ADAPTING ARTHUR:
THE TRANSFORMATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS OF WIRNT VON GRAFENBERG'S *WIGALOIS*

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ABSTRACT

Annegret Oehme: Adapting Arthur. The Transformations and Adaptations of Wirnt von
Grafenberg's *Wigalois.*
(Under the direction of Ruth von Bernuth)

The stories of King Arthur and his noble knights have fascinated audiences for many centuries

and continue to being retold and fashioned to attract modern audiences. Amongst these stories is

the tale of Wigalois, the son of the reputable Gawain. This dissertation traces the story of

Wigalois across different languages, cultures, and media in order to show how this is a shared

German-Yiddish narrative. Furthermore, this dissertations challenges traditional understanding

of adaptation within a diachronic and teleological framework by uncovering dialogical and

dynamic processes inherent in this narrative tradition. Using the theoretical framework of a

combined Adaptation Studies and Medieval Literature Studies' notions of unstable texts my

argumentation focuses on eight specific examples: Wirnt von Grafenberg's *Wigalois* (1st half 13th

ct.), Italian murals from the fourteenth century, Wigoleis *von dem Rade* (1483/93), *Viduvilt*

(Yiddish, 16th ct.), Johann Christoph Wagenseil's *Belehrung der Jüdisch-Teutschen Red- und*

Schreibart (Yiddish and German, 1715), *Gabein* (Yiddish, 1789), the illustrations by Ludwig

Richter (before 1851), and *Die phantastischen Abenteuer der Glücksritters Wigalois* (Comic,

German, 2011).

This dissertation is dedicated to Andrea, the toughest lady I know,

and to her wonderful sister Flurina.

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

This dissertation presents the Hebrew and Yiddish references in transliteration. As no generally accepted guidelines for the transliteration of old Yiddish texts exist, I am drawing on the YIVO/ Library of Congress Systems, which I have modified for the early material. Much alike in German vernacular literature, the spellings in the Yiddish manuscripts vary.

Yiddish Letter	Transliteration/ Romanization	Yiddish Letter	Transliteration/ Romanization
א	a, o, e silent	י	i, e
אי	i	יי	ey
או	u	כ/ך	k, kh
אײ , איי	ay, eye	ל	l
ב	b, v	מ/ם	m
ג	g	ס	s
ד	d	ע	e
ה	h, e	פ/ף	p, f
ו	u	צ/ץ	ts
וו	v	ק	k
וי	oy	ר	r
ז	z	ש	sh, s
ח	kh	ת	t
ט	t		

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"Jafnan er hálfsögð saga ef einn segir."
"[A] story is only half told when it is told by a single person."
(The Saga of Grettir the Strong, chapter 46)[1]

Introduction

"What chronicle will soon be writ of us […]? How will it play and how best fill a stage?"
(Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Arthur*, Act V, Scene III)

In the final scene from *The Tragedy of Arthur*, presented as though it were a play by Shakespeare, Arthur reflects on the poetic potential of his and his knight's lives and adventures. His questions exceed the moment of his own death and remind the audience that they are watching a fictional play. The audience watches Arthur reflecting on the retellings in which, as the fictional character on stage, he is already taking part. *The Tragedy of Arthur*, actually written by Arthur Phillips, pretends to be as an edition of this "Shakespearean" play, complete with a lengthy critical introduction.[2] It was written to highlight the astonishment that Shakespeare most likely never attempted to adapt the stories of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. This is surprising, as the stories of King Arthur have been reworked many times and in many ways and becoming a transcultural narrative transmitted through Anglo-Norman and French mediation to transport many ideas and to address many themes and to meet the needs of different audiences: "King Arthur's Round Table became an ideal story-teller's vehicle by which heroes and tales from far-off lands might be given a unified theme and setting, so to Camelot came

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[1] Denton Fox and Hermann Pálsson, trans., *Grettir's Saga* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 96.

[2] Arthur Phillips, The Tragedy of Arthur. A Novel (New York: Random House, 2011), 359.

stories from every culture and civilization."[3] Considering the unbroken fascination of the Arthurian stories and the many contributions contributions to the material it seems significant that a famous artist like William Shakespeare did not participate in the tradition himself.

