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# Condwiramurs<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

An analysis of the figure of Condwiramurs, contrasting her with other female figures in *Parzival*, and also by comparing the text with Wolfram's *Willehalm*, reveals that she is of great importance for Parzival's election to the grail, and is herself destined to be grail queen; in addition, this figure demonstrates Wolfram's ambivalent portrayal of contemporary society and its use of God for military and social enterprises.

Durch eine Analyse der Condwiramurs im Vergleich zu anderen weiblichen Figuren im *Parzival* und unter Miteinbeziehung des *Willehalm* wird festgestellt, dass sie für Parzivals Wahl als Gralkönig eine wichtige Rolle spielt, und selber dazu bestimmt ist, Gralkönigin zu werden. Außerdem zeigt diese Figur Wolframs ambivalente Darstellung zeitgenössischer Gesellschaft und ihrer Nutzung Gottes für militärische und soziale Zwecke.

In two recent papers, Elke Brüggen<sup>2</sup> and Markus Stock<sup>3</sup> – inspired by the work of Wolfgang Mohr<sup>4</sup> – have shown effectively that analysing secondary figures in Wolfram's *Parzival* can help add yet more dimension to our understanding of the work as a whole: although in the background, they provide a greater texture to the events and characters in the foreground, and often have important roles to play in the pre-histories of the main personae of the romance. Furthermore, they often serve further to illuminate some of the primary themes of the work. Following the lead of these studies, the present paper examines another secondary figure, Condwiramurs. It would not normally be appropriate to designate the heroine of a work – if we may call her that by virtue of her being the hero's wife – as »secondary«, but in *Parzival*, uniquely in the major epics of Middle High German literature, the hero's wife is scarcely

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to express my thanks to Markus Stock for his many useful comments during the preparation of this article. I am also very deeply indebted to Martin Jones, with whom I first read *Parzival* (and Middle High German); the topic of this essay goes back to a comment of his, and his earlier teaching as well as his suggestions regarding this paper have been immensely useful and inspiring, and not just for the present study.

<sup>2</sup> Elke Brüggen, »Schattenspiele. Beobachtungen zur Erzählkunst in Wolframs *Parzival*«, in: Wolfgang Haubrichs, Eckart Conrad Lutz, Klaus Ridder (eds), *Erzähltechnik und Erzählstrategien in der deutschen Literatur der Mittelalters. Saarbrücker Kolloquium 2002*, Wolfram-Studien 18, Berlin 2004, 171–188.

<sup>3</sup> Markus Stock, »Lähelin. Figurenentwurf und Sinnkonstitution in Wolframs *Parzival*«, *PBB* 129 (2007), 18–36.

<sup>4</sup> Wolfgang Mohr, »Zu den epischen Hintergründen in Wolframs *Parzival*«; and »König Artus und die Tafelrunde. Politische Hintergründe in Chrétien's *Perceval* und Wolframs *Parzival*« in his: *Wolfram von Eschenbach. Aufsätze*, GAG 275, Göttingen 1979, 138–151 and 170–222.

present in the narrative. The very fact that she is Parzival's wife and the grail queen, however, should alert us to her potential importance, and therefore to the interpretative opportunities offered by an analysis of her role in the work as a whole.

In the following, I examine Condwiramurs with a view to elucidating the various ways in which she figures through the text, or may be understood in contrast to other characters. Needless to say, her role in Parzival's life is of paramount importance, but the aim of this study is in the first instance to read *Parzival* focusing very narrowly on Condwiramurs (who has, despite the mountain of *Parzival*-scholarship, received relatively little attention<sup>5</sup>), in the expectation that this will have implications for our understanding of the work in a broader sense too; her importance for Parzival has been studied with greater or lesser success by a number of other scholars, and is not the primary focus of this paper.<sup>6</sup>

## I.

Condwiramurs is present on two occasions, both of which depict relatively little narrative time: we encounter her first in book IV (though her name is first mentioned by Gurnemanz in the previous book at 177,30<sup>7</sup>), much of which focuses on the siege of Pelrapeire (181,6–216,2; this narrative is interrupted by

<sup>5</sup> So also Simon J. Gilmour, *Daz sint noch ungelogeniu wort: A Literary and Linguistic Commentary on the Gurnemanz Episode in Book III of Wolfram's Parzival* (161, 9–179, 12), Germanistische Bibliothek 7, Heidelberg 2000, 311: »In the scholarship, the etymology of the name has played a role disproportionate to the analysis of the figure itself«. It is notable that the series of commentaries on *Parzival* have explicated books I–III, and V–VII, skipping over book IV!

<sup>6</sup> Fundamental (if problematic) for this aspect is Hans Dewald, *Minne und »sgräles äventiur«. Äußerungen der Subjektivität und ihre sprachliche Vergegenwärtigung in Wolframs Parzival*, GAG 158, Göttingen 1975; cf. also Joachim Bumke, *Die Blutstropfen im Schnee. Über Wahrnehmung und Erkenntnis im »Parzival« Wolframs von Eschenbach*, *Hermæa* 94, Tübingen 2001; James F. Poag, »Wip and Gral: Structure and Meaning in Wolfram's Parzival«, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 67 (1968), 204–211. Condwiramurs receives limited attention in the works of Marion E. Gibbs (written with great conviction of ideas, but not entirely satisfactory textual arguments), who views her almost exclusively in her significance for Parzival's development; see most recently her article: »Ideals of Flesh and Blood: Women Characters in Parzival«, in: Will Hasty (ed.), *A Companion to Wolfram's Parzival*, Columbia, SC 1999, 12–34; and the chapter on Condwiramurs in her book: »Wiplîchez wibes reht«. *A Study of the Women Characters in the Works of Wolfram von Eschenbach*, Pittsburgh 1972, 22–37.

<sup>7</sup> The text is cited from Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, ed. Bernd Schiroke, Berlin, New York 1998. All statements in the following regarding details of word-usage and repetition, even when first noticed by another scholar, have been checked against the data in Clifton D. Hall, *A Complete Concordance to Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival*, New York 1990, which is not henceforth cited separately in each instance.

descriptions of the arrivals of Kingrun and Clamide at Arthur's court), a time-frame of a few days; the remaining year and a few months that Parzival spends with her are elided.<sup>8</sup> She returns as a physical presence at the very end of the work, and then extremely briefly, in her reunion with Parzival and her inauguration as grail queen (799,13–809,14). The situation at Pelrapeire is a familiar one, mirroring in many ways Gahmuret's arrival and activities at Patelamunt in book I: a knight arrives at the castle of a queen who is besieged by an army; the queen's defender has been killed; the knight is able to enter the castle unopposed, and single-handedly breaks the siege and wins the hand of the queen, following which he becomes ruler over her lands. There is a clear »father-son typology«,<sup>9</sup> which is used to enunciate an equally clear difference between the father and the son and their marriages; more important in our context are the differences between the two respective queens and their situations.

The metaphor of the rose in the dew is used on three occasions in *Parzival*: once describing the hero himself (305,22–23); once describing Condwiramurs (188,10–13); and once to provide a contrast to Belacane, who is »der touwegen rösen gelîch« (24,10). It has been noted that this metaphor was most com-

<sup>8</sup> The Condwiramurs-episode is examined in chapter 4 of Arthur Groos, *Romancing the Grail: Genre, Science and Quest in Wolfram's Parzival*, Ithaca 1995, 95–118; Groos focuses on the relationship between Parzival and Condwiramurs, and offers an illuminating and detailed comparison with Chrétien's version of the scene. The chronology is provided by Groos, 112: Clamide arrives at Arthur's court on Pentecost (216,14); Parzival's second encounter with Jeschute (256,11–271,22) is four and a half years before he meets Trevrizent around Easter (460,22–27); we are told that Jeschute is not reconciled with her husband for more than a year (139,40); given that it is clear that the time between Parzival's departure from Condwiramurs (223,15–30) and his trance encompasses only a few days, it is apparent (but only to a careful reader) that Parzival and Condwiramurs spent a year and about four months together. On further details of chronology, see apart from Groos also Harald Haferland, »Parzivals Pfingsten. Heilsgeschichte im Parzival Wolframs von Eschenbach«, *Euphorion* 88 (1994), 263–301 (his chronology appears sound, though not his interpretation of it); Bernd Schiroke, in his review of Bumke (note 6), *ZfdA* 131 (2002), 98–117, here: 116, provides more details on the cross-references and the relative chronology of various events that took place before the start of the plot of the romance.

