42 Parshall 2011, p. 153.
43 This is what Philipowski argues, who sees the reason for the characters' desires in the gemstones, cf. Philipowski 2009, pp. 59–63.

4. The medium

The *Brackenseil* is not only a dog lead and a valuable object but also a letter and hence a medium that conveys a message. As a medium, the *Brackenseil* has a specific mediality that is defined by the specific features of the medium.[44] This mediality influences the communicative act, i.e. how the message has to be presented and how it is perceived, making the medium itself a message.[45] Especially the materiality of the medium accounts for its specific mediality and conveys meaning, too.[46] Therefore, the specific features and functions of the *Brackenseil* as a thing have consequences for its status as a medium.

The material value suggests that the *Brackenseil* is a medium for important messages only. With its gemstones and precious fabric, its fabrication surely was expensive and time-consuming, which leads to the expectation that the message conveyed through this medium is valuable as well. This is confirmed by Sigune who regards the text as more valuable than her land Katelangen and all the richness that anyone can offer (JT st. 1215). However, not everyone seems to share this attitude: Tschinotulander is sceptical at first (JT st. 1213), and at king Arthur's court only the threat of punishment seems to guarantee everyone's attention (JT st. 1972), suggesting that the text is spontaneously not considered to be important.

Still, the materiality as part of the *Brackenseil's* mediality has power over the recipients. When the text is read aloud at King Arthur's court, everyone who hears or reads the text loses all distress or sorrow and feels joy instead (JT st. 1517, st. 1869). The reasons for this joy lie in the gemstones, not in the message: "*Von edelkeit der steine was disiu kraft der worte*" (JT st. 1507,1, 'this power of words came from the gemstone's preciousness'), "*die vreude der schrifte gie der steine krefte, / dar uz di bůchstab waren*" (JT st. 1930,3f, 'the joy of the writing came from the power of the stones of which the letters were built'). The power of the gemstones affects the recipients and thus their emotional condition.[47] In doing so, the *Brackenseil's* mediality influences the message's perception. The joy caused by the gemstones leads to an atmosphere of happiness in which the message with the rather serious advice for a good life can appear positive and pleasant. In this way, the *Brackenseil* as a medium with a specific mediality leads the characters. It attracts their attention, directs their emotions, and thus has an influence on their rating of the message while it should support the didactic success. However, the latter expectation is not fully met. The gemstones' powers do not work on Arthur whose grief over Ilinot's death is stronger (JT st. 1509-1513). In contrast, they work too well on the others who value the gemstones' powers more than the text's ad-

44 Cf. Hickethier 2010, p. 26.

45 Cf. Hickethier 2010, p. 26; cf. Ortlieb 2018, 38f. As McLuhan noted, „the ‚content' of any medium blinds us to the character of the medium" (McLuhan 1994, p. 8), although this character deserves attention and 'is' the message, cf. McLuhan 1994, pp. 7–21.

46 Ortlieb 2018, p. 39. Lieb, too, describes this connection between meaning and the medium's materiality, using the *Brackenseil* as an example, however, without mentioning the term 'mediality', cf. Lieb 2015, 12f.

47 Wegner points out that these powers were also attributed to these gemstones in medieval science, cf. Wegner 1996, S. 115f, cf. also Rausch 1977. Dietl criticises Wegners method of adding up the gemstone's effects and argues for an interaction of didactic text and gemstone effects, cf. Dietl 2016, 193f. Baisch and Neukirchen, too, argue for the power of the jewels only, cf. Baisch 2010, pp. 24–26, cf. Neukirchen 2006, p. 211.

vice (JT st. 1930) and continue to live their lives as before (JT st. 1931).[48] The materiality overwhelms and impedes the *Brackenseil's* message, as both Philipowski and Volfing point out as well.[49] The medium's materiality that supports its communicative intention by drawing attention and suggesting valuable content on the one hand is disturbing or blocking[50] the communicative process on the other hand. "[I]n communicative terms […] the Brackenseil inscription is a disaster",[51] and the choice of the medium plays a central role in this communicative catastrophe. The mediality of the medium stands in the way of the message.

The *Brackenseil's* status as a dog lead adds to this problem. To use the *Brackenseil* as a medium means to disregard its function as a dog lead. This becomes apparent when Sigune tries to read the text for the first time. In order to be able to read the message, she has to untie the knot with which the dog is bound (JT st. 1201,4) and in doing so loses control over the dog that runs away (JT st. 1204,4). Furthermore, the materiality of the lead makes it at least difficult to use the *Brackenseil* as a dog lead. Not only would it be too long and too heavy,[52] Sigune's injury also shows that it can cause severe harm to anyone who wants to hold a strong dog with it (JT st. 1211).