The Diaspora culture of the Jews in the Holy Roman Empire, on the other hand, might not come to mind as a potential participant in the retellings of Arthurian stories. However, it produced at least one Hebrew story about King Arthur, called [*Melekh Artus*] ("King Arthur") from 1279,[4] and at least two distinct Yiddish retellings of the story of a knight named Wigalois (16th ct.). The first preserved extensive narrative about Wigalois is the Middle High German romance *Wigalois* by Wirnt von Grafenberg (1st half 13th ct.). The Yiddish-speaking community of the late medieval/early modern period contribute to the Wigalois adaptations with *Viduvilt*, and by offering a take on the narrative that significantly differs from Wirnt von Grafenberg's *Wigalois*, their retelling enabled the continuation of the Wigalois material. Entering the modern period, in 1699, the Protestant philosopher and Hebraist Johann Christoph Wagenseil reprinted, transliterated, and translated a later edition of *Viduvilt* from 1671/1679 in his Yiddish textbook for non-Jews, *Belehrung der Jüdisch-Teutschen Red- und Schreibart*, thereby making the epic accessible to a non-Yiddish speaking audience.[5] Daniel Ernst Wagner reworked Wagenseil's version in 1780 for his collection of narratives, entitled *Erzehlungen aus dem Heldenalter teutscher Nationen*, utilizing it to evoke a "German" national literary tradition dating back to the

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[3] David Day, *The Search for King Arthur* (New York: Facts on File, 1995), 157.

[4] About the Hebrew Arthurian Romance see further: Kurt Leviant, *King Artus. A Hebrew Arthurian Romance of 1279 (MS. Cod. Vat. Hebr. Urbino 48, ff. 75-77)* (New York: Ktav, 1969); and Martin Przybilski, "Ein anti-arthurischer Artusroman. Invektiven gegen die höfische Literatur zwischen den Zeilen des 'Melech Artus'," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 131 (2002): 409-435.

[5] Johann Christoph Wagenseil, *Belehrung der jüdisch-teutschen Red- und Schreibart …* (Königsberg, 1699).

Middle Ages.[6] Even the famous German romantic poet, Ludwig Uhland, drew on the transliterated Yiddish version, using the Yiddish name Viduvilt instead of Wigalois.[7] Thus, adaptors of the eigtenth and nineteenth century did not refer to the Middle High German or later German versions, but rather reworked a story that itself was a product of different European traditions transmitted through the Yiddish versions.

The Yiddish adaptations bridged the gap during a time (the 17th century) in which the Middle High German stories of King Arthur were not reworked within a German-speaking framework. Even though Arthurian stories enjoyed immense popularity in this area during the Middle Ages, they fell into oblivion in the late 16th ct., only to be rediscovered at the end of the 18th ct. (which was also the case for the famous German "national" epic, the *Nibelungenlied*).[8] In a German translation of Erasmus of Rotterdam's *In Praise of Folly* from 1780, the translator even believed it necessary to add a footnote explaining to his German audience who King Arthur was: "Arthur war einer der ältesten Könige von England, der sich wider die Angelsachsen vertheidigte."[9] Yet, the story of the Arthurian knight Wigalois continued to be retold in the means of the Yiddish stories.

The aim of my dissertation is to show that the Wigalois narrative should therefore be understood as a dialogical product that went back and forth between different audiences

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[6] "Wieduwilt," in *Erzehlungen aus dem Heldenalter teutscher Nationen*, ed. Daniel Ernst Wagner (Danzig, 1780), 382-517.

[7] Ludwig Uhland, "Ritter Wieduwilt," in *Gedichte. Vollständige kritische Ausgabe auf Grund des handschriftlichen Nachlasses*, volume 2, ed. Erich Schmidt and Julius Hartmann (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta Nachf., 1898), 159-161.

[8] It is, however, important to note that this was not the case in the English-speaking world, where the Arthurian tradition continued uninterruptedly (For a further discussion on the "return" of the Arthurian material in the German-speaking world, see Maike Oergel, *The Return of King Arthur and the Nibelungen. National Myth in Nineteenth Century English and German Literature* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998).

[9] Erasmus von Rotterdam, *Lob der Narrheit,* ed. and trans. Wilhelm Gottlieb Becker (Basel, 1780), 281.

consisting of German and Yiddish speaking groups, each of which was in contact and dialogue with the other, and that produced a shared narrative tradition. Reconstructing the interdependences of eight adaptations of the Wigalois narrative in Yiddish and German that date from the first half of 13th century to 2011, I argue that, despite its "British" roots, the *Wigalois* story is at is core a transcultural narrative that is constantly tailored to suit different audiences. My research thus underscores the importance of including previously disregarded adaptations in languages such as Yiddish in a comparative approach to the Arthurian material, as part of a network of adaptations in different languages, cultures, and media.