<sup>9</sup> Groos (note 8), 115; on Gahmuret's prefiguration of Parzival, cf. also Joachim Bumke, *Wolfram von Eschenbach*, Sammlung Metzler 36, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, Stuttgart 2004, 189–192. I interpret typology here and in the following according to the theory outlined by Friedrich Ohly, »Synagoge und Ecclesia. Typologisches in mittelalterlicher Dichtung«, in his *Schriften zur mittelalterlichen Bedeutungsforschung*, Darmstadt 1977, 312–337: it signifies not imitation, but a completion in some way of what came before. For a critique, see Werner Schröder, »Zum Typologie-Begriff und Typologie-Verständnis in der mediävistischen Literaturwissenschaft«, in: Harald Scholler (ed.), *The Epic in Medieval Society. Aesthetic and Moral Values*, Tübingen 1977, 64–85; Schröder would limit typology only to biblical exegesis.

monly used in the Mariological literature of the time,<sup>10</sup> and its application to Condwiramurs – the future grail queen – in explicit contrast to the first (heathen) wife of the future grail king's father is undoubtedly of some significance: it could be understood as highlighting the special nature of Condwiramurs, characterised by »kiusche«, and foreshadowing her role as grail queen.<sup>11</sup> Belacane too is given the attribute of »kiusche« (28,14; 54,26; 90,22), but the love between her and Gahmuret is more explicitly erotic at the beginning of their marriage;<sup>12</sup> this is not the case with Condwiramurs and Parzival (201,21–23; 202,21–203,10).<sup>13</sup>

There is also a crucial difference in the relation between the two besieged queens and their slain defenders. It is explicit that Isenhart was Belacane's »Minneritter«, and also that Belacane's demands of him caused his death. The narrator informs us that Isenhart lost his life in her service because she did not grant him her love (16,4–10: »die klageren al geliche Isenhart, der den lip in dienste vlôs umbe ein wîp. des twang in Belacâne [...] daz si im ir minne nie gebôt, des lager nâch ir minne tôt«). This is confirmed later by Belacane herself (26,9–28,9). She states that she tested him (27,13) and as a result of this he stopped wearing his armour (27,15–16: »er gap durh mich sîn harnas enwec«). The cause of Schenteflurs's death before Pelrapeire is different. He is never explicitly called Condwiramurs's »vriunt« (Isenhart is called Belacane's »vriunt« at 26,25 and 28,3). We first hear of his death not from Condwiramurs but from her uncle and his father Gurnemanz, who states that Schenteflurs lost his life »in ir helfe« (178,2); this already indicates »military assistance« rather than »service in a love relationship«.<sup>14</sup> Condwiramurs herself says nothing to negate

<sup>10</sup> Groos (note 8), 115; he only notes that the metaphor is used in the context of both Condwiramurs and Belacane, but not the difference in application. Dewald too (note 6), 49) already commented on this metaphor and its predominance in Marian verse; he also suggests that the light-symbolism often used in describing her derives from the same sources (54).

<sup>11</sup> »kiusche« is used as an attribute of Condwiramurs at 192,3; 441,10; 732,3; 732,21; 734,12; 742,28; 743,21; it is used of no other female figure so many times in the whole work.

<sup>12</sup> The night together after Gahmuret's victory (44, 18–30) is not preceded by any formal announcement or public acknowledgement of a marriage – as is the marriage of Condwiramurs and Parzival (199,26–28; 200,2–7; 201,19) – but it has the character of the consummation of marriage, as is clear from the statement afterwards, preceding Belacane's announcement that she and her land are given over to Gahmuret: »diu ê hiez magt, diu was nu wîp« (45,24; cf. 45,26–28); this announcement follows the consummation.

<sup>13</sup> On the difference between Chrétien's Blanchefleur and Wolfram's Condwiramurs with regard to the virtue of chastity, cf. Groos (note 8), 98–110; on the »kiusche« of Condwiramurs and Parzival, cf. Marlis Schumacher, *Die Auffassung der Ehe in den Dichtungen Wolframs von Eschenbach*, Heidelberg 1967, 38–48; 183–186.

<sup>14</sup> Gilmour (note 5), 312. Gibbs, *Study* (note 6), 24, subscribes to the contrary view

this reading, and we are told by Clamide that while Schenteflurs fought on behalf of Condwiramurs (214,11–12: »durch Condwîr âmûrs vaht ouch mit mir Schenteflûrs«), he was *sent* by Gurnemanz (214,15–16: »in sande inz lant ze Brôbarz Gurnemanz de Grâharz«). This makes it clear that no blame can attach to Condwiramurs for the death of Schenteflurs: unlike Belacane (and Sigune,<sup>15</sup> and potentially Orgeluse<sup>16</sup>), she is not a »Minneherrin« who plays with her lover's life.

Just as many elements of Condwiramurs's situation refer back to the events of book I, modifying what was described there to shed light on Condwiramurs's own nature, so even some of the details of the way in which Parzival's arrival and reception in Pelrapeire are staged have references to earlier, and also later events. An obvious difference is the relative lack of glamour at Pelrapeire, and Parzival's own singularity: the grandness of Gahmuret's entry and reception of book I (18,5–19,15; 20,7–24,20) recedes in favour of an almost grotesque bleakness into which Parzival arrives alone (182,7–187,6). Like the already noted differences between Belacane and Condwiramurs, this could be understood as indicating a heightened depth and earnestness in what follows. Less apparent is a reference back to Parzival's reception by Gurnemanz, Condwiramurs's uncle, in book III. As Parzival approaches Graharz, the narrator tells us that Gurnemanz awaits him under the shadow of a linden tree (162,20–23). The significance of this tree is not entirely clear: Simon Gilmour suggests that it is here a »motif of tranquillity«,<sup>17</sup> and more recently, Arthur Groos has called it a »love-trap«, suggesting that it symbolises »minne«, as it often does in contemporary love-lyric.<sup>18</sup> Gurnemanz, in this reading, is going a-wooing on

that Condwiramurs, like Giburc and Belacane, »must suffer [...] the knowledge that they are the cause of hardship, even death, to those who serve them«; this reading pays attention only to the parallels, without considering the differences in detail.

<sup>15</sup> On Sigune's role in Schianatulander's death, cf. 141,11–24; in this case her role is modified by the fact that Schianatulander was also killed while defending Parzival's lands (141,2: »dirre fürste wart durch dich erslagen«). Nevertheless, Sigune states unambiguously that »in unser zweier dienste den tôt hât er bejagt« (141,18). Whether or not it is legitimate to interpret Sigune's apparent statement of guilt at 141,20–24 (and cf. 141,16) with reference to what we are told in *Titarel* is debatable, but *Parzival* is unambiguously in stating that Schianatulander died in service of Sigune as well. Cf. the discussion in Birgit Eichholz, *Kommentar zur Sigune- und Ither-Szene im 3. Buch von Wolframs »Parzival«* (138,9–161,8), *Helfant Studien* 3, Stuttgart 1987, 54–57; and see also Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Titarel*, ed. Helmut Brackert, Stephan Fuchs-Jolie, Berlin, New York 2002, 171,2–4, with their commentary, and the discussion in Joachim Heinze, *Stellenkommentar zu Wolframs Titarel. Beiträge zum Verständnis des überlieferten Textes*, Hermaea 30, Tübingen 1972, 212–215 (on 166,2–4 in Lachmann's edition).

<sup>16</sup> On Orgeluse, see below, with references in note 29.

<sup>17</sup> Gilmour (note 5), 27.

<sup>18</sup> Professor Groos made this suggestion at his lecture on »Architecture, Landscape,

behalf of his daughter, and thus he is shown under the linden tree. The linden does not appear to be used in the context of love at all instances in *Parzival* (or indeed in *Minnesang*: see the last two poems of Walther cited at note 18), but there are a few other occasions where it might indeed signify something to do with love: Gawan rests under a linden tree outside Bearosche, where he is observed by Obie and Obilot and admired by the latter (352,27–353,3); a linden tree stands outside the palace in which Gawan and Antikonie frolic (432,10); and more controversially, Sigune sits on a linden tree with the body of her dead lover (249,14–15). It is not clear what this last reference to the linden tree is supposed to mean, but it might be intended to point to the love of Sigune and Schianatulander.<sup>19</sup>

Parzival's reception in Pelrapeire also takes place under the shade of a linden tree, and one, moreover, that has been specially cultivated to cast a better shadow (185,27–29) and provide what is obviously – at least in a literal sense – a locus amoenus. We may note that if Gurnemanz's tree was intended to symbolise his efforts to find a suitor for his daughter, that daughter appears to foreshadow Gurnemanz's niece, Condwiramurs: Parzival is initially confused when he sees Condwiramurs, thinking she is Liaze (188,2–5), though we are told immediately afterwards that Condwiramurs was far more beautiful (188,5–6). The linden tree as a symbol of love might have a special place in the family of Gurnemanz and Condwiramurs; this is perhaps an appropriate moment to recall the probable meaning of Condwiramurs's name, OFr. »conduire l'amour«, »love's escort«. <sup>20</sup> Under this tree, Parzival is relieved of his armour, and under this tree, he is given a »mantel« (186,7) before he ascends the stairs to be greeted by his hostess.