Thus, the *Brackenseil* cannot exercise its medial and its dog-leading function at the same time because the respective modes of use impede each other. When using the *Brackenseil* as a dog lead, it is not possible to read the message; when using the *Brackenseil* as a message bearer, it is not possible to use it as a dog lead. This has also been noticed concerning Wolfram's *Titurel*: As Gephart argues, the gemstone letters impede the use of the *Brackenseil* as a dog lead, representing an alienation of culture from nature.[53] Besides, Marshall shows that the reification of the text as a dog lead makes it unavailable for the characters, not least because the dog keeps running away.[54] For both the *Titurel* and the *Jüngerer Titurel*, the *Brackenseil* restricts the characters' actions. Certain actions, such as reading or controlling a dog, are only possible in a certain 'mode' of the thing. Only when the dog has disappeared at King Arthur's court,[55] the dog-leading function of the *Brackenseil* is suspended, and the text can be read without interruption.

Yet, as soon as another, though artificial, dog comes into play the *Brackenseil* once again combines different modes of use. Ekunat uses the lead in combination with an artificial dog as crest (JT st. 4542f, st. 5878f), which provides the *Brackenseil* with a new characteristic function and thus adds a new aspect to its mediality. As a crest, it is part of a noble's coat of arms, serving to identify the bearer and to give information on the bearer's nobility, rank, family, and ideology, even becoming the bearer's personification.[56] The *Brackenseil*

48 As Volfing notes, some characters are 'better' recipients than others, especially the male characters "seem entirely to miss the point of the treatise", Volfing 2007, p. 64.
49 Cf. Philipowski 2009, 70f, cf. Volfing 2007, p. 61.
50 Strohschneider refers to phenomena in which the materiality dominates the message (‚Kommunikat') as blocked textuality (‚blockierte Textualität'), cf. Strohschneider 2006, 34f.
51 Volfing 2007, p. 58.
52 Cf. Johnson 1989, p. 518.
53 cf. Gephart 2005, p. 123.
54 Cf. Marshall 2018, p. 421f, p. 434f.
55 Dietl explains the disappearance of the dog with the fact that it is no longer required here, as the *Brackenseil* now has an agency of its own, cf. Dietl 2016, p. 191. Bußmann argues that Albrecht suppresses the dog from the beginning and favours the lead, cf. Bußmann 2011, 190f.
56 Cf. Filip 1997, cols 2031–3033.

then mediates a different sort of text in a broader sense, giving information on Ekunat. However, it cannot mediate the moral text at the same time as the lead as crest is "*gezirkelt*" (JT st. 5878,4, 'coiled'), probably because of its length. Again, the moral text is unreadable. Once more, two of the *Brackenseil's* features obstruct each other: if on the one hand the *Brackenseil* would be uncoiled in order to render the text readable, it could not be part of a crest as it would be too long and cumbrous in combat. On the other hand, in order to use the *Brackenseil* as a crest, it has to be coiled, which impedes the moral text's readability. Besides, the use as a crest exposes the *Brackenseil* to the violence of combat. This turns out to be fatal for the *Brackenseil* that is destroyed by Orilus' sword strokes (JT st. 5888-5890).

Although the text's fixation in gemstones suggests permanence,[57] the *Brackenseil* "constitutes the ultimate elusive text"[58] not only because the dog runs away with it, but because it is more than a medium, namely a valuable object, a dog lead, and later a crest. What Volfing calls a "mismatch between textual message and material form"[59] is then only one aspect of the problem that the choice of medium entails: These features give the *Brackenseil* a mediality that impedes its readability and consequently causes its elusiveness. The message cannot be understood because the thing is not permanently in the right medial mode, and its mediality turns out to be obstructive for the message, restricting the process of reading and understanding. Only when a part of its specific features and functions, i.e. of its mediality, is suspended, the *Brackenseil* has the chance to work properly as a medium.

5. Conclusion

„[H]*ůte wol der verte*" (JT st. 1190,4, 'mind the path well') – this is the central maxime of the *Brackenseil* as a text. However, it goes astray. The text fails in its aspiration to guide the characters on their way of life. Because the message is not taken into serious consideration, it has no lasting or leading effect, which results in death and sorrow. In contrast, the *Brackenseil* as a thing is powerful and influential – it succeeds in leading the characters. As the *Brackenseil* is a dog lead, leading and restricting are its central characteristics and functions. These are fulfilled in the characters' interactions with the *Brackenseil;* their actions are led by it. The reasons for this lie in the *Brackenseil's* status as a valuable object and medium. As a gift, as an object of exchange, and as a trophy the *Brackenseil* possesses the ability to render immaterial aspects manageable and visible, which provokes the characters' desires to own it. Its material features as well as its ambiguous functioning give the *Brackenseil* a problematic mediality that restricts and obstructs the message's readability and understanding. To lead, to restrict, to prevent – these central features of a dog lead turn out to be the central features of the *Brackenseil* as a thing even beyond its function as a dog lead. It is then not the text on the *Brackenseil*, i.e. the thing in its function as a text, that has a poetologic quality but rather the thingness of this text, i.e. the text as a thing.