For the analysis of the Wigalois material – which is comprised not only of versions in two languages but also of retellings in a number of different media, such as manuscripts, murals, comics, and even a children's opera – this dissertation employs the theoretical framework of Adaption Studies. Despite the richness and vastness of the material, past scholarship focussed on the Middle High German *Wigalois* by Wirnt von Grafenberg as the ideal, viewing the later adaptations, verbal or not, as mere copies, vain attempts to capture the essence of the medieval epic. In what seems like an inverted teleological line, the further from the Wirnt text a Wigalois adaptation is, the less it is researched or valued. Yet, to judge adaptations based on their fidelity to a predecessor promotes a notion of adaptation as a "one-way-street," a term coined by Adapation Studies scholar Jørgen Bruhn.[10] The implicit diachronic focus on a model and its adaptations reinforces notions of the prototype as an original. The adaptation, it seems, cannot "exceed" its predecessors and is judged based on them; this understanding resembles notions of "the original" prevalent in 19th-century medieval philology, which often aimed to reconstruct a

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[10] Jørgen Bruhn, "Dialogizing Adaptation Studies. From One-Way Transport to a Dialogic Two-Way Process," in *Adaptation Studies. New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. Jørgen Bruhn et al. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 69-88, here 73.

supposed original. Such an approach entirely dismisses the nature of adaptations as participants in an ongoing dialogue. The focus on Adaptation Studies questions chronological order and value-based evaluations and thereby enables a discourse in which all adaptations are perceived as equal participants within the respective tradition. Building on this notion of dynamic processes, my dissertation uses the verbal and pictorial, German and Yiddish retellings of the Arthurian romance *Wigalois* as case studies to promote an understanding of the inherently dialogic nature of adaptations. Specifically, I am following in particular the definition of Linda Hutcheon, who shows the particular value of Adaptation Studies by emphasizing the triple identity of adaptations as formal units or products, as acts of (re-)creation, and as acts of reception, and by abolishing notions of textual autonomy.

In the past, even the contribution of Wirnt von Grafenberg's *Wigalois* to the Arthurian tradition was disregarded, and it was not perceived a valuable Arthurian adaptation, mainly, because Wirnt's text had been devalued in early scholarship as a "post-classical" Arthurian Romance, characterized by an eclectic use of material.[11] Trying to prove either Wirnt's genius in his original take on the established Arthurian tradition or his deconstruction of the same, early scholars compared *Wigalois* to the partial French model *Le Bel Inconnu* and, perhaps even more so to Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*.[12] At stake in these comparisons was the scholarly value of the romance and its classification as canonical or non-canonical – a problematic debate in itself that mirrors the zeitgeist of 19th-century literature scholarship.

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[11] Scholars such as Werner Schröder in his essay "Der synkretistische Roman des Wirnt von Gravenberg" (1986) were particularly critical of the excessive use of magic and mystical elements in Wirnt's contribution to this tradition (Werner Schröder, "Der synkretistische Roman des Wirnt von Gravenberg," *Euphorion* 80 [1986]: 235-277).

[12] Nevertheless, scholarship discusses the portrayal of religion in *Parzival*, the narrative of an Arthurian knight on a quest to find the Holy Grail, as equally controversial – especially with regard to "God." See for example Susanne Knaeble, *Höfisches Erzählen von Gott: Funktion und narrative Entfaltung des Religiösen in Wolframs 'Parzival.'* Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011.

During the last decade, however, the interest in Wirnt's *Wigalois* increased immensely: according to the *Bibliographie der Deutschen Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft*,[13] there were over 83 publications concerning the Middle High German epic. This increased interest is supported by a new edition and translation with commentary by Sabine and Ulrich Seelbach published in 2005 (second edition 2014).[14] The topics covered by recent research vary greatly and include everything from descriptive analyses of newly found fragments, to the question of the hero's messianity (which I discuss in the second chapter), to gender construction (which I discuss in the third chapter of this dissertation).[15] Thus, the research mirrors trends in medieval studies, such as topics of gender and new philology. Many essays approach Wirnt of Grafenberg's romance within the larger intertextual context of Middle High German Arthurian romances, especially in relation to Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*.[16]

In contrast to the increased research interest in *Wigalois*, barely any publications focus on the retellings. For example, over the last 30 years, only four texts examining aspects of the early modern prose adaptation *Wigoleis vom Rade* (1483/93) have been published. Beyond a comparison to *Parzival*, only a few publications take on comparative approaches bringing into

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[13] BDSL online *Bibliographie der deutschen Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft*, s.v. "Wigalois" and "Gwigalois," accessed January 21, 2016, www.bdsl-online.de.

[14] Sabine and Ulrich Seelbach provide, however, no complete new edition as they are using the text in the form of J. M. Kapteyn' edition. (Wirnt von Grafenberg, *Wigalois. Der Ritter mit dem Rade. Erster Band: Text*, ed. Johannes Marie Neele Kapteyn [Bonn: Klopp 1926).