and Rulership in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*« at the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Medieval Academy of America in Toronto on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, 2007. I am thankful to Professor Groos for discussing with me after his lecture the significance of the linden tree in books III and IV. For instances of the linden tree in love-poetry (albeit not always necessarily serving the same function), cf. *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, ed. Hugo Moser, Helmut Tervooren, 38<sup>th</sup> edn, Stuttgart 1988: Namenlose Lieder: XI; Dietmar von Eist: III; V; XIII; XIV; Heinrich von Veldecke: XIV; XIX; XXIV; Albrecht von Johansdorf: VII; and Walther von der Vogelweide, *Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche*, ed. Christoph Cormeau, Berlin, New York 1996: 16 [= L 39,11]; 20 [= L 43,33]; 64 [= L 94,24]; 96 [= L 122,35] (in the latter two poems the linden tree is not really related to love). A wide-ranging comparative study of the linden-tree motif is provided by A. T. Hatto, »The Lime-Tree and Early German, Goliard and English Lyric Poetry«, *Modern Language Review* 49 (1954), 193–209.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Susanna Backes, *Von Munsalvaesche zum Artusbof: Stellenkommentar zum fünften Buch von Wolframs Parzival* (249,1–279,30), Herne 1999, 8–9; and Eberhard Nellmann's commentary in Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, ed. Eberhard Nellmann, 2 vols, Frankfurt a.M. 1994, II, 589–590. The other linden tree in *Parzival* is in book X (505,9ff.), and there too shelters a wounded man lying in the lap of his lady.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Gilmour (note 5), 311.

If the linden tree places this reception in a typological relationship with Parzival's reception at Graharz (in the previous instance there was wooing and desire, but here the love relationship will be fulfilled – and perfect<sup>21</sup>), the granting of the coat foreshadows the loan of another coat, that of the grail queen Repanse de schoye, at Parzival's next station, Munsalvaesche (228,9; 228,14–16). It has been suggested that the loan of a coat at Munsalvaesche is intended to indicate the conferring of sovereignty over the grail kingdom, but this cannot be confirmed by any independent sources,<sup>22</sup> though we note that here the coat is actually Repanse de schoye's own; we do not know if Condwiramurs had given Parzival her own coat. Nevertheless, it is surely significant that Parzival is given a coat by the lady in power at both castles that he shall himself later rule.<sup>23</sup> It is worth pointing out already that Parzival receives a coat and favour from the lady who shall later be grail queen before he receives the coat of the incumbent.

Other similarities between the situation at Pelrapeire and Munsalvaesche are not especially relevant to my discussion of Condwiramurs; suffice to say that whereas at the grail castle, all that happens has a concealed meaning, this seems not to be the case at Pelrapeire.<sup>24</sup> In fact, we could postulate a progression into a deeper, more spiritual (and thus more obscure – in every sense) territory, from the foreshadowing in the life of Parzival's father, through his stage of courtly education in Graharz, to his attainment of love and secular rulership at Pelrapeire, to, finally, his ultimate goal – spiritual and temporal – of the grail castle, where he – uniquely – fails to attain anything. It is worth stressing, though, that while the spiritual significance of Munsalvaesche and the events

<sup>21</sup> On the progression from Liaze to Condwiramurs, cf. Sonja Emmerling, *Geschlechterbeziehungen in den Gawan-Büchern des »Parzival«*. *Wolframs Arbeit an einem literarischen Modell*, Hermaea 100, Tübingen 2003, 311–314.

<sup>22</sup> See the discussion in Christa-Maria Kordt, *Parzival in Munsalvaesche: Kommentar zu Buch V/1 von Wolframs Parzival* (224,1–248,30), Herne 1997, 43–45.

<sup>23</sup> It is not entirely certain that Repanse is actually in charge of all that happens at Munsalvaesche, as Bumke (note 6), 67, note 127 suggests, though this is a possibility. She is, however, the equivalent of the queen of a kingdom, especially since the king is indisposed; and she has the important role of being bearer of the grail. Parzival also receives a coat from Gurnemanz, but this is not conferred on him in any sort of ceremonial context: it is simply a part of the outfit laid out for him on the morning after his arrival (168,1–20). Note, however, that the coat received at Pelrapeire is explicitly said to match the »roc« received at Graharz (186,8–9). Thus the first coat is also possibly of importance: the linden tree and the coat, and indeed Parzival's communicative skills or lack thereof, all have a somewhat different significance at Graharz than at Brobarz, and the latter two aspects are once more different at Munsalvaesche, indicating that these are all part of the details that contribute to the »Steigerung« that takes place on these three successive stages of Parzival's journey.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. e.g. Bernd Schirok, »Die Inszenierung von Munsalvaesche: Parzivals erster Besuch auf der Gralburg«, *Lit. Jb.* 46 (2005), 38–78; a brief analysis of Parzival's progress from Sigune to Munsalvaesche at 44–48.

there cannot be denied, it is also surely important that Parzival reaches what is probably the highest solely temporal achievement at Pelrapeire, obtaining a wife and kingdom, manifestly ruling well (201,8–18; 222,12–28), and apparently proving himself a good husband too (222,29–223,7) – at least while he remained at Pelrapeire. Since Parzival has found, fought for, and married his lady, and also – unlike Erec, for instance – proved himself as a ruler even after his marriage,<sup>25</sup> we already know that what is to follow must be very different from the conventional »âventure« of a chivalric knight. And indeed, the quest for the grail is, as we shall see, inextricably linked with Parzival's »Minnedienst« for Condwiramurs (examined in section III below).

## II.

Condwiramurs's appearance in book IV can, as we have seen, be linked in many ways to a number of other figures: she overshadows in one way or another those who come before her, and Pelrapeire foreshadows the greater spiritual locus of Munsalvaesche. But this work is a »Doppelroman«,<sup>26</sup> and just as there are two heroes, so there are two heroines: Condwiramurs and Orgeluse. The latter is explicitly compared to Condwiramurs: we are told that »âne Condwîrn âmûrs wart nie geborn sô schœner lîp« (508,22–23). A comparison of the two figures provides us with further insight on Condwiramurs and her suitability to be grail queen.

The tournament for Herzloyde's hand in book II introduces a number of characters who have roles to play in the later narrative(s), and already we see that the characters are divided into two »teams«, as it were: those who are on Gahmuret's side, and those who are against him; the latter or their relatives will also later be opposed to Gawan and/or Parzival.<sup>27</sup> Figures explicitly connected to Condwiramurs and Orgeluse are both present: Gurnemanz (68,22; we should note that it is not explicit which side he fights on); Cidegast (67,15), Orgeluse's first husband or lover<sup>28</sup>; and Brandelidelin (67,16–17), the uncle of Orgeluse's unsuccessful suitor Gramoflanz. Cidegast and Brandelidelin are both on the side opposed to Gahmuret. This is the only occasion in which Cide-

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Hartmann von Aue, *Erec*, ed. Christoph Cormeau, Kurt Gärtner, ATB 39, 6<sup>th</sup> edn, Tübingen 1985, 2924–98.

<sup>26</sup> On the relationship between the two plot lines, see the recent, clear synthesis in Martin H. Jones, »The Significance of the Gawan Story in *Parzival*«, in: Will Hasty (ed.) (note 6), 37–76. A classic and still fundamental work of the older scholarship is Wolfgang Mohr, »Parzival und Gawan«, in his *Aufsätze* (note 4), 287–318.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Bumke (note 9), 49–50.