57 Cf. Hahn 1986, col. 1560.
58 Volfing 2007, p. 6.
59 Volfing 2007, p. 51.

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Dubious Actions Coming to Light: The Role of 'Talking' Gems as Indicators of Virtuousness

Florian Nieser

Dieser Beitrag widmet sich der ‚Sprachfähigkeit' von Edelsteinen, ihrer Mobilität und ihrer erinnernden Funktion an im Text verheimlichte oder zurückgedrängte Elemente. Es soll gezeigt werden, dass Inschriften, die mittels zu Wörtern geformten Edelsteinen angefertigt wurden, nicht zwingend von der ‚Willkür' ihrer Rezipienten abhängen. Im Zentrum steht die Wachstafel des Gregorius in der Erzählung Hartmanns von Aue, deren besondere materielle Beschaffenheit aus teils vergänglichen und teils beständigen Materialien in vergleichender Analyse der Epitaphe gefallener Könige im *Willehalm* Wolframs von Eschenbach und dem Cupido-Helm aus dem *Wilhelm von Österreich* Johanns von Würzburg neu betrachtet wird. Der Fokus in der Betrachtung der Wachstafel des Gregorius wechselt von der verwitterten Inschrift auf der Tafel, die nicht mehr von der sündhaften Vergangenheit berichten kann, zur witterungsbeständigen und edelsteinbesetzten Rahmung dieser Inschrift, die die schillernde Figurenbiographie des Protagonisten materiell in Szene setzt.

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This paper is dedicated to the speaking capabilities of gemstones, their mobility and their function of reminding us of elements hidden or repressed in the text. It will be shown that inscriptions made of gemstones shaped as words do not necessarily depend on the 'arbitrariness' of their recipients. At the center is the wax tablet of Gregorius in Hartmann von Aue's narrative, whose special material composition of partly perishable and partly durable materials is reassessed in comparative analysis of epitaphs of fallen kings in *Willehalm* by Wolfram von Eschenbach and the Cupido-helmet from *Wilhelm von* Österreich by John of Wuerzburg. The focus in the contemplation of Gregorius' wax tablet changes from the weathered inscription on the tablet, which is no longer able to tell of the sinful past, to the weatherproof and gem-studded framing of this inscription, which materially stages the protagonist's iridescent character biography.

memo

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A closer look into Middle High German literature reveals a high amount of inscriptions on all kinds of weapons, armor, and generally on a wide variety of objects and materials. While these inscriptions can serve many different purposes, this paper focuses on 'talking' gems – 'talking' in this case hints at inscriptions or specific ornaments which transmit a certain message. In the terms

Featured Image
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of Lorraine Daston these stones almost follow the principle *res ipsa loquitur* – they speak for themselves.[1] But this is not meant in a strictly logical sense, but flickering between the "epistemological polarit[ies]"[2] of absolute arbitrariness and self-evidence based axioms. The gemstones examined in this paper display a literary woven semiology that 'speaks' for itself in different varieties.[3] The few examples of gems discussed in this paper are comparable regarding a specific connection of two different functions. On the one hand, there is their *agency*-capacity as message carriers when they form inscriptions, which is why their mobility is a main topic (in this context it will be necessary to specify in which way inscribed objects can be 'agile'). On the other hand, there is their role as material reminders of past, questionable deeds of their bearers.

Concerning the aspect of a certain kind of *agency* of inscriptions and inscribed objects – meaning that they have the ability to make an active difference in a plot[4] – Elisabeth Martschini argues against any hidden power that is 'embodied' in inscriptions and their effect on their recipients. She analyses various inscriptions in the *Prosalancelot*, Ulrich's von Liechtenstein *Frauendienst* and *Reinfried von Braunschweig*: Her conclusion is that writing itself does not include any kind of agency. On the contrary, she points out that in *Frauendienst* V. 118-140 a book expresses its fear of being harmed by women receiving it; Martschini's point here is that the written text is endangered by the arbitrariness of its recipient.[5] She concludes that readers control writing (and therefore objects that contain inscriptions) instead of being controlled by it.[6] Opposing Martschini's view, this paper will consider three prominent objects that are not only carrying written text, but also serving a specific function that evades the control of their bearers.

