COMMENTATIONES AD RECENTIOREM LATINITATEM SPECTANTES

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THE "EPIGRAMMATIC" EPIC.
EKKEHART'S IV *VERSUS AD PICTURAS* AND THE POETIC TRADITION

ABSTRACT. Smolak Kurt, *The "epigrammatic" epic. Ekkehart's IV "Versus ad Picturas" and the poetic tradition* (Epika „epigramatyczna". Ekkeharta *Versus ad Picturas* wobec tradycji poetyckiej).

As a consequence of the large variety of poetic genres dealing with biblical material in Christian-Latin literature of Late Antiquity, in the 11th century the two extremely opposite forms of poetic expression were artificially combined, namely continuous epic narration and epigrammatic conciseness of the so called *tituli*, that is to say metrical inscriptions which were meant to explain wall paintings or mosaics of selected biblical topics. By order of Aribo, archbishop of Mainz, Ekkehart IV of St. Gall composed an "epigrammatic epic", which was to cover the wide range of the entire Bible from Genesis to Apocalypse, contemporary exegesis partly included. Aribo was supposed to select those "epigrammes" from this "biblical epic" which he needed for a new decoration of the cathedral – a project, however, which was never realised. Ekkehart's highly manneristic poetic creation, preserved only in his autograph, MS 393 of St. Gall, remained unparalleled. Nevertheless, it is an important testimony of the experimental and innovative character of medieval Latin poetry in the period of transition from monastic literary production of the previous centuries to the golden age of medieval Latin classics, which originated in the cathedral schools, during the late 11th and the 12th centuries.

Keywords: Ekkehart IV of St. Gaull, St. Gaull, Poeta doctus, Medieval Latin Poetry, 11th Century Culture, Biblical Epic, Tituli, Mainz-Cathedral, Holy Languages, Archbishop Aribo, MS St. Gaull 393

1. LITERARY PRESUPPOSITIONS AND CONSTITUENT FACTORS

1.1 *POETA DOCTUS*

In 2004 Stefan Weber published a monograph, titled *Ekkehardus poeta qui et doctus*[1], its topic being the poetic work of Ekkehart IV of Sankt Gallen, who

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[1] Stefan Weber, *Ekkehardus poeta qui et doctus*: Ekkehart IV. von St. Gallen und sein gelehrt poetisches Wirken (Nordhausen: Verlag Bautz, Traugott 2004).

lived from about 980 to 1060[2]. The two words prefixed to the attribute of *poeta*, namely *qui et*, which remind the readers of the usual formulation of a late antique and mediaeval *supernomen*, raise special attention, since they mark a modification of the familiar term *poeta doctus*, which with classical philologists evokes specific associations. There is a German Wikipedia-article on *poeta doctus*, though of poor quality and without any keywords[3]. Those, however, might be the following notions: Hellenism, Alexandrine poetry, Callimachus, Propertius, Horace. Already Ausonius and Sidonius Apollinaris would probably be missing. Possibly vernacular writers would be mentioned, such as Dante or Milton, perhaps also Goethe from the German realm. The ideal of the Romantic Movement in English and German literature largely excludes the *poeta doctus* in an Alexandrine sense, modern and post-modern eras – whatever it might be – do not show conformity in this respect. The item, however, which in the keywords and associations not only of traditional classical philologists – they could perhaps mention one or the other neolatin poet such as Johannes Secundus or Jakob Balde – would most probably be missing, is the Latin literature of the Middle Ages in spite of its enormous extent, which, as is well known, surpasses by far the total amount of Roman and late antique literature, even if the latter had come down to us without any loss. Referring to the Middle Ages, the Wikipedia-article quoted above only mentions the scholastic genre of the Commentary to Sentences! It is another well-known fact that the exclusion of almost a thousand years of Latin literary production goes back to causes related to the history of scholarship and their philosophical basis, topics that, of course, cannot be dealt with in this article.

Before turning to my main topic, the epigrammatic epic, as I call it, I would like to deal with a poem of a mediaeval *poeta doctus* in a more or less traditional sense. It is a bitter invective against a man, who attacked the author demanding his pay, *census*, probably for a piece of poetry, by trying to strangle him. In this insulting poem the poet wishes his enemy to burn in the flames of Styx (here apparently confused with Pyriphlegethon) together with Jude, to meet with an end as gruesome as that of Ischariot, who, according to Matthew 27, 5, hanged himself, or of Palinurus in Virgil's Aeneid, who was drowned to death[4], since the

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[2] On Ekkehart in general see: Steffen Patzold, Eccardus, St. Galler Klostergeschichten, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003); Franz Brunhölzl, Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters, vol. II (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1992), 438–445; Hans F. Haefele, "Ekkehard IV" in Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon, vol. II, ed. Kurt Ruh et al. (Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter 1980), 455–65.

[3] http://de.wikipwdia.org/wiki/Poeta_doctus (February 15th, 2013).

[4] Vergilius, Aeneis 5, 860. It may be not by mere coincidence that just Jude and Palinurus are combined here, for according to a popular belief in either kind of dying not only the body, but also the soul is killed by being prevented from evading the body into the air, cp. e.g. Statius, Thebais 9, 264; Synesius, Epistola 4, p. 642 Hercher, and also the biblical episode of the herd of swine of Gerasa (Lk 8, 32–33).

enemy's menacing words had surpassed by far the fury of Allecto and Megaera in wickedness. The author compares himself with the fast running Pelops and the biblical dwarf Zacchaeus of Luke 19, whereas he parallels his enemy with the giant Briareus from Greek mythology, with the cruel King Herod from the Bible and the terrifying tyrant Dionysius of Syracuse from ancient history. He paraphrases Death with Lethe, the river of forgetting in Hades, and twice makes use of the adjective *Stigialis*, a rarely attested neologism of mediaeval Latin. This *poeta doctus* adopts an attitude different from that of Callimachus and his followers, who by appealing to the readers' education place them on their own level of knowledge in order to achieve an elitist uniformity between producer and recipient. The mediaeval poet, however, writing against the background of the self experienced dramatic situation, possibly described in the poem on the basis of a biblical reminiscence, namely the exclusion of groups of Israelites from priesthood, which they affected, because of not being registered in the list, *census* (!), of genuine Israel clans[5], wants to superelevate the dramatic quality by using items of traditional education, an education which exceeds that of ancient and renaissance *poetae docti*, since it includes detailed knowledge of the Bible: biblical characters are presented as of equal standard with those from classical mythology and history, they even seem to be interchangeable, thus creating a parallel world of mythology, for which testimony is found in many a place in the later Middle Ages[6]. The attitude, which the poet adopted in the poem just dealt with, becomes evident against the background of the rest of his œuvre: for Hugo of Orléans, who proudly called himself *Primas*, in some respect a forerunner of Francois Villon, is a master of mannerist metrical epigrams and of realistic satires against the vices of his own age in modern rhythmic verse[7]. His fifteenth

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[5] 2 Ezr (= Nehemia) 7, 64.