<sup>28</sup> The relationship between Orgeluse and Cidegast is not entirely clear; Gramoflanz refers to Cidegast as Orgeluse's »werden man« (606,10), which might (but need not) mean they were married.

gast is shown alive; his death is, in some senses, the catalyst for the whole plot of the work. It is only because he is dead that Orgeluse accepts Anfortas in her service, explicitly in order that Anfortas might kill Gramoflanz (616,11–15); it is in her service that he suffers his fateful wound and offends the chastity-law of the grail; and it is as a consequence of this that the suffering at the grail castle begins.<sup>29</sup>

We have noted how, unlike Belacane and Sigune, Condwiramurs cannot be held responsible for the death of the man defending her, who was not even her lover. While it is not clear that Orgeluse made specific demands of Cidegast that caused his death, he was definitely in her love-service, and was killed by Gramoflanz, her suitor (606,6–11). Thus Orgeluse is inferior to Condwiramurs not just with regard to her beauty; unlike Condwiramurs, she was also bound to the conventions of love-service that caused the death of her lover. That Orgeluse is in other ways also a foil for Condwiramurs is indicated by her very name (meaning »the proud one«), unchanged from the French source; it is surely significant that while in Condwiramurs, Wolfram has changed not only the behaviour of his French model, but also her name, he has omitted to do so with regard to Orgeluse. While Condwiramurs's conduct is in every way faultless, Orgeluse's is deeply flawed in many ways. She is arrogant and overbearing, thoughtlessly (if not always intentionally) causing, or in the case of Gramoflanz, trying to bring about the deaths of knights in her thirst for revenge. Condwiramurs is, as far as we can tell, a good queen: she has been able to defend her territory successfully during the siege,<sup>30</sup> and also after Parzival's departure. Unlike Orgeluse, although she is clearly queen, on both occasions when she first enters a scene, she appears with at least one of her (male) advisors, her two uncles (186,21–25; 799,28–30); and it appears that she takes the advice of her people in her rule even when choosing her husband (200,2–10; 201,19–20). Orgeluse, on the other hand, rules completely independently, takes no advice when choosing her knights, and her subjects are quite open in

<sup>29</sup> These (and other) aspects of Orgeluse have been discussed sufficiently to warrant no further elaboration here; see the summary in Bumke (note 9), 104–105; and the discussion in Jones (note 26). Fundamental for Orgeluse is still Gisela Zimmermann, »Untersuchungen zur Orgeluseepisode in Wolfram von Eschenbachs *Parzival*«, *Euphorion* 66 (1972), 128–158; as well as Joachim Bumke, »Geschlechterbeziehungen in den Gawanbüchern von Wolframs *Parzival*«, *ABäG* 38/39 (1994), 105–121; see also Martin Baisch, »Orgeluse – Aspekte ihrer Konzeption in Wolframs von Eschenbach *Parzival*«, in: Alois M. Haas, Ingrid Kasten (eds), *Schwierige Frauen – schwierige Männer in der Literatur des Mittelalters*, Bern et al. 1999, 15–33; Emmerling (note 21), 129–156.

<sup>30</sup> The heroine of Wolfram's next work also shows her worth as a queen not least by her ability to defend her town during a siege, without, however, usurping the male sphere of military action; cf. Martin H. Jones, »Giburc at Orange: The Siege as Military Event and Literary Theme«, in: Martin H. Jones, Timothy McFarland (eds), *Wolfram's Willehalm: Fifteen Essays*, Rochester 2001, 99–120.

their condemnation of her nature and deeds (513,12–16; 514,6–8).<sup>31</sup> We may note also that while »kiusche« is used very often as an attribute of Condwiramurs, it is applied not even once to Orgeluse.<sup>32</sup>

In the light of the foregoing, the function of the two figures begins to be apparent: Orgeluse is a far from perfect woman and queen, and makes evident a number of contradictory impulses in human nature, showing especially the problematic nature of the institution of love-service, which she eventually perverts.<sup>33</sup> Love-service for her is clearly in conflict with the requirements of the grail community. Condwiramurs, on the other hand, appears to be perfect in every respect (and thus, perhaps, especially suited to being grail queen): she is chaste, capable of ruling as an independent queen but nevertheless obviously attentive to her advisors and thus not overthrowing the right order of rulership. Although her beauty outshines that of all other women, it has never caused the kind of catastrophes that Orgeluse's various entanglements bring about. With regard to love-service, her first and only knight is her husband, and we see clearly that his love-service for her is largely unproblematic, not in conflict with the grail, and in fact seems to have a direct relation to his attainment of the grail.<sup>34</sup> Orgeluse shows the problems of love-service by perverting it; Condwiramurs appears to exemplify the ideals of both queenship and »Minneherrin« in the most unproblematic form.<sup>35</sup> A key element in evaluating the figure of Condwiramurs is in fact her relationship to Parzival and his quest, and also how even in this regard she may be contrasted against Orgeluse.

<sup>31</sup> Another difference between the two figures is that Condwiramurs is never, as far as we know, at Arthur's court, whereas Orgeluse is presented to Arthur at 672,25ff. Our understanding of the significance of this depends on our evaluation of the relative values of the Arthurian and grail worlds respectively; on this, cf. the works cited at note 64, and the discussion with further references in Bumke (note 9), 181–189.

<sup>32</sup> Dewald (note 6), 214. For a different interpretation of the contrasts between the two figures, see Emmerling (note 21), 139–143.

<sup>33</sup> There is, of course, a positive aspect to her perversion of the ideals in that it shows how hollow and problematic those ideals are; on this, see apart from the works cited at note 29, Friedrich M. Dimpel, »Dilemmata: Die Orgeluse-Gawan-Handlung im *Parzival*«, *ZfdPh* 120 (2001), 39–59.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Dewald (note 6), 163–167.

<sup>35</sup> Orgeluse and Condwiramurs are also similar in that we are told little or nothing about their extended families; neither are linked by blood to either of the two great dynasties of Arthur and the grail. However, while we know absolutely nothing about Orgeluse's family, Condwiramurs's uncle married into the grail family, and we encounter another of her uncles, Gurnemanz, in a positive light.

## III.

After their marriage, Condwiramurs appears to be Parzival's »Minneherrin«: using the language of love-service,<sup>36</sup> he states explicitly when he leaves that apart from wishing to meet his mother again, he is leaving ouch »durch âventiure zil. mag ich iu gedienen vil, daz giltet iwer minne wert« (223,23–25). His next station is the grail castle, where he receives a coat, perceives a number of things, does not perceive a number of things, achieves nothing, and leaves the next morning.<sup>37</sup> And now, just after leaving the castle, after stating that he would like to help its inhabitants and earn the sword he has been given (248,25–29), we are told that the »âventiure« begins for the first time (249,4: »alrêst nu âventiurt ez sich«). The sense that Parzival's »âventiure« is service for Condwiramurs<sup>38</sup> is heightened just before he recedes from the narrative for four and a half years of fighting and searching – »âventiure« – at the end of book VI: the narrator tells us that »Condwier âmûrs dîn minnelîcher bêâ curs, an den wirt dicke nu gedâht. waz dir wirt âventiure brâht« (333,23–26). The next line specifies what sort of »âventiure« we are concerned with: »schildes ambet umben grâl«. It does not seem an exaggeration to state that Parzival's (military) adventures on his quest for the grail are *also* part of his »Minnedienst« (though it would be overstating the case to affirm that this is all they are). After his cycle of (as yet apparently unsuccessful) adventures, when Parzival arrives at Trevrizent's hermitage, the latter also believes Parzival has been out in the service of love, saying: »hât iuch âventiure ûz gesant durch minnen solt, sît ir rehter minne holt« (456,16–18).

As James Poag pointed out over forty years ago, »wîp« and »grâl« are clearly linked.<sup>39</sup> Although we, the audience, already know that Parzival must be seeking a different sort of »âventiure« when he leaves Condwiramurs (though he does not know this himself), the link between »wîp« and »grâl« is first pronounced during the »Blutstropfenszene«,<sup>40</sup> when we are told that for Parzival,

<sup>36</sup> On the implications of Parzival's »Minnedienst« after his marriage, see especially (albeit with some caution) Dewald (note 6), 168–196.

<sup>37</sup> A highly interesting reading of the events at Munsalvaesche, with much of relevance to Parzival's perceptive abilities, is provided by Schiroke (note 24); on this theme see also the early work of Kenneth J. Northcott, »Seeing and Partly Seeing: Parzival's Encounters with the Grail«, in: William C. McDonald (ed.), *Spectrum Medii Aevi. Essays in Early German Literature in Honor of George Fenwick Jones*, GAG 362, Göttingen 1983, 409–428; and more recently Bumke's fundamental study (note 6), *passim*, for Parzival's perception, and especially 66–76 for the events at Munsalvaesche.

<sup>38</sup> First pointed out by Dewald (note 6), 175–183.

<sup>39</sup> Poag (note 6); the nature of their relation to each other is, however, less clear than Poag suggests.

