



MEDIEVAL GERMAN TEXTS IN BILINGUAL EDITIONS • I

SOVEREIGNTY AND
SALVATION IN THE
VERNACULAR,
1050–1150

*Das Ezzolied, Das Annolied,
Die Kaiserchronik, vv. 247–667,
Das Lob Salomons, Historia Judith*

Introduction, Translations, and Notes by James A. Schultz

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HISTORIA JUDITH

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FOREWORD

The Medieval German Texts series is designed for classroom use in German and Medieval Studies as well as for the more advanced scholar in fields adjacent to that of German literature: the historian, latinist, theologian or romanist who wishes to extend her reading and research across those largely artificial borders that still divide medievalists unnecessarily. To this end we want to make available, in modern English translation as well as in the original, texts from the mid-eleventh to the end of the fifteenth centuries which are not yet part of the general study and discussion of vernacular European literature and which at the same time are particularly likely to contribute new and special perspectives to that discussion once they have become more generally known and available.

True, there is no shortage of modern English translations of medieval German texts, from “pre-courtly” epic verse narrative to thirteenth-century lyric poetry and from minor Arthurian romance to late medieval mystic prose or satire in verse. Some of these translations, particularly those of “classics” like Wolfram von Eschenbach’s *Parzival* and *Willehalm*, Gottfried von Strassburg’s *Tristan*, or the *Nibelungenlied*, are very good indeed and have served their purpose well; others are not so good, long out of print or otherwise not readily available. But anyone taking the trouble to assemble and peruse this small virtual library would get at least a superficial impression of how some of the main genres of Western medieval literature in the vernacular are represented in this particular vernacular, Middle High German.¹

At the same time, the positive aspects of this state of affairs only partly disguise two general deficits that become apparent once we ask ourselves to what extent our hypothetical reader has been enabled to understand and

¹ The term is here used loosely to cover the four and one-half centuries indicated above, without the customary and always debatable subdivisions, including “early modern” toward the end. For a concise survey of major trends and changes in this mega-period see my article, “Middle High German Literature,” listed below in the bibliography to this volume. Treatment of individual authors and (anonymous) texts in the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* is very uneven, and inquiring minds will fare much better with the *Verfasserlexikon*, cited in the same bibliography.

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appreciate what, apart from their language, may be specifically German about texts written in German during that period. First of all, choices have been guided on the whole by a concept that privileges “major” works and the “belles lettres,” whatever that may mean in medieval terms, or to put it differently, selections have concentrated on the kinds of texts that constitute German examples of what could be called the international canon of “high-culture” genres and themes. It seems therefore that the time has come to draw attention to forms of writing and literary expression which may serve better to highlight some of the differences that characterize the process in which German evolves in its own particular way as the writing class’s vehicle of literary and cultural expression within the shifting borders and under diverse political, social or cultural conditions in various parts of the Empire.

The second major deficit, from this point of view, is the exclusion of the Middle High German original from most of these publications. Such decisions depend on the intended audience, of course. Translations that represent the text on their own have their place in this area of linguistic mediation between cultures just as they do in any other. When, however, the primary target is a predominantly academic audience, it ought to be given the incentive as well as the opportunity to consult the original along with the translation. By the same token, the primary purpose of such translations becomes to facilitate such access, allowing readers to engage the original German according to their own special needs and at their own pace.

In line with general TEAMS policy, the price of the volumes in this new series will be kept low with an eye particularly to the student. In terms of content, they should appeal to student and scholar alike through their focus on what is, from a Pan-European point of view, “different” in a variety of possible ways, exemplifying something not easily found in other vernacular literatures of the same period. That may be an unusual generic configuration; a special perspective on an international theme or a particularly interesting response to the common Latin tradition; a form of transmission or intertextuality not known from elsewhere at that time but of general significance for the development of vernacular writing; and, not least, a special kind of author or intended audience.