[6] For this cultural phenomenon see: Kurt Smolak, "Mythologie der Befreiung", Wiener Humanistische Blätter 33 (1992): 26–46; Reinhart Herzog, "Metapher – Exegese – Mythos. Interpretationen zur Entstehung eines biblischen Mythos in der Literatur der Spätantike", in Terror und Spiel, ed. Manfred Fuhrmann (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1971), 157–186; in this process of amalgamation of biblical 'history' and pagan myth the *Ecloga Theoduli*, a probably 9th-century 'Streitgedicht' between the allegories of *Aletia*, "Truth", who represents the Bible, and *Pseustis*, "Ly", who represents pagan mythology, played an important role, since it was used as a text of scholastic instruction. But whereas in the *Ecloga* the contending parties are in unbridgeable opposition to each other, in the successive centuries they got reconciled. This can also be observed in renaissance figurative art, e.g. in the tapestries on the Seven Mortal Sins by Pieter Coeke van Aelst (1502–1550), kept in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (Inv. Nr. XXXV, 1–7) and, although not as a complete series, in Madrid (Patrimonio Nacional) and New York (Piepont Morgan Library).

[7] For Hugo's poems see: Wilhelm Meyer, "Die Oxforder Gedichte des Primas (des Magisters Hugo von Orleans)", in Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse 1907, Heft 1, 75–111; Heft 2, 113–175, 231–234 (reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970). The poem dealt with is contained in the Oxford-collection as piece XV.

poem in the Oxford collection I referred to reads in parts like a work of Sidonius or like Martial 5, 28, an epigram which by the way shows thematic parallels with Hugo's 'coat poems'[8]. What Hugo, Callimachus and Sidonius have in common is the fact, that they recur to a stock of knowledge presupposed in the recipient, namely a detailed acquaintance with mythology and with what was used to be called factual knowledge; only Hugo requests also intimacy with the Bible, although Sidonius was also a Christian. To give a more complex picture of mediaeval Latin learned poetry, I shortly add another example, as well taken from the lyrical genre. Only a sufficiently educated person was able to interpret the expression *triplex Charybdis* as three spermatic ejaculations during an amorous night. This metaphor appears in a thirteen's century Goliardic poem, contained in the Latin manuscript Nr. 1365 of the Austrian National Library[9], and is based on a passage of Isidore's of Seville Etymologiae (20, 18, 5). There Charybdis is said to spit her flood three times a day: *ter autem in die erigit* (!) *fluctus... accipit aquas ut vomat*.

1.2 EPIC AND BIBLE

Instead of the just mentioned knowledge of glossaries, commentaries and late antique or early mediaeval antiquarian literature, in Christian times the Bible had to be considered as a prerequisite for understanding literary products, since it was taken for a 'super-text', which in its core contains the whole treasure of what men could know[10]. Along with the 'Word of God' exegetical writings served as main texts of reference in mediaeval Europe. Already in Hellenistic Jewry – Philo of Alexandria may be mentioned as the most outstanding example – both factors, Bible and exegesis, attracted ancient literary genres: the latter the didactic poem, the commentary, the philosophical treatise and rhetoric, the former all the poetic genres including lyric and drama, such as the Exagoge by a certain Ezechiel, who dramatized the Book of Exodus[11]. In the field of Latin culture, on the contrary, biblical drama appeared only late in the shape

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[8] Hugo's 'coat poem(s)' is (are) contained in the Oxford-collection as piece(s) II. For the genre of 'Mantelgedichte', a species of begging poetry, see: Therese Latzke, "Der Topos Mantelgedicht", Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch 6 (1969): 109–31; ead., "Die Mantelgedichte des Primas Hugo von Orléans und Martial", Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch 5 (1968): 54–58.

[9] This poem was first edited by Peter Dronke, Mediaeval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968²), 369–371, notes 372–374; for corrections of the text and a complex interpretation of the poem see: Kurt Smolak, "Bemerkungen zu zwei mittellateinischen Liebesgedichten", Wiener Studien 98 (1984): 203–215.

[10] Similar 'supertexts' appear in various cultural regions of Europe: Homer, Virgil's Aeneid, Dante's *Commedia*, Shakespeare's works as a whole, Goethe's *Faust* I and II.

[11] Clemens Alexandrinus, Stromateis 1, 23, preserved 269 trimetres of this Jewish-Hellenistic drama.

of liturgical plays, which in their turn served as the basis of baroque oratories and popular Passion Plays. In Christian Latin literature, on the contrary, the traditionally most distinguished literary genre, the epic, was the first to take possession of the Bible. As early as in last years of Constantine's reign the Spanish presbyter Iuvencus wrote his *Evangelia*, four hexametric books paralleling the four canonical gospels, although episodes from Matthew's gospel prevail[12]. The metrical paraphrase of prose texts, which used to be practised in schools at the level of the *grammaticus*, provided the requisite technical tools. In the *praefatio* Iuvencus explains what his work is meant to be: an epic proclaiming truth, opposed to the poetic fictions and lies of Homer and Virgil[13].

Already in Late Antiquity Iuvencus had a couple of followers, whose works found their way into the mediaeval canon of poets studied in monastic or cathedral schools. First of all Sedulius, who being a psalmodist and thus engaged in lyrics found himself entitled to an epic presentation of the gospels[14]. He made a fifth book precede the four of his forerunner, in which he explains the exegetic parameters, namely typological interpretations, according to which the gospels should be read. Following the ancient definition of the epic genre, this procedure was legitimate in so far, as no difference was made between the epic subspecies, which only in modern times came to be named didactic poem, and epic poetry in its strict sense. Correspondingly, the decidedly anti-Lucretian didactic epic of Marius Victorius, titled Alethia, "truth" (one is reminded of Iuvencus' *praefatio*), is ranked with biblical epic poetry of late antiquity. With Marius Victorius the inclusion of the Old Testament, which through typological exegesis had already been prepared in the first book of Sedulius, develops a life of its own. The author's primary interest lay in explaining the creation of the world against the godless physics of the atomists and in demonstrating, that phenomena liable to scientific discussion, such as the Big Flood or the destruction of Sodom and

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[12] See: Reinhart Herzog, C. Vettius Aquilinus Iuvencus "C. Vettius Aquilinus Iuvencus", In Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike, vol. V: Restauration und Erneuerung 284–374 n. Chr., edited by Reinhart Herzog, Peter Lebrecht Schmidt, 331–36. München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1989, 332.

[13] Iuvencus' *praefatio* has often been dealt with, e.g. Furio Murru, "Analisi semiologica e strutturale della *praefatio* agli Evangeliorum libri di Giovenco", Wiener Studien 93 (1980): 133–151; Franz Quadlbauer, "Zur *invocatio* des Iuvencus", Grazer Beiträge 2 (1974): 189–212; P.G. Van der Nat, "Die Praefatio der Evangelienparaphrase des Juvencus", in Romanitas et Christianitas. Studia Latina Iano Henrico Waszink a.d. VI Kal. Nov.A. MCMLXXIII XIII lustra completi oblata, ed. W. den Boer et al. (Amsterdam, London: North-Holland Publishing, 1973), 249–257.