The selection of the things discussed in this text is based on their individual qualities and their material nature as bearers of meaning, which connects them to the first example and main object of investigation of this paper: the wax tablet in Hartmann's von Aue *Gregorius*. The analysis of this object focuses on the relation between its gems used to frame the inscription on the *tabula* and the medium itself, which 'carries' the story of Gregorius. The gems here are not 'talking' in the strict sense of the meaning – they do not form words, but they are related to the inscription –, which is why the wax tablet seems to be a good starting point. The second object is the so-called Cupido-helmet in *Wilhelm von Österreich* by Johann von Würzburg, which discloses a connection between the *tugend* of its bearer and certain gems that form words. This is followed by an analysis of a specific scene in *Willehalm* by Wolfram von Eschenbach towards the end of the text: it is the scene in which Willehalm unexpectedly discovers the golden epitaphs. These memorial plaques carry gems formed as letters that tell the names and stories of fallen Saracen kings. In this context, I will argue for an interconnectivity between the stories told by these specific gems and Willehalm's killing of Arofel. Willehalm tries to euphemize his deed with his own version of the story. However, at the end of Wolfram's

1 Daston 2004, p. 12.
2 Daston 2004, p. 13.
3 With reference to Daston and her notes on Roland Barthes' research on things: Daston 2004, p. 14.
4 Mühlherr 2014, p. 261.
5 Martschini 2013, p. 143f.
6 Martschini 2013, p. 145.

text Willlehalm's story is denied by the message of the 'talking' gems on the epitaphs. – The results of the brief case studies concerning the helmet of Wilhelm von Österreich and the epitaphs in *Willehalm* will then enable a fresh look on the table of Gregorius and the role of the gems framing his story.[7]

1. *Gregorius* – Gems as a constant reminder (?)

In Hartmann's von Aue *Gregorius* the story of a repeated incest and its remission unfolds the topics of *riuwe*, *suone*, the original sin and the *felix culpa*. Being the child of a sibling incest, Gregorius is abandoned. To ensure an education adequate to his noble heritage and also to inform the adult protagonist about his genealogy, his mother writes down the circumstances of his birth as an offspring of noble siblings and how to treat the abandoned child, once it is found (*Gregorius* vv. 726-766)[8]. The material of the *tabula* is described as follows:

Ein tavel wart getragen dar
Der vrouwen diu daz kint gebar,
Diu vil guot helfenbein was,
Gezieret wol als ich ez las
Von golde und von gesteine
(*Gregorius* vv. 719-723)

The table is ornated with ivory and gems – signs of Gregorius' noble heritage (*ez* [Gregorius as a child, F.N.] *waere von gebürte hô*, *Gregorius* vv. 734). With regard to the ornamentation surrounding the written story on the table, Edith and Horst Wenzel speak of a frame for the difficult past of the child – a frame that is adequate to his social status.[9] The finder and reader of this *tabula* should keep its message secret until Gregorius himself is able to understand it (*Gregorius* vv. 750-752), so that he should always be humble and do penance for the deed of his parents, because he knows of his past (*Gregorius* vv. 752-762). Finally able to understand the inscription, Gregorius realizes his past and is shocked about the dubious constellation of his birth (*Gregorius* vv. 1745-1751). From then on, he always keeps the table with him in order to repent the sins of his parents ritually (*Gregorius* vv. 2377-2403). As a knight, he unknowingly rescues his own mother and marries her. When – with the help of the *tabula* written by herself – his mother realizes this misfortune, Gregorius flees into exile on an island in the sea and leaves the table unintentionally with a fisherman, who ties his feet[10] and leaves Gregorius on a stone on the secluded

7 This selection of gem-set objects could of course already be extended with regard to Wolfram von Eschenbach, since the *Brackenseil* would also be a very good example of a materially valuable object with gems formed into words. However, this paper intends to examine the revealing effect of materiality and the message of gemstones on the objects in question concerning doubtful aspects of character biographies. As Tamara Elsner shows in this issue of MEMO in her article 'Text as thing. The dog lead in Albrecht's 'Jüngerer Titurel', materiality also has an influence on its text-internal recipients, but at the same time, it is in conflict with the actual message of the dog lead. While in this case it is a matter of a materiality-related conflict of materiality and message, this paper will deal with the conflict of dubious and concealed aspects of central characters, which are kept present via gems as indicators of virtue. For reasons of coherence and this characteristic common to all three objects examined here, the selection remains limited to the wax tablet, the Cupido helmet and Arofel's shield.

8 All references from the text are taken from Mertens (ed.) 2008.

9 Wenzel/Wenzel 1996, p. 105.

10 As highlighted by Marshall 2016, p. 310.

island, so that he can repent his sins (*Gregorius* vv. 2481-3100). After many years, Gregorius is allowed to leave his exile and is chosen by God himself as the new Pope (*Gregorius* vv. 3177-3185). When he returns to the fisherman, he looks for the table. Even though the place where Gregorius had forgotten the table has been burnt down, it is not only found, but it is also as good as new (*Gregorius* vv. 3730-3735). Michael R. Ott has stated that, with regard to the fact that Gregorius' mother has decided against more enduring material like parchment or stone, it is more than remarkable that the table is well preserved.[11] The inscription is weather-beaten[12], but its frame of gems and ivory – according to Ludger Lieb and Michael R. Ott symbolizing chastity and purity and therefore standing in clear opposition to the former content[13] – appears in an almost renewed state. However, instead of interpreting the vanished inscription as a sign of redemption[14], the valuable materiality of the table as its sole feature could also be read as the indestructible reminder of Gregorius' heritage and the possibility of a new inscription at any time. As it will be shown at the end of this paper, in addition to the possibility of a new inscription one could also 'read' the remaining gems as a potential reminder of a peccable – human – past of a prospective pope.