For the early period, such differences are self-evident as a matter of comparative chronology. Not long after the first flowering of vernacular writing had come to a halt in Anglo-Saxon England and in the largely isolated monastic communities that created or recorded texts in what is

known as Old High German, the southern and western regions of the German-speaking area entered a second period of substantial and, in terms of the vernaculars, remarkably original composition of religious verse and prose, mostly monastic in origin but often with strong overtones of political, even dynastic, and social engagement and hardly comparable at all to the early literary production in French, Anglo-Norman, Provençal or (slightly later) Old Norse. That is the reason why the first two volumes of the series are designed to showcase some of this literature from the period from roughly 1050 to 1150. Professor Schultz's introduction to this, the first, volume describes some of the phenomena that are characteristic not only of the texts he has selected and of their contexts but of this whole phase of vernacular writing at various ecclesiastic centers. The second volume, with a translation and introduction by James A. Rushing, Jr., will be devoted exclusively to the biblical poetry of the *inclusa*, Frau Ava, who died in 1127 and who is the first woman, as far as we know, to have put her name to a substantial body of vernacular verse during the western Middle Ages.

Further volumes in this series will not follow any particular chronological order. Obviously, much depends on the availability of expert translators, and the editorial board welcomes suggestions and proposals.² These bilingual editions will present, on facing pages, the text of the original in the standard critical edition minus its scholarly apparatus, and a translation in straightforward English prose which reproduces meaning as faithfully as possible, compatible with modern idiomatic usage. A brief introduction, accompanied by an equally brief bibliography, will situate the text in its historical environment, including particularly its transmission. Explanatory notes will be kept to a minimum, confined primarily to essential background information; special features of the manuscript evidence such as pictures; corrupt text passages or especially difficult translator's decisions. Since pictures are an integral part of the representation of the text wherever

² High on our own list of *desiderata* is Thomasin von Zerclaere's didactic verse tract, *Der welsche Gast*, which Thomasin, a trilingual Friulian, composed in 1215/16 and addressed to the German-speaking lay nobility, the "literary public" to the northwest. It is, among other things, the oldest extant vernacular text whose author included a complementary program of illustrations to enhance the effectiveness of his overall message.

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they occur,³ *Medieval German Texts* will reproduce this pictorial component of the manuscript tradition in one form or another. In some cases, such as Frau Ava, reproductions can be included in the volume itself. Richer and more diverse traditions, like that of Thomasin's work, may be stored on the TEAMS web site.

With this series we offer students and scholars of the Western Middle Ages access to German vernacular texts and textual traditions that should be known more widely. Partly for their own sake, but particularly also because they shed significant light on the process of vernacularization that took place everywhere and promise to help foster the kind of cooperation among disciplines that is at the heart of the medievalist enterprise.

PRINCETON, DECEMBER 1999

MICHAEL CURSCHMANN

³ This material has been compiled and catalogued systematically since the early 1960s by the Kommission für Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in Munich, and the first volumes have appeared in this decade: Hella Frühmorgen-Voss and Norbert H. Ott, *Katalog der deutschsprachigen illustrierten Handschriften des Mittelalters*, 3 vols. to date (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1991; 1996; 1999 [vol.3, 1–3]).

INTRODUCTION

Writing in German began about 750 in the language we now call Old High German. The missionary work of the Carolingian Church provided the initial impetus for this innovation, and the efforts of Ludwig the German to consolidate his rule in the eastern empire inspired the production of texts a century later. Shortly after 900, however, reasons to write in German seem to have lost their force, and, except for a few isolated efforts, such writing ceases. When it resumes, shortly after 1050, the language has changed considerably, into what is known as Middle High German (MHG), and the cultural context that supported writing in the vernacular has changed as well. The texts in this volume are among the first to have been written in this new context. Although they are the first, they are nevertheless texts of great power, and include two, the *Ezzolied* and the *Annolied*, that would be on anyone's list of the monuments of medieval German literature.

But these are not the principal reasons for offering them in English translation. We do so rather in the belief that they will be of interest to medievalists who might not have access to them in the original. We believe they will be of interest because they represent a kind of writing — at the intersection of ecclesiastical and secular power, drawing on the whole range of medieval Latin learning, yet written in vernacular verse — that is not found elsewhere in the European Middle Ages. In addition, they may be of use in teaching since, although relatively short, they illustrate a great number of characteristic medieval ways of writing and can be directly linked to a number of quite remarkable historical figures.

Because it offers the easiest way of introducing the individual texts, I will begin by describing their production and transmission. To an extraordinary extent, these texts were subject to expansion, revision, appropriation, and other forms of what has been called “productive reception.” I will turn then to questions of intellectual tradition and poetics. These texts find remarkably effective means of expressing the Latin learning of their age in a MHG vernacular that was just beginning its career as a medium for written poetry. Finally I will try to describe something of the cultural context that enabled this new synthesis. With bracing directness these texts represent

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the concentration of political, ecclesiastical, and cultural power in the centers where they were produced.

PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTIVE RECEPTION

Although the *Ezzolied* is probably the oldest text in Middle High German, we are surprisingly well informed about the circumstances of its composition. One source of this information is the first strophe of the later, expanded version of the text, which tells us that Gunther, bishop of Bamberg, commissioned one of his clerics, Ezzo, to write the text of a song and that Wille composed the tune. Ezzo's song must have been written, then, during the years of Gunther's episcopate, 1057–65. A second source, the *Vita Altmanni*, the Latin life of another bishop, reports that a "canon and scholar" named Ezzo "composed a song about the miracles of Christ in his native tongue" on a pilgrimage that Bishop Gunther led to the Holy Land in 1064–65 — although scholars have wondered if the song might have been composed earlier and only sung on the pilgrimage. This double record, in German and in Latin, provides us with more detailed information about the composition of the *Ezzolied* than we have for almost any other MHG text, including the most famous. It suggests that contemporaries recognized the *Ezzolied* for the pathbreaking accomplishment that it was: the first poetic text of the high Middle Ages to join Latin learning and the German vernacular.

The *Ezzolied* survives in two versions. The earlier version is fragmentary, breaking off just before the end of the seventh strophe. It is known to scholars as the Straßburg *Ezzolied* after the location of the single manuscript in which it is found. It celebrates the glory of God in the Creation, remembers the Fall and the night of sin that followed. The later version, assumed to have been written 1120–30, is known as the Vorau *Ezzolied* since it is found in a manuscript in Vorau (in Styria, Austria). Unlike the earlier version, the later one is complete. It is also expanded. The last, seventh strophe of the earlier version corresponds to the eleventh strophe of the later version, indicating that four strophes have been added to this section of the poem. The entire text comprises thirty-four strophes. The later *Ezzolied* falls into three roughly equal sections, the first devoted to the time from the Creation to Christ's birth, and the second to Christ's life on earth; the third is a hymn to the miracle of salvation accomplished by Christ's death on the cross, rich in Old Testament prefiguration and

allegorical elaboration. By far the largest part of the scholarship on the *Ezzolied* has exhausted itself trying to reconstruct the missing parts of the fragmentary original by selecting parts of the later version felt to be Ezzo's work. Unfortunately, consensus has not been achieved. Here we have offered each version as it is actually transmitted: the earlier fragment free of any speculative reconstruction; the later expansion in its entirety.

The versions differ not only in length but also in other ways, as can be seen by comparing the first two strophes of the earlier version with the corresponding three strophes (2–4) of the later one. They differ in genre. The earlier version, in which the strophes are of the same length, was meant to be sung, while the later version, in which each strophe is of different length, was probably not. They differ in their esthetic ideal. The earlier is balanced and restrained. The first two strophes, of equal length, are devoted to the Old and the New Testaments respectively; this contrast comes to a point in the concluding lines, which are identical except for the very last word: in the first it is *eron*, the “glory” of the Old Testament; in the second it is *gnadon*, the “grace” of the New. The later version is expansive and didactic: two strophes have grown to three; lines have been added admonishing us to glorify the Lord and keep the Sabbath (4.6–10). The two versions differ in thematic emphasis, the earlier placing more weight on the typological relation of Old and New Testaments, the later on the grace promised by the New. The later version takes the first strophe of the earlier version, which had been devoted to the Old Testament, and infuses it with the New: the last word is no longer “glory” but “grace” (2.8), which has slipped in earlier as well (2.5). They envision different audiences. The earlier version expects an audience that is aristocratic, addressing itself in the very first line to *iu herron*, “you lords,” while the later version, addressing itself to *iu allen*, “all of you” (2.1), seems to have a more general audience in mind. The earlier version is a song in praise of salvation addressed to a noble audience presumed to possess the intellectual background to appreciate its learned restraint. The later version is an expansive rhymed sermon addressed to all and placing greater stress on the hope of grace.