[14] For Sedulius' poetical programme see: Kurt Smolak, "*Niliacae bibli*. Anmerkungen zum Anfang des Carmen Paschale des Sedulius", in Gedenkschrift Ulrike Horak (P. Horak), Papyrologica Florentina 34 (2004), 495–500; on Sedulius' relationship to Iuvencus see: Salvatore Costanza, "Da Giovenco a Sedulio. I proemi degli *'Evangeliorum libri'* e del *'Carmen Paschale'*", Cultura Classica e Cristiana 6 (1985): 254–286.

Gomorra by heavenly fire, have their origins in God's constant interaction with men by interfering in the material world[15].

Apart from the just outlined tradition of biblical epic there is an extensive epic paraphrase of the initial books of the Old Testament up to Judges, preserved only in fragments, the – pseudonymous – author of which used to be called Cyprianus Gallus or Cyprianus poeta or Heptateuchdichter[16]. In this poem the epic hexameter totally equales the narrative prose of the paraphrased text. This statement must be drawn from the fact, that wherever lyrical passages appear in the text of reference, such as Moses' song of thanks after crossing the Red Sea, the author uses lyrical metres as the hendecasyllabus to render them properly by marking the formal difference between epic narrative and lyrics, which is an unheard destruction of a fundamental law of the epic genre by classical standards.

In order to offer a condensed, but (almost) all comprising image of the state of epic biblical poetry of Latin Late Antiquity at least partly accessible to Ekkehart, another four impresses must be brought to attention. First of all the biblical Virgilian cento: Whereas Ausonius in the *pars privata* of his *cento nuptialis* turned Virgilian verses, that is to say Virgil himself, who according to tradition was rather reserved towards women[17], in an obscene character with the scope of entertaining the readers by an effect against expectation, the Christian lady Faltonia Baeticia Proba, who composed a biblical Virgilian cento probably in the middle of the fourth century, was praised to offer an "improved Virgil", *Maronem mutatum in melius*, that is to say a Virgil, whose basically Christian status of mind was to be elucidated by rearranging his verses or parts of them[18].

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[15] On Marius Victorius in general see: Michele Cutino, *L'Alethia di Claudio Mario Vittorio. La parafrasi biblica come forma di espressione teologica* (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum: 2009); Ugo Martorelli, *Redeat verum. Studi sulla tecnica poetica dell'Alethia di Claudio Mario Vittorio* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008); Helge Hans Homey, *Studien zur Alethia des Claudius Marius Victorius* (Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität 1972).

[16] The traditional denomination, *Cyprianus Gallus*, was still adopted by Rudolf Peiper in his edition in Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 23 (Pragae, Vindobonae, Lipsiae: F. Tempsky, G. Freytag, 1891) and by Martin Schanz et al., Geschichte der römischen Literatur, vol. IV, 2 (München: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1920), 655 (Alphabetisches Register), whereas Ludmilla Krestan prefers 'Cyprianus' (without any specification), in Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum 2 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann 1957), 477–481; Herzog, Bibelepik 1, 53–60, calls the anonymous poet 'Heptateuchdichter', an expression already used in Martin Schanz et al. 671 (Generalregister).

[17] Aelius Donatus, Vita Vergilii 11.

[18] These are the words of an anonymous who wrote a poetical preface to Proba's Cento in a copy dedicated to emperor Arcadius, 5–6: *dignare Maronem / mutatum in melius divino agnoscere sensu*, in Poetae Christiani Minores, ed. Carolus Schenkl in Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 16 (Pragae, Vindobonae, Lipsiae: F. Tempsky, 1888); generally on Proba see: Kurt Smolak, "*Maro mutatus in melius*? Zum Phänomen des literarischen Zitierens in der christlich-lateinischen Spätantike", in Text und Kontext, ed. Oswald Panagl, Ruth Wodak (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004), 51–66; Herzog, Bibelepik 1, 14–51.

Secondly the three books De laudibus Dei by Dracontius, who lived in Vandal Africa in the second half of the fifth century are to be mentioned[19]. He wrote a panegyric to God in epic hexameters, praising his benefits towards men by a well meditated selection of episodes and praying for liberation from prison, since he had been incarcerated by King Gunthamund for political reasons. It must not be excluded, that the poet by outlining the benevolence of the forgiving God aimed at encouraging the Vandal ruler to pardon him, which, however, proved to be a failure, for it was only King Thrasamund, who granted him amnesty. This highly subjective private poem of Dracontius, which goes far beyond of what traditionally was supposed to fit with the attitudes of epic poetry, has its counterpart in an objective, public one, and this is the third instance. In 544 the Roman subdeacon Arator recited his paraphrase of the Acts of the Apostles in epic hexameters in the church of S. Petri ad vincula in Rome[20]. The public recital of poetic panegyrics to Saints, in the special case of a paraphrase of the Acts of the Apostles to Peter and Paul, who long before had adopted the protective function of the pagan *penates*, corresponds to the public recitations of verse-panegyrics to rulers, whose task in Italy of the Arrian Ostrogoths in the sixth century had passed to the Catholic Church. Contrary to Dracontius' panegyric to God himself, whom he expected to help him in his deplorable situation as a prisoner, Arator's panegyric to Peter and Paul was intended to implore their protection of Rome from the approaching troops of emperor Justinian's general Belisarius – in vain, though: in 546 the Byzantine units invaded the City of Peter and Paul. Finally the historical biblical epic of Alcimus Avitus, bishop of Vienne, has to be added[21]. Its title De spiritalis historiae gestis, be it original or not, exactly meets the poet's intention: the Bible offers subject matter for his epic, which should raise traditional Roman epic poetry to a higher level: according to Horace, *ars poetica* 73–74 *gesta* is one of those notions, which constitute the epic genre in contents and in form: *res gestae regumque ducumque et tristia bella / quo scribi possent numero monstravit Homerus*. Avitus' epic satisfies the definition of the Roman theoretician of poetry, for God Father, the central character in the initial

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[19] On Dracontius see: Myriam De Gaetano, Scuola e Poetere in Draconzio (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2009); Luigi Castagna, Studi Draconziani (1992–1996), (Napoli: Loffredi Editore, 1997); Claude Moussy, Colette Camus, Dracontius Œuvres, tome I, Louanges de Dieu, Livres I et II (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1985), 7–136.

[20] For Arator see: Johannes Schwind, Sprachliche und exegetische Beobachtungen zu Arator (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995); Richard Hillier, Arator on the Acts of the Apostles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Johannes Schwind, Arator-Studien (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990): Schwind was the first to demonstrate that the prose-inserts in the metrical composition are not genuine, but should be dated into the Early Middle Ages.