How exactly specific gems can be indicators of both – a persistent or a fragile virtuousness – shall be demonstrated with the help of the following cases of talking gems in *Wilhelm von Österreich* and *Willehalm*, where they serve as tools to detect virtuousness or to bring dubious actions to light.

2. *Wilhelm von Österreich* – the Cupido-helmet as an unreliable indicator of virtuousness

In *Wilhelm von Österreich* (*WvÖ*) by Johann von Würzburg, the protagonist Wilhelm/Ryal has to pass several trials of virtuousness. An important part of one of these trials is the Cupido-helmet. Wilhelm receives this item in the treasure chamber of Joraffin, the ruler of the so-called fiery Mountains. Joraffin presents Wilhelm various valuable objects from which he may choose, but the protagonist's attention gets caught exclusively by a zinc white helmet with a little child-like figure on top of it – the Cupido-helmet (*WvÖ* vv. 3905-3911; vv. 4019-4037)[15]. The figure wears a wreath made of red gold as *zimier* (crest), and the word CUPIDO is inscribed on it with specific gems. Every letter is made of one distinct gem (*WvÖ* vv. 3950-74), and they do not only serve to highlight the quality and richness of the inscription, but they also seem to function as indicators of the righteousness of its owner. Every gem represents a certain kind of 'spiritual virtue' – meaning that it obtains a power through naturally given qualities, which again were assigned to it in medieval nature history treatises. This can be corroborated by regarding briefly every letter of the CUPIDO-helmet with Ulrich Engelen and Gerda Friess, who both did extensive research on gems in the Middle Ages.

11 Ott 2015, p. 257f.
12 Ott 2015, p. 264.
13 Lieb/Ott 2015, p. 23.
14 Lieb/Ott 2015, p. 25.
15 All references from the text are taken from Regel (ed.) 1906.

All the Cupido-letters are associated to theological and therefore *tugend*-related topics. The letter C is made of a ruby, representing the way out of sin – especially in the context of Mariology[16] – and the letter U is made of carbuncle, representing godly light, the Word of God and his sympathy.[17] The letter P is a turquoise, which is associated with humbleness.[18] The letters I and D are both made of *adamas* (diamond), which is associated with durability and virtuousness in faith.[19] The letter O is a chrysolite, a gem connected to virtuousness and faith in godly wisdom.[20] From a material-focused perspective, the constellation of these letters reveals – theologically spoken – a dense accumulation of stones linked to specific aspects of virtuousness in a Christian sense. As a matter of course, the inscription not only refers to theological dimensions. The more obvious connection between the child-like figure depicting Amor and the name Cupido as a self-reference to the Roman god is the theme of *minne*.

Following Engelen, ruby and carbuncle for the specific gems forming the letters C and U and their similar color could be read as a reflection of the two loving parts of one *minne*-relationship.[21] To strengthen this assumption, the *minne*-dimension of the inscription as well as the helmet itself becomes apparent when Wilhelm chooses the helmet due to the fact that it reminds him of his beloved Aglye, whom he has never really seen before.[22] In addition, Joraffin discloses to Wilhelm the *minne*-related meaning of every stone in the text (*WvÖ* vv. 4059-4101). Regarding the helmet on a metaphorical level, its gems function as representations of the catalogue of *tugend*- and *minne*-related qualities that the helmet-bearer should possess. Hence, specific gems can fall off the wreath, indicating a lack of virtuousness of its bearer – one could also state that they own the *agency* of observably judging their bearer:

ez ist dar umme also getan,
er muoz sehs lay wirde han
der in ze haubt binden schol:
daz kuonnen iu bewaeren wol
die sehs stain glantz
die ligent in dem crantz
und in der krone guldin
die uff hat daz kindelin
daz uf den helm gemacht ist.
swem der sehs wird ainiu brist
der die stain sint geziuge,
fuor war! ich daz niht liuge,
swenne der den helm stuortzet,
zehant der stain zu buortzet
der der selben tugent walt.
(*WvÖ* vv. 4055-4069)

16 Engelen 1978, p. 324-326.
17 Friess 1980, p. 136f.
18 Engelen 1978, p. 380.
19 Engelen 1978, p. 298f.
20 Friess 1980, p. 108f.; see also Engelen 1978, S. 294f.
21 Engelen 1978, p. 324-326.
22 Schneider 2004, p. 39f.