<sup>40</sup> For an analysis of how Parzival's love is here related to the quest for the grail, see most recently Bumke (note 6), *passim*, which is in some respects similar to Dewald (note 6).

in his trance, his thoughts about both the grail and his queen cause suffering (296,5–7: »sine gedanke umben grâl unt der künigin glichiu mâl, iewederz was ein strengiu nôt«). »wîp« (or the name of his wife) and »grâl« are both explicitly associated as his goals or cause of his suffering later as well,<sup>41</sup> and he is explicitly called »beider dienstman« as he fights Feirefiz (740,21). The priorities appear to change, but it seems reasonable to argue that the narrator's words at 333,26–27 may be taken at face value: the »âventiure« in the service of Condwiramurs is »schildes amben umben grâl«.<sup>42</sup> This interpretation is supported by an analysis of where Parzival sends the knights he defeats. The one battle that Parzival fights (or at least the one we are witness to, that against Orilus) between his stations at Pelrapeire and Bearosche is not really for Condwiramurs (and we should add that it is not for the grail either): it rights previous wrongs.<sup>43</sup> The first time he could be said to fight as Condwiramurs's knight after leaving Pelrapeire is at Bearosche. Here he obligates his conquests either to free Meljanz, or to get the grail for him (388,28–29); or, if neither of these deeds is done, to go to Condwiramurs and tell her that his mind is fixed on both the grail and her, in that order (389,5–12). The next conquest we hear about, that of Vergulaht, has a similar double obligation as its consequence (424,22–23; 425,1–14). Until the ninth book at least, therefore, it is clear that Parzival's fighting is connected to both the grail and his wife. After he leaves Trevrizent and before the narrative returns »an den rechten stam« (678,30), Parzival's only conquests are of the five knights of Orgeluse (at any rate, these are the only conquests in this period that we hear of); these knights are sent directly to Condwiramurs (559,9–16), suggesting to Bernd Schirok that »offensichtlich begreift Parzival im IX. Buch, daß die Gralsuche seine ureigenste (und daher nicht delegierbare) Aufgabe ist«.<sup>44</sup> As we have seen, even just before he is elected to the

<sup>41</sup> Apart from the passages cited above before Parzival arrives at and while he leaves Arthur's court, his wife and the grail are associated as goals or the cause of his suffering at 389,5–12; 425,1–14; 441,4–14; 467,26–27; 619,4–12; 737,27–30; 740,19–22; 743,12–13. At 559,9–18 both Pelrapeire and the grail are mentioned, but not really linked together; at 732,19–22 his wife and the grail are associated, though not as joint goals. The association culminates in Cundrie's announcement at 781,15–19, when both are named on the »epitafjum«.

<sup>42</sup> This reading would be strengthened by a (syntactically defensible) change in punctuation, replacing the exclamation mark after 333,27 with a colon, to have 333,27–30 read thus: »waz dir wirt âventiure brâht: schildes amben umben grâl wirt nu vil geübet sunder twâl von im den Herzeloyde bar; er was ouch ganerbe dar.«

<sup>43</sup> Thus Dewald (note 6), 170. The three entranced jousts outside Arthur's court do not quite fit into this picture: one could say that Parzival is unconsciously fighting for Condwiramurs, or even for both Condwiramurs and the grail.

<sup>44</sup> Schirok (note 8), 106–107. After this point, Parzival does, of course, also fight Gawan and Gramoflanz; neither of these battles can really be related to either the grail or Condwiramurs, and though they both say something about Parzival's character, they have to do, I believe, with his connection to the Arthurian world – from which both the

grail, as he is fighting Feirefiz, he is manifestly fighting for both his wife and the grail (the significance of which we shall return to).

The notion that Parzival's fighting for the grail is also a part of his »Minne-dienst« for Condwiramurs, and thus that his marriage to her might have something to do with his suitability for election to the grail,<sup>45</sup> is supported by a few further points. At 460,9, 467,27, and 468,3, Condwiramurs is referred to as Parzival's »selbes wîp«; the only other person to be called thus is Frimutel's wife (474,14), and Parzival and Frimutel are the only two people who love their respective »selbes wîp«. This could be taken to associate a former grail queen with a future grail queen, just as the former grail king Frimutel is explicitly associated with the future grail king in Trevrizent's eyes (474,18–22). Trevrizent (not cognizant of the nature of Parzival's love), stating that a woman was never loved thus, »mit rehten triuwen« (474,17), exhorts Parzival to follow Frimutel's example and love his own wife similarly: »sine site sult ir niuwen, und minnt von herzen iwer konen« (474,18–19). Parzival is compared (favourably) with his grandfather, in the first instance by reference to their relationships with their respective wives, and only then with regard to the similarity of appearance (474,21).<sup>46</sup>

As we have seen above, the differences between Condwiramurs and Orgeluse are crucial, and obviously, given that one of them becomes grail queen and the other does not – though both are wooed by members of the grail family, one a future grail king, and the other the incumbent – there is some significance in the differences. Looking at Parzival's interaction with Orgeluse elucidates this point further. We should remind ourselves that Anfortas too encounters and falls in love with Orgeluse; this is (according to Trevrizent) a result of his sin of »hochvârt« (472,26; cf. 478,30–479,2<sup>47</sup>), and it is in his service for Orgeluse that he suffers his grievous wound. Parzival's service for Condwiramurs manifestly has no such negative effects. After departing from Trevrizent's hermitage,<sup>48</sup> Parzival too encounters Orgeluse, and he passes the »Orgeluse-test«.<sup>49</sup>

grail and Condwiramurs are divorced; these two duels, one could argue, illustrate further the problematic nature of Parzival's connection with courtly society.

<sup>45</sup> Gibbs, *Study* (note 6), 28–35, expresses a similar opinion, though in my view Gibbs exaggerates her case and provides too little textual support for her arguments.

<sup>46</sup> It is worth commenting that there appears to be an alternation between »good« and »bad« generations of grail kings: Frimutel appears to have been exemplary, but his son clearly was not. Parzival, having been elected to the kingship, is presumably to be an exemplary king; the ending of the work raises many questions about how problem-free the next generation could remain (cf. the works cited below at note 64).

<sup>47</sup> Schumacher (note 13), 181–183, argues that Anfortas's transgression has also to do with a lack of chastity, not just »hochvârt«; this would correspond well with the fact that »kiusche« is not stated to be an attribute of Orgeluse.

<sup>48</sup> For the chronology, cf. Mohr, »Zu den epischen Hintergründen« (note 4), 179; and the chronological table in Haferland (note 8), 301: the day after Gawan first meets Orge-



What is especially significant here is that Parzival names himself for the first time when encountering Orgeluse.<sup>50</sup> Orgeluse tells Gawan that after Parzival defeated her knights, she offered herself and her lands to him; he turned her down, saying »er hete ein schœner wip, unt diu im lieber wære« (619,4–5). Orgeluse takes this hard (619,6), and asks »wer diu möhte sîn« (619,7). Parzival does not name his wife, but himself: »von Pelrapeir diu künegin, sus ist genant [!] diu lieht gemâl: sô heize ich selbe Parzival« (619,8–10). We should note that Parzival is overwhelmingly referred to as the red knight in book IV, and never referred to as Parzival by anyone other than the narrator (he is called the »ritter rôt« at 206,16; 218,4, and 221,6), and is even thought to be Ither (204,2); although we may presume that Condwiramurs knows who he is, we have never before had a statement of his identity from himself. It seems apparent that if Parzival learns anything during the course of the work, what he learns concerns, at the very least, his network of kin relations, and his place within that network.<sup>51</sup> It is thus surely significant that the first time he names himself he does so when he is asked *his wife's* name, not his own! The maturity (if it is that) that enables him to name himself may have nothing to do with his marriage, but the fact that he identifies himself in relation to his wife cannot be denied. It is also significant that Orgeluse's description of this encounter ends with the words »hin reit der üz erkorne« (619,14). It would be pushing the limits of interpretation to argue that Orgeluse knows that she is the test of chastity for grail kings, and that Parzival, having passed this test, is the one chosen to be grail king. However, the fact that the narrator puts these words into her mouth at this point might be intended to indicate to the audience that Parzival has indeed passed this test, and is therefore now the chosen one.

luse, he hears from the ferryman that Parzival had given to him the horses of Orgeluse's knights the previous day (559,9–14); Orgeluse tells us that she spoke with Parzival after he conquered her knights (618,21–619,2); Gawan's letter reaches Ginover within three days of this, and four years, six months and six weeks after he and Parzival left Arthur's court (646,14–18); Parzival left Trevrizent within four years, six months and eighteen days of leaving Arthur's court (460,22; 501,11); it is thus apparent that the meeting with Orgeluse takes place soon after leaving Trevrizent.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Schumacher (note 13), 38: »Den Vertretern des Gralsbereichs ist sie [scil. Orgeluse] der Prüfstein, an dem sie versagen oder sich bewähren«.

<sup>50</sup> This is commented on by Dewald (note 6), 277.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Dewald (note 6), 268–280, who makes the potentially significant point that after book IX, Parzival is increasingly named by various characters in the work, whereas earlier he was almost invariably called the red knight; this indicates, for Dewald, an acknowledgement of Parzival's »Selbstwertung«.