[21] On Avitus see: Nicole Hecquet-Noti, Avit de Vienne, Histoire spirituelle, tome I (chants I–III), (Paris: Les éditions de Cerf, 1999), 23–195; Alexander Arweiler, *Die Imitation antiker und spätantiker Literatur in der Dichtung „De spiritalis historiae gestis" des Alcimus Avitus* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999).

books, is apostrophized as a king in the Old Testament in many instances, starting with Hester 13, 15, and Christ, according to his own words to Pilate, John 18, 37 calls himself king (*regumque*!), whose kingdom is not from this world. He wages 'war' (*bella*!) against the demons and the Lord of darkness, Satan[22], and last, but not least: he achieved memorable deeds (*res gestae*!), such as healing ill and bringing dead back to life. Just like Dracontius Avitus chose significant and soteriologically relevant episodes from the Old and the New Testament, not for subject reasons, however, but in order to produce a historical epic, from Ennius onwards a typically Roman subspecies of narrative poetry, based on an entirely biblical foundation. In doing so he does not present his subject material in the form of *annales*, but he picks out some landmarks, *res gestae*, of God, which he treats with remarkable poetic licence, though he asserts in the prose preface to his epic to refrain from adopting any *licentia poetarum* which he identifies with lying[23]. To give an example: He was the first to introduce the devil as an acting and speaking character, apart from his appearance as speaking serpent in Genesis 3[24], a feature still reflected in the so called Prologue in Heaven in Goethe's Faust I. It is a noteworthy fact, that Avitus, in a literary respect, fulfils what the inventor of biblical poetry in Latin literature, Iuvencus, demands in his *praefatio* already mentioned, namely genuine epic poetry vs. the lies of poets, that means poetry which draws a line between itself and the most prominent representatives of classical epic, but tops them in its ethical value without changing their style and setting, as they believed.

The previous quite lengthy *parecbasis* – to use a term of rhetoric model speeches, *dictiones* – should give a survey of the literary situation, in which the products commonly summed up as biblical epics, came to meet at the intersection of Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages in the field of Latin culture. There is no rounded off picture of a genre, apart from the use of the hexameter, which on the one hand is not necessarily linked to epic poetry and on the other hand, as shown before, was not applied with consequence, if one considers the practice of the Heptateuchdichter. Nor can the common subject, the Bible, fulfil the demand of constituting a literary genre, as also in Christian lyrics the main topics are taken from the Holy Scriptures to a large degree. It is only the poem

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[22] The concept of *Christus militans* had been quite popular from Late Antiquity onwards. It is based on the apocryph Gospel of Nicodemus (in the Latin area called Acta Pilati) 7–8 (23–24). An instructive example in figurative art is given in an early 6th-century (partly restored) mosaic in the so called Oratorio di S. Pier Crisologo (or di S. Andrea) or Cappella arcivescovile in the Archbishop's Palace in Ravenna, where Christ in armour is shown crushing the lion and the dragon according to Ps 90, 13 and bearing his cross as if it were a sword.

[23] Alcimi Ecdicii Aviti Viennensis episcopi opera quae supersunt, ed. Rudolf Peiper (Berolini: Apud Weidmannos, 1883), 202.

[24] See: Martina Eisenberger, *Non equidem invideo*… Die Entwicklung des Teufels von der Schlange zum epischen Protagonisten in ausgewählten lateinischen poetischen Darstellungen des Sündenfalls (Wien: Diplomarbeit, not published in print, 2009), 88–122.

of Avitus that might meet the criteria of an epic in the classical sense, as worked out by Dieter Schaller in connection with his studies on the so called Epic on Charlemagne ('Aachener Karlsepos'), critically reviewing the classifications of Klaus Thraede[25].

<div align="center">1.3 THE LATE ANTIQUE TITULI</div>

The wide range of hexametric biblical poetry – this name seems to fit better than the traditional term of 'biblical epic', which Herzog used as a title of his epoch making monograph quoted in note 12 – permitted or rather encouraged authors to go on experimenting within the coordinates of hexameter and Bible, since in spite of Iuvencus, Sedulius and Avitus there was no poetic text of reference of greater authority than Virgil's Aeneid. The attempt to present the complete Bible from Genesis to Apocalypse and not only selected landmarks poetically was such an experiment and will be treated in the following chapters. It goes without saying that the presentation of this enormous subject matter could not be managed with the traditional means of narrative hexametric poetry – for this not even an epic as large as Nonnus' Dionysiaca would have been sufficient, the only poems to deliver a possible parallel might be the gigantic Sanskrit epics. On the other hand, there was a late antique genre available, also written in dactylic verses, hexameters or elegiac distiches – in this case the notion of a literary genre is justified: what I mean are the so called *tituli*, epigrams describing and explaining wall paintings in churches or pictures on vessels, which illustrate biblical scenes. Along with cycles of *tituli* accompanying selected images of Elpidius Rusticus, Pseudo-Claudian and Ambrose – if the latter is genuine has be doubted, though – it is above all the so called Dittochaeon (Ditropheum?) of Prudentius, which had a considerable impact – last, but not least due to the high reputation of its author[26]. Contrary to the cycles just mentioned, this work offers, in 48 hexametric epigrams (an additional one is spurious), each consisting of three lines, selected scenes from the fall from grace of Adam and Eve down to the opening of the seventh seal

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[25] Dieter Schaller, "La poesia epica", in Lo spazio letterario del Medioevo, vol. I, tom. II, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo et al. (Roma: Salerno Editore, 1993), 9–42, on biblical epic 16–25; Klaus Thraede, "Epos", in Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum 5 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1962), 98–1042, on biblical epic 1014–1042.

[26] For a profound introduction, edition, German translation and commentary see: Renate Pillinger, *Die Tituli Historiarum oder das sogenannte Dittochaeon des Prudentius* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980); for details of structure of Prudentius' *tituli* and its problematic title see: Kurt Smolak, *Ut pictura poesis? Symmikta zum so genannten Dittochaeon des Prudentius*, in Text und Bild. Tagungsbeiträge, ed. Victoria Zimmerl-Panagl, Dorothea Weber (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 167–195.

of the Apocalypse, that is to say a survey of the complete history of salvation on the basis of landmarks. There was a lot of discussion going on about the question, whether the epigrams referred to a real cycle of paintings in a church like the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome or of S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, or whether they served a purely literary purpose and only pretended to comment on pictures[27].

2. EKKEHART IV

The use of hexametric *tituli* in sacred rooms giving advise to the readers how to interpret Christian mural paintings has survived in the Middle Ages. Those in St. George's Church in Reichenau-Oberzell in the Lake of Constance, which are dated as early as ninth century by some scholars, but regarded as belonging to the ottonian period by the majority, supply evidence for this tradition[28]. Below each picture there is a *titulus* consisting of one elegiac distich – unfortunately most of them are in poor condition. In the early Middle Ages the monastery of Reichenau was a cultural centre of primary importance and during its prime time was in constant cultural contact with the nearby situated monastery of St. Gallen, an equally active cultural stronghold[29]. Last but not least Ekkehart himself has to be mentioned, who already before his stay at Mainz had written *tituli* for a cycle of wall paintings showing the history of St. Gall, the Irish founder of this monastery. In this south German monastic area Ekkehart received his individual coinage. He was the first and, as far as I can see, the only to present the complete Bible – that means in a more comprehensive way than Prudentius – in a continuous *narratio*, which is the basic structure of an 'annalistic' historical epic. However, at times the form of the *tituli*, in our concrete case two hexameters, is broken, namely if a scene requires up to ten lines, that is to say if the epic element takes possession of the epigram. Ekkehart's life-time still belongs to the epoch of literary experiments and the origin of new genres without any reference to classical literature, such as liturgical sequences, the earliest liturgical plays and the earliest representative of the Latin beast epic, the so called *Ecbasis cuiusdam captivi*.