In this regard, Albrecht Jürgens speaks of a constantly threatening crisis concerning the reputation of the helmet-bearer (cf. *WvÖ* vv. 4122-4127).[23] Despite this constant threat of revealing inadequate behavior, Wilhelm decides to wear the helmet. Almut Schneider points out that afterwards, Wilhelm is able to kill his rival in love Wildomis without a fair fight and without losing a gem.[24] Wilhelm achieves the triumph over Wildomis with a certain degree of perfidiousness: He attacks with a poisoned spear and armed in a foreign armor after hiding behind a grandstand for women, where Wildomis most certainly would not suspect any opponent (*WvÖ* vv. 10227-10263). Wilhelm's way of 'dispatching' his rival attests him deceitfulness, but not *tugend* in any way. This raises the question how it is possible that all the gems stay in place, and that Wilhelm remains unmarked by the helmet?

This can be explained by the mobility of the helmet as a *tugend*-indicator. Wilhelm does not seem to wear the Cupido-helmet in this scene, because his new *zimier* is described as a twig:

> *auch het er haizzen im berait*
> *gruen als der hag ain wafenclait,*
> *ein duerrs ris sin zymmier was;*
> *er wolt niht daz*
> *in ieman do erkante.*
> (*WvÖ* vv. 10227-10232)

The absence of the Cupido-helmet reveals the possibility of laying the helmet aside, thereby preventing the gems from 'witnessing' the killing of Wildomis. It seems that the function of the helmet as an indicator for virtuousness is bound to the condition that its owner is actually wearing it.[25] The *agency*-capacity of the visibly judging gems and their ability to mark dubious transgressions is restricted to their presence in the actual *tugend*-related events. That means, if Wilhelm can simply leave behind the indicator of his virtuousness, its *agency* is extremely limited and error-prone, because thenceforth the displayed false message of these gems still being in good order is only transparent for the original bearer and the recipient of the text, who know the history of the protagonist and the helmet. It is this connection between the knowledge of the recipient about a specific gem-*agency*, together with the gems' impact on the recipient's perspective on a character, that leads to the 'talking' gems in Wolfram's von Eschenbach *Willehalm*.

3. *Willehalm* – the authority of 'talking' gems

After defeating a huge Saracen army that had besieged the city of Orange in Wolfram's epic (*Wh*), Willehalm talks to a Saracen king named Matribleiz, who is a relative of his wife. After the victory of the French army that fights alongside the margrave, Willehalm grants Matribleiz security and a safe conduct home (*Wh* st. 461,24-463,1)[26]. In this context he tells the Saracen king a story

23 Although later in the text, he is accused for this murder: Jürgens 1990, p. 411f.
24 Schneider 2004, p. 44.
25 Cf. Schneider 2004, p. 44f.
26 All references from the text are taken from Heinzle (ed.) 2009.

about a certain finding he had made earlier in an almost abandoned Saracen camp. In this camp, the margrave came across a tent; after entering it he found inside – quite to his surprise – the bodies of twenty-three kings to be layed out. Attached to their litters were golden epitaphs with inscriptions made of gems (*Wh* st. 464,25), but whereas the gems are not described in detail – they are just *edele steine* – the text reveals what they are 'saying':

dar an was ieslîch buochstap
mit edelen steinen verwieret,
al die bâre wol gezieret.
man liset dâ kuntlîche
ir namen und ir rîche,
wannen ieslîcher was erborn
und wie er hât den lîp verlorn.
(*Wh* st. 464,24-30)

The epitaphs speak of the names, birthdates and kingdoms of every fallen king and give information about the way in which they died. Willehalm literally regrets entering the tent after this finding (*mich gerou, daz ich dar under was*, *Wh* st. 465,1). He only seems able to read some of the epitaphs, and after a brief look, he turns his eyes away from the tables. Then he leaves the tent and safeguards the fallen kings and a Saracen priest, who sojourned there (st. 465,6-10). With regard to the topic of this paper, the brief mentioning of Willehalm's remorse without any further explanation, his almost evasive reading of the epitaphs, and also the timing of telling this story to a Saracen king, whom – unlike before – he grants safe conduct, needs to be analyzed in detail. All these aspects as well as the ability of gems to indicate virtuousness suggest a connection between the 'talking' gems on the epitaphs to gemstones on a shield connected to a previous killing of a Saracen king and close relative of Willehalm's wife: Arofel.