[15] Examples include: Christa Bertelsmeier-Kierst: "Die Krakauer 'Wigalois'Fragmente (q). Eine weitere Handschrift im Umkreis der Cgm 19-Gruppe?." *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 144 (2015): 150-177; Cordula Böcking, "'daz wær ouch noch guot wîbes sit.' Streitbare Frauen in Wirnts Wigalois." In *Aktuelle Tendenzen der Artusforschung*, ed. Brigitte Burrichter et al. (Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2013), 363-380. Christoph Fasbender, "Gwigalois' Bergung: Zur Epiphanie des Helden als Erlöser," in *Aktuelle Tendenzen der Artusforschung*, ed. Brigitte Burrichter et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 209-222.

[16] Eva Bolta, *Die Chimäre als dialektische Denkfigur im Artusroman. Mit exemplarischen Analysen von Teilen des Parzival Wolframs von Eschenbach, des Wigalois Wirnts von Grafenberg und der Crone Heinrichs von dem Türlin* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2014); Gesine Mierke, "Genealogie und Intertextualität. Zu Wolframs von Eschenbach *Parzival* und Wirnts von Grafenberg *Wigalois*," in *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik*, Band 74 (2015): 180-200.

dialogue adaptations from within the Wigalois narrative tradition. Among these works, similar aspects as in the publications focusing on only Wigalois are visible, which underscores the fruitful analysis of these topics in a wider frame and further illuminates aspects of reception. Astrid Lembke's "Ritter außer Gefecht" (*Wigalois*, *Viduvilt*), for example discusses the construction of the hero's identity in relationship to the women he encounters along the way.[17] And Bianca Häberlein's "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive" (*Wigalois*, *Viduvilt*, *Ammenmährchen*) discusses the retellings in the light of changing audiences and changes based on their respective cultural and religious needs. Similarly, Margot Behrend Valles's dissertation explores *Viduvilt* alongside the Hebrew Arthurian Romance *Melekh Artus* and the Yiddish *Bovo Bukh* in the context of their audiences, arguing that the material has been appropriated for medieval and early modern Jewish audiences.[18] Achim Jaeger's monograph *Ein jüdischer Artusritter* (*Wigalois*, *Viduvilt*), particularly underscores the value of comparative studies; his detailed analysis of the early Yiddish retelling had a huge impact on the revaluation of the Wigalois adaptations.[19] The recent study by James Brown *Imagining the Text* (2015), surpasses the prior comparative analyses by combining research on verbal and pictorial adaptations in order to understand reception processes of the Wigalois material. Brown shows the additional value of reading the *Wigalois* manuscripts and incunabula as reactions to the text by Wirnt's text and those of later adaptors and offers insights into the early reception.

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[17] Astrid Lembke, "Ritter außer Gefecht. Konzepte passiver Bewährung im Wigalois und im Widuwilt," in *Aschkenas* 25 (2015): 63-82.

[18] Margot Behrend Valles, "Judaized Romance and Romanticized Judaization. Adaptation in Hebrew and Early Yiddish Chivalric Literature." (PhD diss. Indiana University, 2013).

[19] Further examples include Wulf-Otto Dreeßen's "Wandlungen des Artusromans im Jiddische" (*Wigalois*, *Viduvilt*), a close reading based on the cultural background of the Yiddish material, and Jutta Eming's *Funktionswandes des Wunderbaren* (*Bel Inconnu*, *Wigalois*, *Wigoleis vom Rade*), in which she analyses marvelous elements in connection to the respective epochal changes in aesthetics (Jutta Eming, *Funktionswandel des Wunderbaren. Studien zum Bel Inconnu, zum Wigalois und zum Wigoleys vom Rade* [Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier], 1999.

Lembke's, Häberlein's, Jaeger's, and Brown's publications emphasize the value of comparative approaches to the material, as their readings offer not only insights into the adaptations but also into the very early reception of *Wigalois*. I argue that a closer analysis of the Wigalois material that includes a broad variety of retellings uncovers the dialogical processes within the adaptation tradition and enables a revaluation of material. Therefore, I compare significant adaptations on either a text-internal level or with regards to their paratextual and pictorial elements in order to discuss both their individual takes on the story and their participation in a narrative tradition. The eight specific examples that I compare in depth are: Wirnt von Grafenberg's *Wigalois* (Middle High German, 1st half 13th ct.)*, Wigoleis vom Rade* (Early New High German, 1483/93), *Viduvilt* (Early Yiddish, 16th ct.), Johann Christoph Wagenseil's *Belehrung der Jüdisch-Teutschen Red- und Schreibart* (Early Yiddish and German, 1699)*, Gabejn* (Early Yiddish, 1789)[20], the illustrations by Ludwig Richter (before 1851), *Die phantastischen Abenteuer der Glücksritters Wigalois* (German, 2011) and Italian murals from the fourteenth century. These adaptations have been selected because they produce their own take on the narrative and offer particular insights into how the narrative was interpreted. In addition to a textual analysis based on close readings, I further examine introductions and editorial settings of the material, as they also offer an important insight into the approaches to adaptation, illustrating aspects of both production and reception aspects.