## IV.

The thrust of the foregoing analyses was that Condwiramurs is a special character, and because of this, she is especially suited to being grail queen. She is exceptionally chaste; she is a good queen; she is a good »Minneherrin«, never causing damage to her knight; she has, in fact, only had one knight in her love-service, and this knight is her husband; she is contrasted in many ways to the woman in whose service the troubles of the grail family started; and in fact, when her husband passed the test of Orgeluse, when asked to identify his wife, he instead identifies himself for the first time. The argument that Condwiramurs is meant to be grail queen, and that perhaps because of this his marriage to her plays a role in Parzival's eligibility to the kingship of the grail,<sup>52</sup> is strengthened by three details, in increasing order of importance, where it appears that God seems to have a hand in bringing the two of them together.

The first detail concerns Parzival's horse,<sup>53</sup> which leads him somewhere three times in the whole work; in all three occasions, the place he is led to has some significance. The last instance is in the ninth book (452,1–12): Parzival lets go of the reins of his horse, and challenges God to lead his horse in the right direction. God does so, and leads him to Trevrizent.<sup>54</sup> The previous occasion in which Parzival is led by a horse is just after he leaves Pelrapeire: lost in his longing for Condwiramurs, Parzival lets go of the reins, and the horse takes him to the lake where he finds Anfortas (224,10–22). The first time Parzival lets his horse lead him, he is similarly lost in thought, and his horse takes him to Pelrapeire (179,30–180,2). We should note that thus Parzival's stay in Condwiramurs's city is bracketed by him being led by his horse, while he is lost in thought about a woman (before he arrives at Pelrapeire, his mind is on Liaze; when he leaves, he is preoccupied with Condwiramurs). We note also that it is the same

<sup>52</sup> Another reason why the marriage is important is because, as demonstrated by Dewald (note 6) and Bumke (note 6), his love for her leads him to his initial attainment of knowledge of his quest for the grail, and only in his love-trance does he express clear words of praise of God as creator; we might also agree with Gibbs's view (followed by Emmerling [note 21], 310) that »the support afforded by the constancy of Condwiramurs during their long separation [...] sustains him through the years of lonely wandering« (*Study* [note 6], 28–29), thus helping him achieve his goal. We should stress that this could only be one factor, albeit undoubtedly an important one.

<sup>53</sup> On horses and their actions, Ohly's classic paper is indispensable: Friedrich Ohly, »Die Pferde im Parzival Wolframs von Eschenbach«, in his: *Ausgewählte und neue Schriften zur Literaturgeschichte und zur Bedeutungsforschung*, Stuttgart 1995, 323–364.

<sup>54</sup> Schiroke (note 8), 110, points out that on this occasion, Parzival does not just leave the reins, but *also* spurs on his horse: while this may not exactly be »Gottvertrauen verbunden mit Aktivität« as Schiroke states, it is at least leaving things to God – but this time consciously, and »verbunden mit Aktivität«.

horse – Ither's horse – that he rides on both occasions.<sup>55</sup> There is no explicit indication in either of these instances – unlike in book IX – that God's hand guides the horse.

The second indication that Condwiramurs and Parzival's marriage is favourable to God comes after their marriage. When Clamide hears that the queen of Pelrapeire has employed »Ither« to defend her (204,1–4), he proceeds thither. After some of his men have been defeated in battle it is decided that a duel between him and Parzival will decide the outcome. As Parzival rides out to fight, we are told: »ûz kom geriten Parzivâl an daz urteilliche wal, dâ got erzeigen solde ober im lâzen wolde des küneec Tampenteires parm« (210,27–211,1). We need not view this as a formal ordeal to believe that since Parzival wins, God does, indeed, show that he approves of the marriage.<sup>56</sup> This interpretation is, of course, strengthened by hindsight, considering all the other exceptionally positive aspects of Condwiramurs and her marriage to Parzival analysed above.

The clearest suggestion that the marriage is pleasing to God comes when Condwiramurs is named on the »epitafjum« as grail queen, along with Parzival's naming as grail king (781,15–19). We have been told by Trevrizent that the grail king is not allowed to marry someone not previously ordained (478,13–16), without suffering. If we can assume that Trevrizent is correct,<sup>57</sup> and also that Parzival has not suffered for his marriage, we could understand the naming of Condwiramurs on the grail as indicating a »nachträgliche Legitimierung von Parzivals Gattinnenwahl«,<sup>58</sup> since Parzival was already married before being elected grail king. Alternatively, if we believe that Parzival was in any case intended to be grail king, we need not see the naming of Condwiramurs as »nachträglich«: perhaps she, no less than Parzival, was intended for the grail. Certainly, the many good qualities she possesses would appear to qualify her eminently for this position – more so than Parzival for most of the work, in fact.

We should remember also that when Anfortas encounters Orgeluse, he is unmarried, and looking for love (this seems to be the implication of 472,29–30

<sup>55</sup> Groos (note 8), 116, note 27, points out that the whole of book IV is bracketed by the phrase »dannen schiet« (179,13 and 223,30).

<sup>56</sup> I would not go so far as to state that »their marriage is conceived as an act of divine will«, as does Gibbs, *Study* (note 6), 26.

<sup>57</sup> On the reliability of Trevrizent, see especially Bernd Schirok, »Ich touc durch ableitens list. Zu Trevrizents Widerruf und den neutralen Engeln«, *ZfdPh* 106 (1987), 46–72, and Groos (note 8), 220–242; also useful (with some caution) is Schirok, »Parzival und Trevrizent. Beobachtungen zur Dialogführung und zur Frage der figuralen Komposition«, *ABdG* 10 (1976), 43–71. At this stage in *Parzival*-research it does not seem possible to attempt an interpretation of the work that would completely discount all of Trevrizent's statements.

<sup>58</sup> Bumke (note 29), 119, note 25.

and 478,10–16), and he succumbs to an unchaste love for Orgeluse; when Parzival meets the same woman, he has been married many years, and despite not having seen his wife for nearly five years (and despite temptation<sup>59</sup>), he does not fall for Orgeluse, and his chaste love for Condwiramurs is victorious. Only a few days after his encounter with Orgeluse, Parzival is elected to the kingship of the grail. Perhaps it is not too much to suggest that the fact of Parzival's (faithful) marriage, and the woman he is married to, play a part in his eventual eligibility to the grail kingship (though Parzival's eventual accession to the grail was of course caused by a number of factors<sup>60</sup>). My main point is that regardless of her contribution in whatever form to Parzival's election, Condwiramurs was herself intended for the grail; their marriage might have made him eligible

<sup>59</sup> Parzival explicitly states, in his inner monologues, that he would have been able to find solace in the love of another if his love for Condwiramurs were of a different nature and admitted »zwivel« (733,10–15; this instance of the use of »zwivel« – normally not granted much notice – might be worthy of some attention in light of the discussion of the prologue in the scholarship). We note that of the many things happening at Munsalvaesche, Parzival notices the women, and how many they were (493,16–18), and while he was at Munsalvaesche we are told that Parzival was constantly looking at and thinking of Repanse de schoye (236,12–14); he expresses a wish to be in her service, but explicitly not »durch ir minne« because his own wife is »alse clâr, oder fürbaz« (246,16–22). He is also very impressed by the beauty of the grey knight's daughters (450,14; 451,27–30). Shortly before his reunion with his wife we are told that because of »grôz triewe« he was preserved from »unstæte« so that »für wâr nie ander wip wart gewaldec sîner mine« (732,4–14). At the time of his reunion with Condwiramurs, we are told that he never received »minne helfe für der minne nôt: manec wip im doch minne bôt« (802,6–8). It would be exaggerating to say that we know he was tempted, but – especially in the case of the grey knight's daughters – it does seem very likely. That the scenes referred to here are »Versuchungsszene« is argued by Emmerling (note 21), 307–309.