Arofel's death is a controversial topic because Willehalm kills Arofel regardless of his request for safe conduct and his defenseless situation.[27] The fact that there is no fight between the two opponents, because Arofel's armor shifts and his leg loses its protection before the two opponents can start a fight, further adds to the dubious nature of the killing. Willehalm makes use of this opportunity and cuts Arofel's leg off – sending his adversary to the ground, then killing him (*Wh* st. 79,9). Because of the absence of a fight, the shield of Arofel remains intact and therefore can be read as a reminder of the equivocal killing.[28] Arofel's shield is of extraordinary value (*Wh* st. 82,8; 202,24; 202,28-30) and is adorned with sumptuous and luminescent gems (st. 203,6f.). Willehalm leaves the intact shield as an indicator of his guilt in a monastery, which later burns to the ground.[29] Nevertheless the precious gems of the shield remain in the story told by the former abbot, and with their mentioning Willehalm is forced to tell the story of its acquisition to the king Lois, who listens to the abbot's story. Just like Wilhelm can leave behind the Cupido-helmet,

27 For a short overview concerning the different arguments about the (il-)legitimacy of Willehalm's deed and possible motivations for it cf. Nieser 2018, p. 48-77, Schröder 1974; Greenfield 1991, a.o. p. 107, 134, 168 and 181; Raucheisen 1997, p. 80; Przybilski 2000, p. 164; Bumke 2004, p. 285; Brüggen/Bumke 2014, p. 854f.
28 Cf. Nieser 2017.
29 Nieser 2017, S. 335-338.

Willehalm is able to lay aside the shield as an indicator of questionable virtuousness. Moreover, the shield as a 'witness' of the dubious deed is destroyed by the fire in the monastery. Willehalm uses this opportunity to modify his report to the king. He keeps silent about the absence of a fight, therefore the shield changes from being loot of a dubiously killed Saracen king to a trophy gained by righteously defeating his rival (*Wh* st. 203,20).[30] To put it bluntly: Willehalm temporarily overwrites the 'revealing' story of the intactness of Arofel's shield which is known only to him and the recipients, so his virtuousness seems to remain unblemished – at least within the frame of the story told.

Looking back to the tent-scene and Willehalm's evasive behaviour it seems likely that in front of multiple epitaphs telling the story of so many fallen Saracen kings, the problematic killing of Arofel and the *rêroup* (viz. stealing from corpses) might surface.[31] If this is the case, the motif of *edele steine* – working as a reminder of Willehalm's deed – is forcing its way back into the story and finally gets its own 'voice' and authority over the death-story of fallen Saracen kings. The ones who know the correct sequence of events behind Willehalm's story at the monastery – the margrave himself and the recipient – are reminded of this knowledge, as 'talking' gems claim the sovereignty about preserving the *fama* and *memoria* of these kings, thereby acting as a reminder of the culpable dimension of a patron saint (*Wh* st. 4,13). If this is plausible, the margrave's manufactured story of a seemingly fair fight with Arofel ultimately closes in on Willehalm the moment he is confronted with these 'talking' gems.

Considering these aspects, the margrave's story to Matribleiz tells the recipient much more than his interlocutor on the narrative level: Willehalm's evasive look and near escape out of the tent could be interpreted as an involuntary confrontation with his questionable deeds. Keeping this in mind, the timing of telling this story to Matribleiz and granting him safe conduct appears to be an act of remorse provoked by 'talking' gems as a reminder of *tugend* and virtuousness.

4. Back to *Gregorius* – ornamental gems operating as 'talking' gems

Considering all the previous aspects about gems as indicators of virtuousness, a re-evaluation of Gregorius' wax tablet and its importance as a reminder of his identity becomes plausible. Sophie Marshall has already demonstrated that there is an interconnectivity between the rich material and Gregorius' past. She refers to the division of the treasure of Gregorius' parents and their incest as conditions of non-circularity.[32] Marshall points out that the modification of the parents'/siblings' treasure into gold could be a solution to this familiar pseudo-circularity caused by the incest. While *gold* sets the search for Gregorius' identity in motion[33] and its value changes during the events in the text, the *tabula* – and its gems – keep their value as part of a hoarded – non-circular –

30 Nieser 2017, S. 341.
31 In addition, it is also possible, that Arofel could be one of these layed out kings and that his story was written down in gems on the memorial plaque. Because the text is not offering more details about the fallen kings, this has to remain an assumption.
32 Marshall 2016, p. 317f.
33 Marshall 2016, p. 320.

treasure that finds its way back to Gregorius. Following this argument on a basic level, it seems reasonable to state that materiality plays an important role as a marker of Gregorius' identity.

With regard to these aspects, the *tabula* combines several characteristics of the analyzed 'talking' gems. While the abovementioned scholars focus on the wax tablet as a sign of grace and Gregorius being at the point of his recovery a saint, the way of treating the table as a secret, of laying it aside and hiding it is more than remarkable and seems to be equally important. The wax tablet as an object ornamented with gems linked to the past of its owner shares a distinct characteristic with the Cupido-helmet and Arofel's shield: it is mobile and can be laid aside.