Although the Arthurian knight Wigalois, the son of the better known Gawein, is not one of the most famous knights, his story of has been retold several times and fascinated many audiences, from at least the date of the first written version to now. Scholars generally interpret

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[20] As the text is only preserved in transliterated form in Leo Landau's *Arthurian Legends or the Hebrew-German rhymed Version of the Legend of King Arthur*, I am using the title and the spelling according to Landau's transliteration (Leo Landau, *Arthurian Legends or the Hebrew-German rhymed Version of the Legend of King Arthur* [Leipzig: E. Avenarius, 1912])*.

Wirnt's *Wigalois* as the narrative of an exemplary knight, whose path lacks a crisis.[21] In that respect he is in line with the "family tradition," Wigalois being the son of the "perfect" knight Gawein himself. The tale begins with the story of Wigalois' parents; Gawein, Wigalois' father, is led from King Arthur's court to a mysterious, far-away land and marries its princess Florie. After a while, Gawein decides to return to the Arthurian court, unaware that his wife is pregnant. Since Gawein is unable to return to the land of his wife Florie, because he lacks a magic belt, Florie has to raise their son on her own. Eventually, the son, Wigalois, decides to search for his father, leaving his mother, and making his way to King Arthur's court. There, everyone is taken with the young, handsome knight, even his father Gawein, who is unable to recognize the perfect knight as his son. The courtly joy is interrupted when a messenger maiden approaches the court to request help for her queen, whose country is under siege. To the displeasure of the messenger maiden, it is the young and inexperienced Wigalois who finally agrees to come with her, hoping to gain knightly expertise. He quickly gains experience by undertaking several adventures along the way to the besieged kingdom. When the messenger maiden and Wigalois finally arrive at the queen's court they find it and the surrounding land in a devastated state. The queen promises to be Wigalois' wife if he successfully defeats the heathen usurper, Roaz, and subsequently reinstates Larie as queen. In order to rid the land of Roaz, Wigalois has to enter some sort of magical otherworld in which he first defeats a dragon and then finally the usurper Roaz. As promised, Wigalois is given the queen's hand in marriage upon his return. But during the wedding festivities another messenger arrives asking for help on behalf of the mighty Namur, who was supposed to attend the wedding but was killed – his wife abducted and his former kingdom taken over by another warlord. Wigalois cannot resist the urge to help and successfully

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[21] Steaphan Fuchs, *Hybride Helden. Gwigalois und Willehalm. Beiträge zum Heldenbild und zur Poetik des Romans im frühen 13. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter), 1997, 111.

leads a huge army to free this kingdom and its queen. Many verses describe the ensuing epic battle in the tradition of the *chanson de geste*, narratives centered on Christian-heathen wars associated with Charlemagne. After Wigalois' victory, the narrator tells us how Wigalois and his wife visit King Arthur's court and become parents of a son named Lifort Gawanides. We are promised that his adventures will be told another time; unfortunately no such work has been discovered yet.

Wirnt of Grafenberg's *Wigalois*, the first known German version of the narrative, proved to be very successful with medieval audiences. More than forty text witnesses, fragments, and complete manuscripts of Wirnt's *Wigalois* still exist, the earliest dating from 1220-1230, shortly after its assumed composition. The large number of manuscripts and adaptations make it clear that the text and its story enjoyed great popularity with varied audiences, such as the medieval and early modern German- and Yiddish speakers. *Wigalois* itself already existed as a product of a transcultural and -lingual network of narrative culture and was at least influenced by, if no based on the old French *Le Bel Inconnu* (c. 1190).

Early on, the Wigalois material was adapted in an exclusively visual form, as an illustration cycle in Runkelstein Castel, Southern Tyrol. Commissioned around 1390 by the important Bozen townsman Niklaus Vintler, the murals of Wigalois decorated parts of the walls of the so-called Summerhouse (Sommerhaus). The transition into this sphere proves the success of the Wigalois narrative to an early modern audience, as does its early prose version. Within the span of one hundred years, the story was reworked in prose at least three times, once as a stand-

alone text *Wigoleis vom Rade* (1483/1493)[22], and twice in compilations, *Buch der Abenteuer* (1496-1500)[23] and *Buch der Liebe* (1587).[24]