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[27] Pillinger 18 is hardly right in assuming that Prudentius described the iconographic decoration of a real church.

[28] Walter Berschin, Ulrich Kuder, Reichenauer Wandmalerei 840–1120. Goldbach, Reichenau Oberzell St. Georg, Reichenau Niederzell St. Peter und Paul (Heidelberg: Mattes Verlag, 2012); Kurt Martin, Die ottonischen Wandbilder der St. Georgskirche Reichenau – Oberzell (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbeke Verlag, 1975).

[29] For the high standard of culture in the monasteries of Reichenau and St. Gallen see: Walter Berschin, Eremus und Insula. St. Gallen und die Reichenau im Mittelalter. Modell einer lateinischen Literaturlandschaft (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2005²).

Because of his prolific didactic activities in St. Gall Ekkehart was summoned to Mainz by the metropolitan and archbishop Aribo to be the head of the local cathedral school. After the cathedral had burned down in 1009, Aribo planned to have it rebuilt. With this project of his patron in mind, Ekkehart motivates his epigrammatic biblical epic with a corresponding commission, namely to compose *tituli* for the projected decoration of the cathedral with mural paintings. This might as well be true, but it can also be just a polite gesture, accompanying the classical topic of poetry following the order of a superior person. The predominant motive for producing this piece of work, however, must have been a different one. For right from the start it was a well known fact, that – even assuming most generous dimensions of a newly built cathedral – it would have been impossible to squeeze in about 860 hexameters with leonine rhyme describing about 400 biblical scenes, though of small size. The entire title of Ekkehart's poem runs as follows: *Versus ad Picturas Domus domini Mogontinae Veteris testamenti et novi Aribone archiepiscopo Jubente modulati*, "Verses accompanying the pictures of the Old and the New Testament in the House of the Lord in Mainz, composed by the order of Archbishop Aribo". There follows an advise to Aribo: *eligantur qui picturis conveniant*, "verses should be elected which match the pictures". If concrete talks had taken place between Aribo and Ekkehart concerning the program of the projected paintings, there would not have originated a work consisting of *tituli*-epigrams for sure, the dimension of which was that of a lengthy epic book telling continuously and chronologically, that is to say like a genuine historical epic of Ennian type, about the past and the future, about the beginning and the ending of history. A genuine epic is by all means more voluminous, but the extreme concentration and shortening of such an ample subject matter follows a tradition of epic reception in Latin literature: so the Homeric epics of twenty four rhapsodies each, became the twelve books of the Aeneid, from which arose the six books of the heroic epic poetry on the 'soldier of Christ', St. Martin of Tours, written by Paulinus of Périgeux, which in turn were shortened into four books by Venantius Fortunatus in his panegyric epic on St. Martin. And above all: one should be aware, that even Prudentius' Christian epic, the *Psychomachia*, consists of only 915 verses. Ekkehart, on his turn, transfers a constituent epigrammatic element, namely brevity and conciseness, to what had been a narrative epic subject in Christian Latin literature since Late Antiquity, the Bible, thus enlarging the traditional literary function of the epigrammatic genre and, at the same time, taming the epic narrative style by reducing it to the most necessary information. This, however, presupposes a profound knowledge of the subject matter, that is the Bible, on the part of the recipient, since pictures, as demanded in the *tituli*-genre, inform the viewer only partially. From this point of view Ekkehart acts as a *poeta doctus* like the initially mentioned Hugo Primas of Orléans, but exclusively with reference to another scientific stratum, namely not to mythology and factual knowledge in

general, but to the Bible, its exegesis and various other items of expert knowledge. Without being familiar with exegesis a lot remains incomprehensible or seems to diverge from the biblical text. These divergences, however, are always supported by exegesis.

The text of the *versus ad picturas* is preserved only in Ekkehart's autograph in Codex Sangallensis 393, pp. 197–238, and is equipped with the author's glosses and variations. The poem in question has been recently edited critically, commented and translated into German for the first time by my former Phd-student Helena Leithe-Jasper in her thesis of doctorate[30]. The following examples, which are to prove what has been stated about Ekkehart's method, give the wording of Leithe-Jasper's edition.

2.1 EXAMPLES

2.1.1 The first day of creation (verses 1–4)

Principio rerum lux primo facta dierum[31],
arida cum cęlis, magnum genus et Michahelis.

Luciferum verbis temerantem sceptra superbis
In primo flore plasmator nudat honore.

"In the beginning of things light was created on the first day, moreover the earth, heaven and the great race of Michael. Lucifer, who desecrated God's rule with arrogant words, was robbed of his honourable position by the creator in his first prime".

Text of Genesis 1,1–4[32]

In principio, creavit Deus caelum et terram. Terra autem erat inanis et vacua, et tenebrae super faciem abyssi, et spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas. Dixitque Deus, "Fiat lux". Et facta est lux. Et vidit Deus lucem quod esset bona, et divisit lucem a tenebris.

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[30] Helena Leithe-Jasper, *Versus ad Picturas Domus domini Mogontinae* Ekkeharts IV. Edtion, Übersetzung und Kommentar (Wien: not published in print, 2001); although Leihte-Jasper follows mostly the first critical edition, published by Johannes Egli, Der Liber benedictionum Ekkeharts IV. nebst den kleineren Dichtungen aus dem Codex Sangallensis 393 zum ersten Mal vollständig herausgegeben und erläutert (St. Gallen: Fehr Verlag, 1909), she gives separated lists both of the glosses and of the textual alternatives proposed by the author himself as well as an *apparatus criticus*.

[31] Though the aphaeresis in *est* after *primo*, according to classical metric, would not affect the metre, the addition of the modal verb in the manuscript has to be regarded rather as an interlinear gloss (see: Leithe-Jasper 23) than as a correction; for it is a matter of fact that medieval Latin poetry, metrical as well as rhythmical, increasingly strives to avoid any kind of hiatus – and so does Ekkehart.

[32] Text and translation (Douay-Rheims Translation) of the Genesis passages are taken from the most recent edition: The Vulgate Bible, vol. I. The Pentateuch, ed. Swift Edgar (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Contrary to the biblical report, but following patristic and already Jewish exegesis, which can refer to Isaiah 14, 12–14 as an authority, Ekkehart interprets the separation of light and darkness on the first day as the creation of angels and the immediately following fall of arrogant Lucifer[33]. By calling the angels *per antonomasiam*, "the great race of Michael" he mentions the name of Lucifer's successful rival without describing their fight in an epic manner – a salon piece of epigrammatic conciseness and at the same time a significant appeal of a *poeta doctus* to the knowledge of his readers. In Ekkehart's exegesis reference to an episode from the New Testament is added, namely Luke 10, 18, where the passage from Isaiah is quoted, but with Lucifer's name changed to Satan, and where the statement concerning the bright glare of the former angel, who falls down like a lightening, is found as an enlargement. To describe this glare, the author uses the word *honor*, which also contains the aesthetic element of shine[34], an element that cannot be rendered in the translation, unless by adding a second attribute such as 'splendid' to the 'honourable position'. Ekkehart, however, activates this notion by using *primo flore*, 'in his first prime'. But there is still more: by putting the noun *arida*, 'mainland', instead of the biblical *terra*, 'earth', in verse two, Ekkehart anticipates a word, which in the Vulgate belongs to the third day of creation[35]; when treating with that day he replaces it by *tellus*, which is phonetically close to *terra*. In doing so he establishes a sophisticated connection between day one and day three: for whereas *arida* according to Isidore of Sevilla, Etymologiae 14, 2 (with reference to Genesis 1, 10) is the proper denomination of *terra*, the noun *tellus*, still according to a pseudo-etymology of Isidore, Etymologiae 14, 1, designates the earth under the aspect of fertility, because we gather, *tollimus*, fruits from it. Since on the same third day God ordered the earth to bring about grass and fruit trees, only the use of *tellus* seemed to be appropriate (9–10):

> Tertia telluris dies et maris aucta figuris:
> Ad domini verba surrexit arbor et herba.