Gregorius does not lay it aside on purpose but forgets it as he leaves into exile (*Gregorius* vv 3077-3080). Before that, however, he hides it as long as possible in order to prevent it from revealing its story in public. Gregorius' flaw as a child of siblings has already come out and therefore cannot be seen or read publicly, which is why the *tabula*'s mobility connects it to the Cupido helmet and Arofel's shield. All their particular bearers pursue the same target by laying them aside or hiding them: their individual flaws should not be revealed in public. Moreover, similar to the gems on Arofel's shield, the valuable stones on Gregorius' table are able to survive a fire and find their way back into the story – still referring to the royal, yet intricate heritage of its owner. In accordance with the inscriptions on the golden epitaphs the reminding gems on the rich table can be reminiscent of a problematic past and thereby keep in mind the peccable nature of the prospective pope Gregorius – and hence his human nature.

5. Conclusion

The paradox of the status of things "being material and meaningful"[34] lies at the bottom of the considerations outlined here. Looking back on the results so far, the three different gem-set objects combine the preservation of their original message in the interplay between the text and the recipient level. Their "matter constrains meaning and vice versa"[35]: While the negative connotations for the owners of the Cupid helmet and Arofel's shield are asserted directly via precious stones formed into words, the valuable framing of the wax tablet possesses the agency of the reminding counter-voice of virtue - as opposed to the passing word on the tablet.

Moreover, there seems to be a closer connection between the shield of Arofel as well as the epitaphs in *Willehalm* and Gregorius' wax tablet. In Wolfram's text, Willehalm takes possession of the shield and, from that point onwards, carries the material reminder of his dubious deed. The wax tablet, however, is a gift that initially fulfills two essential functions as a marker of Gregorius' noble heritage and as a reminder of his intricate past. Both objects share the fate of getting burned, but with different outcomes: The 'message' of the intact shield in *Willehalm* has first to be remembered by the abbot's story and is recalled later on in a material way with the help of the epitaphs. Focusing on the role of

34 Daston 2014, p. 17.
35 Daston 2014, p. 17.

'talking' gems, the story of the dubious killing in Wolfram's text is told with the help of one fragile (burnt shield) and several imperishable message carriers (epitaphs). Considering these aspects, one may assume that Wolfram had knowledge of Gregorius' wax tablet, which combines these two dimensions.

The *tabula* as well as the valuable frame of its inscription endure the fire in Hartmann's text. The inscription, however, is weather-beaten and cannot be restored. Whereas Willehalm deliberately leaves the shield as a material reminder of his guilt behind,[36] Gregorius forgets the wax tablet when he goes into exile – to atone for his past that is partially written on the *tabula*. In both cases, the left-behind objects change their messages due to the influence of the elements but still are able to maintain their functionality in the text. Despite the transformation of both message carriers, the 'talking' gems are able to act as ultimately indestructible and constant reminders of the dubious past of their bearers. Their material value matches the level of virtuousness they are demanding of their owners. If they do not meet these high standards, no matter if forgotten, laid aside or burnt, the gems possess – to various degrees, of course – the *agency* to indicate individual (lack of) virtuousness and seem to be bound to the fate of their owners.[37] The gems on Arofel's shield keep their message that has to be reclaimed by the story told by the golden epitaphs, but the gems on Gregorius' *tabula* proved to be a special case. With the transformation of the wax tablet changes the function of its 'talking' gems: the vanishing of the inscription and hence of the story of Gregorius' intricate past seems to recode the message of the valuable frame from being a link to his noble heritage to framing a story of a prospective pope that has yet to be told. Thus, the 'talking' gems on Gregorius' *tabula* do not only serve the purpose to remember the problematic past of a prospective pope. The *tabula* also 'reframes' Gregorius' past and marks the space for a story about the papal future not only as one of a ruing incest child but also as one of a child of god.

In conclusion, the corresponding meanings of the messages, which – at least in the chosen examples – are in conflict with the respective biographies of the protagonists, are generated in different ways. The gems of the Cupido helmet acquire meaning through the theologically significant materiality and the second carrier of the gems – the little Cupido-figure. The stones on Arofel's shield can only assert their significance in contradiction to Willehalm's deliberately chosen perspective in his report and by his remorse in view of the gem-set epitaphs. The function of the gemstones on the wax tablet, on the other hand, can only take effect if they prove to be the enduring element from Gregorius' past in the weathered narrative of the tablet. What they all have in common is the conflict of their owners with a virtue-associated theme, which is negotiated in the intermediate level of the respective texts, in which the admonishing 'voice' of the gems also comes to play an important role.

With this finding of a materially bound, 'righteous' voice that can be heard in the interplay between the textual level and the level of reception, this contribution should be understood as a stimulus for further reflections on the agency of things as dissenting voices in the face of dubious biographies of characters that had rather remained hidden in the text.

36 Nieser 2017, p. 337f.
37 Cf. Lieb/Ott 2015, p. 25.

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