Within the same timeframe, the narrative was adapted in Yiddish as a text referred to as *Viduvilt*, which represents the first known Yiddish rendering of an Arthurian text and becomes a model for other Yiddish adaptations. Unfortunately, author, time, and place of the composition remain unknown, although some sixteenth-century manuscripts point to Italy as the place of composition – at that time Italy was a central place for the production of Yiddish literature. However, later adaptations appear to come from further north. Three incomplete manuscripts of the Yiddish Wigalois exist.[25] Their retelling became a template for numerous adaptations, indicating a fascination with the story that lasted for centuries. The most famous reworking of *Viduvilt* in Yiddish was printed in 1671/1679 in Prague and offered a complete Yiddish recast using *ottava rima*, an Italian verse scheme that the author daringly adjusts to the Yiddish. In a later adaptation called *Riter Gabejn* from 1789, the main character even travels to China and Russia and becomes the heir to the Chinese imperial throne.

The 20th century presents us with the only gap in re-workings of the Wigalois narrative, but we also see a huge increase in scholarly interest in *Wigalois* during the second half of the

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[22] *Ein gar schöne liepliche und kurtzweilige history von dem edelen herren Wigoleis vom Rade. Ein Ritter von der Tafelronde. Mit seinen schoenen hystorien und figuren / Wie er geborn / unnd sein leben von seiner jugent an Biß an sein ende gefürt unnd vollbracht hat.* Edited by Johann Knoblauch, 2nd ed. Straßburg 1519.

[23] "Wigoleis," in *Buch der Abenteuer der Ritter von der Tafelrunde*, ed. Ulrich Füetrer (1496-1500). Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CGM 1,. 75 r.-83r.

[24] "Ritterliche History des Hochberühmpten und Thewren Ritters Herrn Wigoleis vom Rade…," in *Buch der Liebe*, ed. Sigmund Feyerabend (Frankfurt, 1587), 382-396.

[25] Manuscript MS F 12.44, hold at Trinity College Library in Cambridge, is the only one to include an epilogue, but due to ill-fated attempts of preservation largely illegible over the second half (*Viduvilt*. Cambridge, Wren Library. MS F.12.44 [16th ct.]). Cod. hebr. 289 and 255, hold at Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg, offer a mainly identical text, but lack both prologue and epilogue. Furthermore, cod. hebr. 255 only consists of a few leaves (*Viduvilt*. Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 255 [16th ct.]; *Viduvilt*. Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 289 [16th ct.]).

century. The "Kulturverein Wirnt von Gräfenberg e.V," a society devoted to preserving and promoting Wirnt of Grafenberg and his Arthurian Romance, is responsible for reigniting the adaptation tradition in the 21st century. Within a few years, they commissioned a play (2011), a comic (2011), and a children's opera, which is not yet complete and has so far only been performed in parts (2014). All of these works are based on Wirnt's text in contrast to numerous earlier adaptations that are connected to Wirnt only indirectly, mediated by the Yiddish retelling. Despite being disregarded by scholarship, the Wigalois material was continuously reworked in one form or the other, except for the 20th centur, in contrast to other medieval German narratives that were rediscovered only in the 18th and 19th centuries.[26]

As part of a larger adaptation tradition that centers on King Arthur and his knights of the round table, the Wigalois material represents a very suitable case study to critically revisit common notions of Adaptation Studies that are often promoted within Film Studies and to test their applicability to other adaptations in different media. The myth of King Arthur stands out in literary history, as it prompted one of the most productive, and still ongoing adaptation traditions in European history, constantly inspiring new art. Once Geoffrey of Monmouth paved the way for them in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (1136) by establishing the story of King Arthur and his knights, Arthurian narratives have been reworked over and over again for centuries, integrating contemporaneous concepts and to presenting the stories of King Arthur to different audiences as the reflection on retellings in the initial quote from Arthur Phillip demonstrates.

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[26] *Wigalos* (1215), Runkelstein murals (1390), *Viduvilt* (15th or 16th century), *Wigoleis: Buch der Abenteuer* (1496-1500), *Wigoleys von dem Rade* (1519), *Wigoleis: Buch der Liebe* (1587), *Viduvilt* or *Kinig Artis Hof* Wagneseil (1715), *Gabejn* (1789), "Wieduwilt" in *Erzehlungen aus dem Heldenalter teutscher Nation* (1780), *Vom Könige Artus und von dem bildschönen Ritter Wieduwilt* (1786), *Wigolais vom Rade* (1841), Ludwig Uhland: *Wieduwilt* (1898), *Wigalois* (2011).