> "The third day was abundantly endowed with the forming of sea and (fruit bearing) earth: On the Lord's commandment trees and grass sprang up".

On the other hand, taking into consideration Isidore's pseudo-etymology (Etymologiae 14, 1) of *terra*, namely "*terra* is named in respect of its surface,

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[33] For this concept which does not appear in the Genesis see: Fall of the Angels, ed. Christoff Auffahrt, Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

[34] For this notion see: Thesaurus Linguae Latinae, vol. VI, 3, 2930, 49–2931, 2.

[35] Genesis 1, 9–10: *Dixit vero Deus, "Congregentur aquae quae sub caelo sunt in locum unum, et appareat arida", Factumque est ita. Et vocavit Deus aridam terram, congregationesque aquarum appellavit maria"*, God also said, "Let the waters that are under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear". And it was so done. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters he called seas.

which is rubbed", *teritur*, "by the feet of animals and humans", this noun must seem definitely inadequate to be used for an earth, which was *inanis et vacua*, "unfurnished and empty", and "over the surface of which was dark chaos", *tenebrae super faciem abyssi*. Furthermore, one cannot exclude (nor prove), that Ekkehart modifies both the wording of the Bible and that of Virgil, Aeneid 6, 724, *principio caelum ac terram* (*camposque liquentis / lucentemque globum lunae Titaniaque astra / spiritus intus alit*), "first of all heaven and earth (and the liquid fields, the shining globe of the moon and the Titanic star are vivified by an interior spirit)", according to Isidore's specifications of the Latin synonyms of 'earth'. Virgil's verses Aeneid 6, 724–726 show considerable verbal parallels to Genesis 1, 1 (and to the first chapter of Genesis as a whole), although they do not deal with the creation of the universe, but with its actual form of existence under a Stoic aspect. Thus the first word, *principio*, is used rather as the starting point of an enumeration than in a strict chronological sense as in the Bible. In 'correcting' Jerome's Vulgate and Virigil's Aeneid Ekkehart would prove himself as a fastidious school-teacher, what he indeed was, and at the same time as a *poeta doctus*.

2.1.2 The fourth day of creation (verses 11–12)

Quarta sol reduce lustrat novus ęthera luce,
Quam sibi non una facie rapit obvia luna.

"On the fourth day the newly created sun illuminates the ether with recurring light, which the moon, facing him, robs for her in ever changing shape".

Text of Genesis 1, 14–16

Dixit autem Deus: "Fiant luminaria in firmamento caeli ut dividant diem ac noctem, et sint in signa et tempora et dies et annos ut luceant in firmamento caeli et inluminent terram". Et factum est ita. Fecitque Deos duo magna luminaria – luminare maius ut praeesset diei et luminare minus ut praeesset nocti – et stellas.

"And God said, 'Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven to divide the day and the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years to shine in the firmament of heaven and to give light upon the earth'. And it was so done. And God made two lights – a greater light to rule the day and a lesser light to rule the night – and the stars".

In the slight paradox of *reduce*, "recurring", put in view of the task of the sun in the future, but also referring to the past days, which had not been without light since the creation of light on the first day on the one hand, and *novus*, "new", on the other hand, Ekkehart seems to allude to the relation between light

in itself and the sun, a question often discussed in the patristic exegesis of the (H)exaemeron, e.g. by Ambrose of Milan[36]. He adds to the report of the Bible the astronomic discovery of the moon not possessing light of her own[37], a discovery not known to the text of reference and, at first sight, without any importance for the intention of the biblical report. The moon appears in the metaphor of a more or less successful robber of the light, depending on her respective phase. But if one compares the biblical report of the functions of the celestial bodies and Ekkehart's statement about the nature of moonlight, one will discover a learned allusion, fitting a *poeta doctus*, to the chronometric role of the moon, since in ancient times, and especially in the Jewish and Early Christian liturgical calendar, her phases were and partly still are of major importance, e.g. for fixing the date of Pessah and Easter, respectively.

2.1.3 The creation of the first human couple (verses 15–24)

Sexta dies pecudum genus edidit atque ferarum,
Astat homo primus, vivit spiramine limus.

Sabbata stant sancta requiescunt et sibi cuncta,
Tamquam lassatus factor sedet ipse quietus.

Vivit homo primus anima de complice limus,
Quem pater et natus creat et vi compare flatus.

Personis trinus, deitate perenniter unus,
Arbitrio similem sibi plasmat Adam et ratione.

Dormit Adam et lẹvam costa spoliatur in Aevam.
In cruce transfixẹ reparandus vulnere costẹ.

"The sixth day brought about the race of domestic and wild animals, the first man appears, the loam is vivified by afflation. It is Holy Sabbath, all is resting, the Creator himself, as if he were tired, reposes quietly. The first man is loam and lives by the soul closely tied to him. He was created with equal power by Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Triune in person, in deity forever the only one, he creates Adam similar to him in free will and reason. Adam is sleeping and is bereaved of a rib for the making of unfortunate Eve; he had to be restored on the Cross to make up for the wound of his transfixed rib".

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[36] See: Ambrosius, Exaemeron 1, 9, 35; 3, 6, 27; 4, 1, 1.

[37] Note three outstanding examples from sources which are generally of great importance for the Middle Ages: Cicero, De re publica 6, 17, 131 (De somnio Scipionis) states that the moon "is lighted by the rays of the sun"; Martianus Capella, De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii 1, 77, 23 speaks of the "moon taking her glance from her brother's lamp"; Isidorus, Etymologiae 3, 53, 2 refers to philosophers, who, in contrary to others, affirm that the moon is illuminated by the sun and lacks genuine light.

The text of Genesis 1, 24–27; 2, 2; 2, 7; 2, 21–2.

Dixit quoque Deus, "Producat terra animam viventem in genere suo, iumenta et reptilia et bestias terrae secdundum species suas". Factumque est ita. Et fecit deus bestias terrae iuxta species suas et iumenta et omne reptile terrae in genere suo. Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum. Et ait, "Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram, et praesit piscibus maris et volatilibus caeli et bestiis universaeque terrae omnique reptili quod movetur in terra". Et creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam; ad imaginem Dei creavit illum; masculum et feminam creavit eos.

Complevitque Deus die septimo opus suum quod fecerat, et requievit die septimo ab universo opere quod patrarat.