The *Annolied* appears at first glance to be a life of Anno von Steußlingen, archbishop of Cologne from 1056 until his death in 1075. But it is actually something more and different. It falls into three parts. After a prologue strophe, the first section (strophes 2–7) offers a condensed salvation history: the Creation, Fall, Incarnation, and Crucifixion are recorded; the apostles are sent out into the world; saints and martyrs are

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dispatched to Cologne where they establish a tradition that culminates in St. Anno. The second section (8–33) presents world history: the beginning of cities is followed by four empires; the strophes on Rome, which gets most of the attention, are monopolized by Caesar and particularly by his relations with the German tribes; the rule of Augustus leads to the birth of Christ; Peter converts Rome and dispatches missionaries to Cologne, who, as bishops, establish the line that culminates in Anno. The third section (34–49) is devoted entirely to Anno, but rather than a standard narrative saint's life, it offers selected snapshots: his works of charity, his power as regent for the underage emperor Henry IV, his tribulations, a vision, his death, and a posthumous miracle. The *Annolied* is clearly concerned to promote the figure of Anno, perhaps to improve his reputation among the people of Cologne, perhaps to further the effort to have him canonized. But it is also devoted to the empire, recounting its origin, elaborating the role of Caesar, particularly his relation to German tribes, and expressing anguish at the toll taken by the Investiture Controversy. Cities, particularly Cologne, are another thematic focus: the first two sections culminate in Cologne; the second begins with an account of the "origin of cities" (8.2); the German episcopal sees are traced back to their Roman foundation. The *Annolied* is a thematically complex and, as will become clearer below, carefully constructed work that packs an immense amount into a relatively small compass: classical and Christian learning, ancient and modern history, imperial, national and local politics.

Unfortunately, we have little certain information about its composition. Based on the historical events it mentions and its relation to other texts, one assumes it was written between 1077 and 1101. The author is unknown. It may have been written in Cologne, which figures prominently in the poem, or, more likely, in the nearby monastery at Siegburg, which had been established by Anno and which was the site of his grave. The monastery at Siegburg was without equal in the region as a scholarly and literary center and had a vested interest in promoting the reputation of the bishop who was interred there. No manuscripts of the *Annolied* survive, and we would not know of the text at all were it not for the efforts of two early modern scholars, the Dutch humanist Bonaventura Vulcanius, who published lines 2.1–5.4 in 1597, and the great poet and poetician Martin Opitz, who published the complete text — with a Latin preface and commentary — in 1639.

While the *Annolied* does not seem to have been well known in the Middle Ages, about 250 lines received wide circulation since they were

adapted and incorporated into the *Kaiserchronik*, or *Chronicle of the Emperors*, a text that enjoyed considerable popularity. It was written in Regensburg by one or more anonymous authors, perhaps beginning as early as 1126 but more likely closer to 1150. A copy of the *Annolied* may have been in the possession of Kuno, who had been abbot of the monastery at Siegburg before becoming bishop of Regensburg (1126–32) and who may have brought the text with him when he journeyed south to assume his episcopal duties. If the *Annolied* is the first text to exploit the learned tradition of secular history for vernacular writing, but still coupled with salvation history, the *Kaiserchronik* was the first to abandon the salvation-historical framework and let secular history stand on its own. The *Kaiserchronik* is a chronicle of *emperors*, beginning with Caesar (not with Augustus and the birth of Christ) and continuing into the twelfth century. It seems to have filled a need for the German elite, since it was copied many times, continuations were written to bring it up to date, it was translated into Latin and adapted into German prose.

Whereas the *Kaiserchronik* usually abbreviates the material it takes from its sources, it expands what it has from the *Annolied*. It magnifies Caesar's opponents, German and Roman, thereby increasing the glory of the empire that can defeat them. It has a good deal more to say about the foundation of the cities on the Rhine and the battles around Trier, thereby adding information on specifically German history. It also changes the treatment of the dream in which the prophet Daniel sees four beasts proceed from the sea. While the *Annolied* takes the beasts to represent four empires, in the *Kaiserchronik* the beasts represent emperors, the third being Caesar. The focus is now on Caesar and his establishment of the Roman empire as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Each of the changes the *Kaiserchronik* makes to the text it adopts from the *Annolied* serves to magnify the empire and Germany.

Unlike the *Ezzolied* and the *Annolied*, each of the remaining texts in this volume is transmitted in only one version. All are anonymous, and all must have been written before the last quarter of the twelfth century, when they were incorporated into the Vrau manuscript, Cod. 276, the single manuscript in which they are found. Otherwise nothing is known about the circumstances of their composition. The *Lob Salomons* is made up of a series of scenes whose function is more iconic than narrative. The two principal scenes are in the center: the construction of the Temple, including the story of a dragon that directed Solomon to the tool that enables him to build the edifice without iron; and the visit of the Queen of Sheba, which