Pointing to an exact beginning of stories about King Arthur in general is difficult. By the early ninth century a nexus of legends had already grown around his figure.[27] The very first works about King Arthur, which laid the foundation for further adaptations, were politically inclined.[28] The "historical Arthur" is mainly a construction of Geoffrey of Monmouth,[29] who wrote his *Historia Regum Bitanniæ* in 1138 as a legitimization for the rule of his patrons.[30] King Arthur soon would become the basis for the rule of the British Kings.[31] Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote his text in Latin, only for *literati*.[32] Also writing in Latin in his history of the English kings, William of Malmesbury describes a historical Arthur as a somewhat messianic figure that the Normans were afraid of. Justifying expansionism and the demonization of the other and foreigner are part of the agenda in Wace's *Roman de Brut* (1150-1155).[33] It presents King Arthur as the one who extended borders and provided services to meet the needs of an empire.[34] Wace

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[27] Ingrid Kasten, "The Western Background," in *The Arthur of the Germans. The Arthurian Legend in Medieval German and Dutch Literature*, ed. Henry Jackson and Silvia Ranawake (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 21-37, here 22.

[28] See for further examples Finke and Schichtmann, who look at the cultural and historical forces from Middle Ages to Wars of Roses that created Arthur as a cultural and especially political signifier (Laurie Finke and Martin B. Shichtman, King *Arthur and the Myth of History* [Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004], 1).

[29] Neil Thomas, *A German View Of Camelot. Wirnt von Gravenberg's Wigalois and Heinrich Arthurian Tradition* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1987), 31-39 21.

[30] "For Geoffrey of Monmouth, the writing of history was performance, an ingenious manipulation of language to create a past that would ease the anxieties of a powerful ruling class concerned with discovering origins so that claims of lineage might be upheld. At the same time, it was an entry in a competition – waged against the evil and malicious – the stakes of which, though they were never specified, were believed enormous. As the circulation of symbol capital in twelfth-century England is evaluated, it seems Geoffrey's patrons received much more than they gave in return. In exchange for relatively minor ecclesiastical promotion, Geoffrey of Monmouth provided them with a powerful myth of origin – that of King Arthur." (Finke/ Schichtman, King *Arthur and the Myth of History*, 69-70).

[31] Ibid., 31.

[32] Kasten, "The Western Background," 23.

[33] Ibid.,102.

[34] Ibid.

marks the important transition into the vernacular (at least in regard to the written tradition). Pre-modern notions of nation and politics continue to be themes in Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*.[35] For the semi-opera *King Arthur* (1691) by Henry Purcell, John Dryden designed a libretto that focuses on King Arthur as commander-in-chief during the battles between Saxons and Britons in general, and in particular on Arthur's recovery of his beloved, the blind and abducted Cornish Princess Emmeline. The idea to emphasize the political and supposedly historic framework of the Arthurian narrative continued into modern cinema with David Franzoni's film *King Arthur* (2004).

Yet, it was Chrétien de Troyes, who reshaped the stories in the most significantly way for literary history and introduced Arthur and his knights to the continent.[36] Despite the courtly setting, an Otherworld plays an essential role in the storyline, as that space is usually the place for adventure. After solving a problem and/or fulfilling a certain task, the hero brings stability to the court.[37] Following Chrétien de Troyes, Middle-High German tellings and retellings of Arthurian material soon emerged, including stories by Hartmann von Aue, Wolfram von Eschenbach, and Wirnt von Grafenberg.

The Arthurian material is based on the impetus to retellthe stories about the famous King and his brave knights and to adapt them for the needs of the respective audiences. The Wigalois narratives participate in that tradition by taking place in the same narratological world, but also by providing a sequel to the story of Gawein as one of the most famous knights. In my first

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[35] Ibid., 159.

[36] "In Arthurian romance, as the genre was defined by Chrétien, the hero is torn between knighthood, love and marriage, and is bound to find himself wanting in consequence of his inability to meet the expectations of either society or of a woman, or to satisfy religious norms. As a result, he suffers a crisis, which he then has to overcome." (Kasten, "The Western Background," 27).

[37] Ibid., 28.

chapter, I use one of the claims of Adaptation Studies to show that the Wigalois stories participate in the tradition of continued retellings and simultaneously reflect on their identity as adaptations. Developing the theoretical framework of this dissertation, the first chapter explores both the advantages as well as the limitations of Adaptation Studies for the Wigalois material, using Wagenseil's Wigalois version as an example and answering the central question of its identity. After first discussing first possible alternative theories, such as the concepts of inter- and transtextuality, inter- and transmediality, translation and cultural translation/transformation, I commence the analysis of Wigalois by critically reviewing problems of Adaptation Studies and by demonstrating how concepts in Medieval Literature Studies lend themselves perfectly to the creation of an overarching adaptation theory applicable to the Wigalois tradition and its diverse material. Building on the preceeding theoretical explications, this chapter concludes with a brief analysis of a number of Wigalois materials, uncovering how they already include reflections on their identity as adaptations. This chapter lays the foundation for the following analyses of the Wigalois material its relationship to the topics of religion, gender, and the pictorial tradition.