Formavit igitur Dominus Deus hominem de limo terrae et inspiravit in faciem eius spiraculum vitae, et factus est homo in animam viventem.

Inmisit ergo Dominus Deus soporem in Adam, cumque obdormisset, tulit unam de costis eius et replevit carne pro ea. Et aedivicavit Dominus Deus costam quam tulerat de Adam in mulierem et adduxit eam ad Adam.

"And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature in its kind, cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds'. And it was so done. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and cattle and every thing that creepeth on the earth after its kind. And God saw that it was good. And he said, 'Let us make man to our image and likeness, and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air and the beasts of the whole earth'. And God created man to his own image; to the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

And on the seventh day, God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.

And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord built the rip which he took from Adam into a woman and brought her to Adam".

After the shortened report of God's deeds on the sixth day, there follows the seventh day as a break before his further actions. On this day of rest Adam, though not mentioned by name – only the etymology of Adam, "man of loam", is present through the words *homo* and *limus* – is already alive. By the means of the rhetorical figure of epanalepsis of the central notions from verse 16, *vivit* and *limus* in verse 19 – after God's Sabbatical rest of verses 17–18 – Ekkehart succeeds in making the two biblical reports about the creation of the first human being as just one. The woman from the priests' report, in which she is mentioned only after the man (Genesis 1, 26), but already in the following line with regard

to the order to multiply as his equal, is left aside by the poet just like the command to multiply itself. In verses 19–22 the plot does not really proceed. For, considering their contents, these verses still belong to the (H)exaemeron, since they only offer an exegesis of verse 16 under the aspect of Trinitarian theology, an exegeses which seems to have its base in the hortative plural *faciamus*, "let us make", in the priests' report[38]. This procedure of interpreting God's activity exclusively in connection with the first man creates the impression of a devaluation of the woman, who, so to speak, seems to be created only on the 'eighth day', which is also expressed verbally in her attribute, *lęvam*. This corresponds both to Eve's traditional role as seduced and seducing mother of sin – here Ekkehart follows the misogynic tendency of 1 Timothy 2, 13–14 – and to the monastic aversion from women. Already in his description of Eve being shaped from one of Adam's ribs Ekkehart in verse 24 indirectly points to the fall from grace in a comforting sentence by referring to the typological relation between Eve's creation from a rib of Adam and the lateral wound of crucified Jesus being pierced by the lance of a Roman soldier (John 19, 34): Jesus as the 'New Adam' will annul the original guilt of man, introduced by his wife. This typology which has been attested since the Fathers of the Church is concentrated in one word: *transfixę*. Here – in epigrammatic brevity – Ekkehart executes the soteriological concept of Paul (1 Corinthians 15, 45) and, as far as the presentation of the subject matter is concerned, makes use of what is characteristic of a didactic epic from the age of Hellenism onwards: the sophisticated versification of a scientific or philosophical text of reference in prose. In order to understand this, the reader must be familiar with the Bible, which has to be assumed as a matter of course in monastic and other educated clerical circles of the eleventh century, but also must have profound knowledge of traditional exegesis. Thus the mediaeval *poeta doctus* claims an equal capacity from his recipients as the poets of biblical epics in Late Antiquity.

2.2 THE 'HOLY LANGUAGES'

What for a *poeta doctus* of antiquity – let him be a poet of epics, lyrics, elegies or epigrams – were rare proper names from mythology, history, geography or any other field of knowledge, for his mediaeval successor was the really inexhaustible treasure of Hebraic and Greek notions from the Old and the New Testaments, provided that he dealt with biblical matters. Moreover, the use of such

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[38] E.g. Ambrosius, Exaemeron 6, 7, 40. In modern exegesis the Plural is explained either as a 'plural of deliberation' or as a relics of the well known concept of a council in heaven held by (the supreme) God with a heavenly court or an assembly of gods; see: Josef Scharbert, Genesis 1–11 in Die Neue Echter Bibel. Kommentar zum Alten Testament mit der Einheitsübersetzung (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2006⁶), 44.

names and terms in a Latin context complied with the educational ideal of the three 'Holy Languages', which based on their evaluation by Isidore of Seville[39], an ideal which could stand its ground from the Early Middle Ages, in particular in Hibernolatin literature, till the epoch of Renaissance Humanism and even up to the concept o f the German 'Humanistisches Gymnasium' of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

2.2.1 Hebrew (verses 487–8)

Pręcinit egregias Achazzi res Esaias:
Parturiens alma prolem generabit Ahalma.

"Isaiah prophesies to Achaz sublime events: by her confinement a gentle virginal girl will give birth to a child".

The text of Isaiah 7, 14[40]

Propter hoc dabit Dominus ipse vobis signum: Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium et vocabitis nomen eius Emmanuel.

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold: a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Immanuel".

Ekkehart paraphrases a passage of central importance for Christians about the "sign", which the prophet announces to King Achaz: the birth of a "baby boy", called "Immanuel", by a "young girl". This prophecy, of course, in Christian exegesis has always been interpreted as referring to the Virgin Mary. The Hebraic word for a young woman, *almá*, was known to mediaeval readers from Jerome, In Isaiam 3, 7, 14[41], just like its synonym, *ahalmá*, equally conveyed by

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[39] Isidorus, Etymologiae 1, 3, 4: *... ut nosse possimus linguam Hebraicam omnium linguarum et litterarum esse matrem*, "... so that we can learn that the Hebraic language is the mother of all languages and literatures". On the enormous importance of the three Holy Languages in early mediaeval learning, espicially in the Irish tradition, see: Walter Berschin, Griechish-lateinisches Mittelalter (Bern: Francke Verlag 1980); Bernhard Bischoff, *The Study of Foreign Languages in the Middle Ages*, in "Speculum" 36 (1961): 209–224; enlarged reprint in Bernhard Bischoff, Mittelalterliche Studien, vol. II (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann 1967, 227–245); id., *Das griechische Element in der abendländischen Bildung des Mittelalters*, in "Byzantinische Zeitschrift" 44 (1951), 27–55; reprint in Mittelalterliche Studien, vol. II, 246–275.

[40] Text and translation (Douay-Rheims Translation) are taken from the most recent edition The Vulgate Bible, vol. IV, The Major Prophetical Books, edited by Angela M. Kinney (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press, 2012).

[41] Hieronymus, In Isaiam 3, 7, 14 deals largely with the different meanings of the Hebrew word *alma* and points to the fact that in Punic language, which is close to Hebrew, *alma* is the usual word for *virgo*. Furthermore he stresses the homophony of Latin *alma* in the meaning of

Jerome, Adversus Iovinianum 1, 32. Since Ekkehart puts both Hebraic notions in one syntactic unit, an unbiased reader could not understand almá but as the Latin adjective *alma*, attribute to Hebraic ahalmá in the nominative case (in mediaeval Latin hexameters the syllable preceding the *caesura semiquinaria* usually is treated as *syllaba anceps*). The notion of Latin *alma*, "mild" (originally: nourishing), fits perfectly in with the linguistic realm of 'motherhood' and with the neighbourhood of *parturiens*, "by her confinement", with which Ekkehart replaces the verb *concipiet*, "will conceive", from the Isaiah-passage and stresses the ultimate aim, and not the beginning of the pregnancy, by the means of a hendiadyoin which results from the syntactic relation with the predicate *generabit*, "will give birth". Moreover, the adjective *alma* as an epithet of Mary is attested e.g. in the hymn *Ave maris stella*, in which the invocation of the Virgin which follows immediately is *Dei mater alma*, "mild (nourishing) mother of God". This popular hymn is prior to the eleventh century[42].