<sup>60</sup> There are at least three demonstrable changes in Parzival by the end of the work: he knows much more about his network of kin; while perhaps still arrogant in some ways, he is more humble or at least accepting with regard to God (and we are told explicitly at 741,26–27 that Parzival has faith in God after leaving Trevrizent); and as discussed above, Parzival names himself for the first time. This last change, if it is indeed one, is associated in the way it is depicted with Condwiramurs. How much we can read into the fact that the quest for the grail is no longer delegated to others is debatable (see Schirok, cited above at note 44), but this is also, as Schirok suggests, a potential change in Parzival. We should also note that if Parzival remains »tump« in that he still fights thoughtlessly and with the danger of killing relatives, in at least one of his post-Trevrizent battles, his opponent is equally »tump« in this regard. Given that this opponent is Gawan, who ought to have been able to recognise Parzival by his red armour, perhaps we should not judge Parzival too hastily (thus Schirok [note 8], 116; on criticism of Gawan for fighting pointlessly, cf. also Emmerling [note 21], 77–86). It may also be that the reference to Parzival as the grail's »dienstman« (740,21) and the suggestion that the grail might protect or help him (737,27 and 743,12–13) indicates a change in his relation to the grail (I am grateful to Martin Jones for drawing this to my attention).

in a manner comparable to the way that his birth to Herzeloÿde did.<sup>61</sup> But just as being »ganerbe« (333,30) at Munsalvaesche does not automatically entitle him to kingship, nor does marriage to the woman destined to be grail queen – regardless of both these factors, he still had to earn the grail kingship (though if my argument is accepted, we may note that Parzival's eligibility is at the very least aided by association with two women). Condwiramurs, on the other hand, appears to have all the qualities one might think are appropriate for a grail queen right from the start.<sup>62</sup> She is not, therefore, elected grail queen only because of her marriage to Parzival, any more than he becomes grail king solely because of his inheritance (or, for that matter, his marriage).

## V.

There is, however, another major event in Parzival's life after his encounter with Orgeluse and before he is elected to the grail: his battle with Feirefiz. In this battle, as noted above, it appears that he is fighting on behalf of both the grail and his wife (737,27–30; 740,19–22). However, just before he would kill Feirefiz, the grail is not mentioned, only his wife is (744,2–6). Thus it appears that his love for his wife almost causes him to commit – once again – the most grievous sin, that of killing a relative. That a knight should invoke his wife in battle, and that this should help him, is of course only a convention of »Minnedienst«. The suffering in *Parzival* is caused in large part because of »Minnedienst« in some form or another,<sup>63</sup> as we have seen, Condwiramurs seems in this respect not to be implicated in the problematic aspects of the society Wolfram depicts. The fact that now Condwiramurs is also invoked in a way that would associate her with killing would not seem to put Condwiramurs and Parzival's love for her in an especially favourable light: the near-murder of

<sup>61</sup> Perhaps we should note that Condwiramurs too is related, through her uncle's marriage to Schoysiane, to the grail family.

<sup>62</sup> Marion E. Gibbs, »The Role of Woman in Wolfram's *Parzival*«, *German Life and Letters* 21 (1967/1968), 296–308, here: 301, suggests that Condwiramurs earns her election to the grail as much as does Parzival, by staying at home and being a good wife and mother; cf. also eadem, *Study* (note 6), 28; 34. Similarly Emmerling (note 21), 316–320, who believes, however, that »die figure der Condwiramurs vom Schluss der Erzählung her gestaltet ist« (320). The only hint that there might be an evolution in Condwiramurs's character is given by the fact that references to her as »kiusche« are clustered just before and during the passage describing the battle of Parzival and Feirefiz (five out of seven references; cf. note 11): this connects her to this battle (there is an unusually large cluster of references to her in these passage), while stressing her chastity more than ever before.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Helmut Brackert, »der lac an ritterschefte töt. Parzival und das Leid der Frauen«, in: Rüdiger Krüger, Jürgen Kühnel, Joachim Kuolt (eds), *Ist ziwivel herzen nächgebür. Günther Schweikle zum 60. Geburtstag*, Stuttgart 1989, 143–163; Bumke (note 9), 158–162; Emmerling (note 21), passim.

Feirefiz indicates that even when the object of love is one so perfect as Condwiramurs, there remains always something innately problematic in the realisation of the ideal.

Before we explore this point further, it is worth noting that according to Trevrizent, grail knights kill: they do not take »sicherheit« (492,8). Even if Trevrizent is not necessarily to be trusted about the fallen angels or even the »Gralprämissen«, as a former grail knight himself he surely knows what these knights do. They kill, and in defence of Munsalvaesche; and none of this appears to offend God. If grail knights are holy warriors who kill, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the fact that the (future) grail queen should inspire the (future) grail king to kill – almost. Of course, this killing would be all the worse because of the close relationship between the protagonists, but it seems apparent that one of Wolfram's concerns in this work (even if less explicitly than in *Willehalm*) was to expose the kinship of humanity in general, and given the anonymity of the grail knights and the fact that they kill, it would appear that they are in any case susceptible to the danger of killing kin.

We should note, though, that in the context of the duel with Feirefiz, the grail itself is exculpated. The potential killing is a wholly human affair, in which the divine has no part. Wolfram's portrayal of the grail community is, as recent scholarship has repeatedly stressed, very ambiguous, and his view of religious knighthood as he portrays it is not entirely positive;<sup>64</sup> religion itself, however, and God, remain pure.<sup>65</sup> In this context (and following the trend of some recent studies<sup>66</sup>), it is appropriate to look forward to the theme and »message« of *Willehalm*. Regardless of the controversial aspects of many details of that work, it is safe to say that one of its primary themes is the problem of killing, and speci-

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Joachim Bumke, »Die Utopie des Grals. Eine Gesellschaft ohne Liebe?« in: Hiltrud Goug (ed.), *Literarische Utopie-Entwürfe*, Frankfurt a.M. 1982, 70–79; idem, »Parzival und Feirefiz – Priester Johannes – Lohrerangrin. Der offene Schluss des *Parzival* von Wolfram von Eschenbach«, *DVjs* 65 (1991), 236–264; Horst Brunner, »Von Munsalvaesche wart gesant / der den der swane brahte. Überlegungen zur Gestaltung des Schusses von Wolframs *Parzival*«, *GRM* 72 (1991), 369–384; Schirot (note 24).

<sup>65</sup> Or so it seems; however, at 492,9–10 (and cf. 468,28–30) we are told that the grail knights »wägt ir lebn gein jenes lebn; daz ist für sünde in dâ gegeben«. That they risk their life as penance may be understandable, but that in the process of doing so they do not take »sicherheit« (492,8) – in other words they kill – as penance, less so. Are we to understand that God has imposed this penance – of killing? These are, of course, Trevrizent's words, and therefore inherently ambiguous in their value; we also do not know if these rules regarding »sicherheit« have always and shall always obtain. The passage is a vexed one, with much that has yet to be adequately explained; but it is not of the greatest relevance to my argument to examine these lines in further detail.

<sup>66</sup> E.g. Brunner (note 64); Fritz Peter Knapp, »Von Gottes und der Menschen Wirklichkeit. Wolframs fromme Welterzählung *Parzival*«, *DVjs* 70 (1996), 351–368; on the relationship between the two works, see also Annette Volting, »*Parzival* and *Willehalm*: Narrative Continuity?« in: Jones, McFarland (eds) (note 30), 45–59.

fically killing in the name of God.<sup>67</sup> Wolfram takes pains to show that the two warring sides are linked by the bonds of biological kinship, and appears to suggest that these ties are further strengthened by the kinship derived from being part of God's creation.<sup>68</sup> The justification for the war at the beginning and the end of the work is, quite apparently, pragmatic (a woman and land: 7,27–9,20; 457,17–19<sup>69</sup>), even if throughout the work it appears to be religious; we should note too that if the Christian dead are saved and Willehalm himself is a saint, in the light of 450,15–20 they are also sinners. One of the central concerns of *Willehalm* is, I believe, to problematise the concept of religious war. This does not mean that God or religion are in themselves problematic; only the way in which religion and God are instrumentalised in service of human desires and ambitions is questioned.<sup>70</sup>

Giburc is, ultimately, the primary cause of the war: »durh Giburge al diu nôt geschach« (306,1) is a phrase that sums up a lot of what *Willehalm* is about. Willehalm is Giburc's husband, and we might perhaps characterise his fighting as being at least partly a form of »Minnedienst«; definitely the whole conflict is caused by their love. Giburc is a good queen; like Condwiramurs she is capable of defending her town in siege; as with Condwiramurs and Parzival, the love of Giburc and Willehalm is portrayed in an entirely positive light. Yet the fact that it has horrendous consequences is also depicted.

If we return now to Condwiramurs, we may understand better what Wolfram intends with her ability to cause Parzival to kill (almost), and with the nature of the grail knighthood. Like Willehalm and Giburc, neither Parzival nor Condwiramurs are necessarily especially to be criticised for their flaws; Condwiramurs particularly is portrayed as perfect in every way. Yet the enterprise for which they are chosen – the grail community, an idealised form of religious

<sup>67</sup> On the central themes of *Willehalm*, see the classic paper of Wolfgang Mohr, *Willehalm*, in his: *Aufsätze* (note 4), 266–331; the ideas presented briefly in the following paragraphs are fully argued out in Shami Ghosh, »Forms of Kinship: Unresolved Tensions in Wolfram's *Willehalm*«, *Euphorion* 97 (2003), 303–325.