2.2.2 Greek (verses 701–2)

Spe petit immani Sother ipse domum publicani.
Pęnitet, in quadruplum redit et cum fęnore simplum[43].

"In hopeful expectation the Saviour himself comes to visit the house of a publican. The latter is penitent, the simple amount returns with quadruple rate".

The text of Luke 19, 2–3; 19, 5; 19, 8–9[44].

Et ecce vir nomine Zaccheus, et hic erat princeps publicanorum et ipse dives, et quaerebat videre Iesum, quis esset.

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sancta; he seems to blame the Hebrew language for taking over words from various other languages: *nostro quoque sermone alma sancta dicitur*, "also in our language 'mild' is used in the sense of 'holy'" (Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 73, 103, 39). As translator of the Old Testament from Hebrew, he reflects on the meaning of *alma* in his œuvre in 17 instances.

[42] For the history of this hymn which is attested from the eighth century onwards see: Heinrich Lausberg, Der Hymnus 'Ave maris stella' (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1976).

[43] Leithe-Jasper replaced the reading of the manuscript, which is *redit*, by *reddit* according to the wording of Luke 19, 8: *reddo quadruplum*, thus disturbing the metre that requires a short *e*. It is, however, more reasonable to keep *redit*, taken for a form of *redire* with *simplum* as its syntactical subject: the simple amount "returns" to the defrauded person with quadruple rate. The seemingly abrupt transition from the acting persons in the previous line to a non personal noun, *simplum*, as the acting subject is smoothened by the fact that *pęnitet*, situated between the personal and the non personal subject, can be understood both as a personal predicate referring to the publican according to medieval Latin grammar, and as an non personal verb with the publican as the logical subject according to classical usage.

[44] The text is taken from the Edition of the Vulgate by Robert Weber, Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem, vol. II (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969), the translation is that of the English Standard Version.

Et cum venisset ad locum, suspiciens Iesus vidit illum, et dixit ad eum, "Zachee, festinans descende, quia hodie in domo tua oportet me manere".

Stans autem Zaccheus dixit ad Dominum, "Ecce dimidium bonorum meorum do pauperibus, et si quid aliquem defraudavi, reddo quadruplum". Ait Iesus ad eum, quia, "Hodie salus domui tuae facta est".

"And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was".

"And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today".

"And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold'. And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house'".

In this distich Ekkehart paraphrases the episode of the rich chief publican Zacchaeus, visited by Jesus in his own house, who remorsefully promises to pay back the unduly high taxes he collected, at a high rate of interest. The use of the Greek expression for saviour, wrongly reassured as a pyrrhichius instead of a spondaeus and contrary to orthography written with an aspirate dental, alludes to Jesus' sentence in Luke 19, 9: *hodie salus domui huic facta est*, "today salvation has come to this house", that is to say, 'the saviour brought salvation to this house'. The notion *soter*, both in its original meaning and as a proper name, is given reference for in classical and in patristic Latin literature, though in prose texts, so that the metrical quantities could not be ascertained any more. In mediaeval Latin poetry there is a proof to be found in Ademarus, *Carmina* 5, 1, 2, where the word appears as a trochaeus. On the other hand, Hrabanus Maurus, *Carmina* 53, 44, measures the female proper name *Sotheris* (sic!) as tribrachys. In view of the free availability of quantities of the Greek noun for Latin poets and of its brevity Ekkehart could use it instead of its Latin equivalent, *salvator*, in order to allude to the biblical reading *salus*. So, in epigrammatic brevity, a complete biblical verse has been summed up in just one word (*petit domum* in the same verse connects with Luke 19, 5: *hodie in domo tua oportet me manere*, "I must stay at your house today") and is an integral part of the plot that moves on like an epic narrative. This procedure, once again, requires a more than educated reader.

3. CONCLUSION

The analyses of some units of Ekkehart's 'epigrammatic epic' were to present him as a *poeta doctus*. His *carmen perpetuum* – to apply the expression Ovid

used for characterizing his mythological epic of the Metamorphoses, which covers a similar space of time (met. 1, 4) – is based on numerous presuppositions, which were by no means self-evident to all the readers in the eleventh century. Consequently, the term *poeta doctus* in Latin studies should neither, if one wants to describe the phenomenon of a learned poet in general, be limited to antiquity, nor to the Alexandrine stylistic ideal of poets like Callimachus, Lycophron, Propertius and Horace. As far as the problematic nature of literary genres carefully separated from one another is concerned, a relevant notion for Ekkehart's *versus ad picturas* is definitely missing in traditional terminology: 'epigrammatic epic' or, perhaps more specific, 'epic *tituli*' is nothing but a makeshift expression, which probably characterizes no other piece of poetry than Ekkehart's *Versus ad picturas*. It seems that the Early and High Middle Ages up to the thirteenth century had become resigned facing the vacillating situation of terms and thus used to apply the ancient notions theoreticians of literature had established in antiquity. As a consequence of that uncertainty and insufficiency of the traditional terminology a lot of poetic products of those centuries in the manuscripts are simply entitled *versus*, a title describing merely the outward form in a highly generalizing way. Obviously even the learned poet Ekkehart IV did not know any better term for his complex 'historical epic' about the "ways of God to men" as John Milton puts it in his epic of Paradise Lost (1, 26). For realizing his ambitious concept the mediaeval poet created an epic made of a series of *tituli* that is to say of epigrams in the original meaning of this word.

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DAS 'EPIGRAMMATISCHE EPOS' DIE VERSUS AD PICTURAS EKKEHARTS IV.
UND DIE DICHTUNGSTRADITION

Z u s a m m e n f a s s u n g

Die unterschiedlichen Traditionen dichterischer Behandlung biblischer Stoffe in der christlichen lateinischen Literatur der Spätantike führten im 11. Jahrhundert zu einer Kombination ihrer formal extremen Ausformungen, nämlich der durchgehenden Erzählung epischen Charakters und der epigrammatischen Kürze metrischer Beischriften, tituli, zu bildlichen Darstellungen biblischer Einzelszenen. Im Auftrag des Mainzer Erzbischofs Aribo schuf Ekkehart IV von St. Gallen ein 'epigrammatisches Epos', das die gesamte Bibel, Altes und Neues Testament, teils mit Integration der zeitgenössischen Exegese, umfasste. Aus diesem Material sollte Aribo für die Neugestaltung des Domes einzelne Szenen auswählen – was allerdings nie geschah. Ekkeharts höchst manieristisches Produkt, erhaten in dem Autograph St. Gallen 393, blieb ohne Parallele. Es ist aber ein wichtiges Zeugnis für die Experimentierfreudigkeit der mittellateinischen Literatur am Übergang von der monastischen Klosterliteratur des Frühmittelalters zur hochmittelalterlichen Klassik der Kathedralschulen.