<sup>68</sup> On this aspect, cf. Timothy McFarland, »Giburc's Dilemma: Parents and Children, Baptism and Salvation«, in: Jones, McFarland (eds) (note 30), 121–142.

<sup>69</sup> The text is cited from Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Willehalm*, ed. Joachim Heinze, ATB 108, Tübingen 1994.

<sup>70</sup> On the instrumentalisation of God and the questioning of this in other literary texts (including *Parzival*), cf. Joachim Theisen, »Des Helden bester Freund. Zur Rolle Gottes bei Hartmann, Wolfram und Gottfried«, in: Christoph Huber, Burghart Wachinger, Hans-Joachim Ziegeler (eds), *Geistliches in weltlicher und Weltliches in geistlicher Literatur des Mittelalters*, Tübingen 2000, 153–169; and on Gottfried's *Tristan* (though with implicit implications for *Parzival* too in its broader suggestions), cf. Klaus Grubmüller, »ir unwarheit warbaeren. Über den Beitrag des Gottesurteils zur Sinnkonstitution in Gottfrieds *Tristan*«, in: Ludger Grenzmann (ed.), *Philologie als Kulturwissenschaft: Studien zur Literatur und Geschichte des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Karl Stackmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, Göttingen 1987, 149–163.

knighthood<sup>71</sup> – is, while perhaps praiseworthy in its ideals, very problematic in its reality. Human striving to fulfil what humans perceive as God's plans must ultimately be flawed, because God's will cannot be known by humans, and perhaps more significantly, because of the innate sinfulness of human nature. Thus despite the perfection of Condwiramurs's nature, she can incite Parzival to kill; despite the innate goodness of Parzival's »art«, he is deeply flawed; and at the end, despite the attainment of the grail by both of them, the future presented by the work is far from ideal.<sup>72</sup> In this respect, it appears to me that *Parzival* contains in nuce the essential theme of *Willehalm*: good people do bad things, and in the name of God and love, two values that embody, in themselves, the ultimate good. In *Willehalm*, fighting for God is a more prominent problem than fighting for love, though the latter aspect is also very present; in *Parzival* it appears that the priorities are the other way round, though once again both themes are depicted.

## VI.

Towards the end of her fascinating analysis of the »Frauenpassage« in the prologue to *Parzival*, Mireille Schnyder states that »Der Roman ist die gute Frau, die gute Frau ist der Roman. Und so sind der Rubinring und der Glasring sowohl Frau wie Werk.«<sup>73</sup> She believes that the core message of this passage –

<sup>71</sup> The references to the grail knights as »templeise« (444,23; 468,28; 702,24; 792,21; 793,21; 797,13; 802,12; 804,6; 805,22; 816,5; 816,17; 818,26; 821,19; note that the grail is kept in a »tempel«: 816,15), and their community as a »ritterliche bruderschaft« (470,9) are almost certainly intended to remind us of the Military Orders; cf. Nellmann (note 19), II, 660–661; and Heinze (note 15), 24–26. Note also that at 468,28, »templeise« rhymes with »reise«, which is undertaken because the knights carry sin. All this reminds us of the crusades, the ideology of religious war, and thus potentially of the problems associated with them, taken up more explicitly in *Willehalm* (cf. Bumke, »Schluß« [note 64], 263–264).

<sup>72</sup> Fundamental for the future presented by the work: Bumke, »Schluß« (note 64). It is extremely odd that Condwiramurs's own inherited land of Brobarz is not mentioned in the list of lands given over to young Kardeiz (803,5–8). Kardeiz is as much her son as he is Parzival's – more so in fact, one could argue, given that he is manifestly never to be in his father's company, though he has been with his mother for a few years. Thus one of the open endings of the work concerns not just Kardeiz's ability to win back his lost paternal inheritances, but also the fate of Brobarz – the only kingdom Parzival has ever ruled, and the kingdom that Condwiramurs ruled for nearly five years in her husband's absence. Should we also remember Graharz and wonder about its fate and that of its queen Liaze?

<sup>73</sup> Mireille Schnyder, »Frau, Rubin und *aventure*. Zur »Frauenpassage« im *Parzival*-Prolog Wolframs von Eschenbach (2,23–3,24)«, *DVjs* 72 (1998), 3–17: 16; the quote refers to lines 3,11–19: »manec wibes schœne an lobe ist breit: ist dâ daz herze conterfeit, die lob ich als ich solde daz safer ime golde. ich enhân daz niht für lîhtiu dinc, swer in den kranken messinc verwurket edeln rûbin und al die *aventure* sîn: dem glîche ich rehten

which is in her view central to the prologue as a whole – is that the narrative is both a form of »Frauendienst« as well as a form of »Gottesdienst«: like Parzival, who at the end of his tortuous path finally attains the grace of God, so the audience – comprising women – will attain grace by following the narrative, and they are therefore asked to place their trust in the narrator and look beneath the surface of what they see. The central import of the metaphor of the ruby and the glass ring is that what shines on the surface might be fake, and what does not shine on the surface contains real value. The »âventiure« that is compared to the good woman stands for both the woman and the work itself, leading Schnyder to the (rather provocative) statement quoted above. Both the work and the good woman may appear imperfect on the surface, but a deeper knowledge of both shows their true worth.

This is a plausible reading of the prologue; how does it affect our reading of Condwiramurs (or how does our reading of Condwiramurs affect our understanding of the prologue)? Condwiramurs is scarcely present in the work. She is perfect and she never changes; there seems to be little reason, therefore, for the narrator to spend much time on her. But if the work is the good woman and the good woman is the work, what are we to make of the fact that if there is a good woman in *Parzival*, this is surely (though not necessarily exclusively) Condwiramurs? The figure of Condwiramurs appears to contradict the central statement of the work, if we follow Schnyder's reading and agree that the message of this work is that what shines on the surface need not be worthy within, whereas what is not superficially impressive might be perfect within: Condwiramurs is the one person about whom it almost seems fair to say that »what you see is what you get«. Her surface reflects her depth perfectly. However, as we have seen, there is a fundamental problem *even with regard to Condwiramurs* in relation to love-service and the grail community. Perhaps this is the contrary side of Condwiramurs: even when a figure is perfect, precisely because she is nevertheless human, she remains susceptible to partaking of the flaws innate in human undertakings.

The work might plausibly be seen as a »Frauenspiegel« of some sort,<sup>74</sup> but its message is not an easy moral of how to be a good woman. Like other aspects of the work, the figure of Condwiramurs is also ambiguous, and shows that even if one is perfect, one is still human, and therefore potentially entangled in the flaws innate in human society. Thus even a good woman like Condwiramurs may be in the position of being queen over a community that has questionable ideals and even more questionable ways of fulfilling them; she may, in this posi-

wibes muot« (the punctuation here, as in Schnyder's article, follows that of Nellmann; the parenthesis in the last line in Schiroke's edition does not fully make sense).

<sup>74</sup> Thus Annette Volting, »*welt ir nu hœren fürbaz?* On the Function of the Loherangrin-Episode in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (v. 824,1–826,30)«, *PBB* 126 (2004), 65–84.

tion, be used as a force to help to kill. The moral for a female audience in the figure of Condwiramurs, if there is one, could be twofold. On the one hand, even the statement of the prologue that one must look beneath the surface ought not to be hardened into a fixed formula that what is good on the outside must be bad on the inside and vice versa: the figure of Condwiramurs shows that human nature is even more complex, and that it is not possible to believe simply that the truth contradicts what is on the surface.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, she also shows that even if one is completely and unambiguously a good figure, not »parriert« in any way, one remains potentially imprisoned by the fallibility of human nature. This reflects no more nor less than the inscrutability of God's will, and the fallacy of human striving in trying to fulfil God's will according to human, and therefore necessarily limited, understanding. If – in addition to presenting ideals of womanhood – many other female characters in *Parzival* might be viewed as admonishments against one or another potential flaw in what Wolfram saw as female nature, Condwiramurs is a warning against taking goodness for granted; she is also a warning that a good woman may be used for good ideals by a male society with not necessarily good effects.

<sup>75</sup> Wolfram quite explicitly calls into question the correspondence of external and internal qualities on a number of occasions: 3,11–24 (discussed by Schnyder [note 73]); 124,15–20; 315,24–25; 316,16–19; and regarding Orgeluse: 516,3–14 (Orgeluse is especially complex, combining negative and positive qualities at several levels). That Condwiramurs actually does provide a reflection on the surface of what is within, might in turn reflect contemporary theories, elucidated (in a different context) by Bumke (note 6), 15–27.