As the majority of research on the Middle High German *Wigalois* and the Yiddish *Viduvilt* centers on the question of religious motifs and the influence of the respective religious and lingual backgrounds of the texts (German-Christian, Jewish-Yiddish), the second chapter will explore the theme of religion as first *tertium comparationis*, analyzing its role in *Wigalois* (1st half 13th ct.), *Viduvilt* (16th ct.), and Gabejn (1789?). A dominant question in scholarship asks whether the Yiddish adaptations of Middle High German literature including *Viduvilt*, are "De-Christianized" or even "Judaized." I show that neither *Wigalois* nor *Viduvilt* presents the audience with a coherent religious tale, but rather use religious motifs to underscore different claims or even, in the case of *Wigalois,* to create a dangerous atmosphere. Religion is

significantly less important to the Wigalois material than scholarship claims, and it is portrayed as an important, consistent trait of the hero only in the Yiddish *Gabejn*. Even *Gabejn* does not present a tale of a religious hero, but rather a tale of personal piety. In conclusion, I will show that despite what one might expect to find, the Yiddish adaptations by no means represent "Jewish" tales in a cultural-religious sense. Similarly, Wirnt does not present his audience with a Christian-religious tale in the first place. The fact that religious motifs are used freely in Wirnt's *Wigalois* without turning the text into a Christian tale is precisely what ensures and enables the long tradition of retellings in different cultural settings, such as the Jewish-Yiddish one.

The third chapter takes on the construction of female agency, as women are a key element in the story of the Arthurian knight. I therefore propose using the depiction of female agency as second *tertium comparationis*. An examination of female agency further complements the preceding analysis of religion, since many scholars argued for a "Jewish character" of the Yiddish Wigalois adaptation by pointing to its construction of the female figures. This chapter shows how the medieval and early modern adaptations in the narrative tradition of Wigalois can be grouped according to their portrayal of female agency; in one group women play the voiceless extra, wheras in the second group they have agency and exerice their power. The analysis of female agency within this chapter furthers an understanding of the mechanisms of the narrative and the dialogical framework of these adaptations because we see that the changes in depicting women and their possession or lack of power reveal new and different connections between the adaptations. The focus on female agency thus allows for a very different categorization than religion, as it shows a different set of changes occurring both diachronically and synchronically. I will discuss three different texts regarding the construction of female agency: Wirnt's *Wigalois* (1st half 13th ct.) as the earliest medieval example in which women lack agency, *Wigoleis vom*

Rade (1483), which immobilizes women further, and the Yiddish *Viduvilt* (16th ct.) which turns the narrative into nothing less than an Arthurian romance with women as the actual power-brokers. Although seemingly telling the same story, these three Wigalois adaptations have distinct agendas, as the focus on female agency shows.

The concluding chapter departs from the Wigalois material on a text-internal level in order to analyze the pictorial adaptations. My analysis underscores the relevance of Adaptation Studies for a tradition that involves retellings in different media. Including a chapter on pictorial retellings further deconstructs the often-implicit notion of the supremacy of the word for retellings of medieval material. My analysis focuses on *Wigoleis vom Rade* (1483/93), the murals at Castle Runkelstein (14th ct.), Ludwig Richter's illustrations (before 1851), the *Wigalois* comic from 2011, and a sketch in the undated Cod. Hebr. 255. I also refer to the most famous illustrations of *Wigalois*, found in the codex Leiden (1372). This final chapter shows that the Wigalois pictorial adaptations constitute a rich tradition with examples that retell the narrative very differently than the written texts by utilizing the respective conditions of material and medium. The pictorial Wigalois tradition represents a significant and distinct way of retelling the narrative, displaying a shift from a heterogenic narrative filled with religious elements, already visible in the verbal retellings, and thus offering an important testimony of reception. Almost all pictorial adaptations offer a story that focuses solely on Wigalois, leaving out additional figures and even the extensive battle in the second part of Wirnt's narrative. In regard to the illustrations discussed in this chapter, overarching and connecting themes emerge that bridge temporal and cultural boarders differently than the verbal adaptations, underscoring the fact that this material is as valuable and relevant as adaptations discussed in the preceding chapters.

Each of the chapters shows the significance of the Wigalois adaptations, which are as representative for the general Arthurian tradition as they are exceptional. They are representative because the retellings include changes in media, textual representation, and genre. They are exceptional because the adaptations involve two seemingly distinct lingual and cultural groups and yet culminate in one shared narrative tradition. Furthermore, the material represents a wonderful case study since historians are currently revising and reviewing the perceptions of closed-off and separated Christian and Jewish communities in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Following up on notions in Adaptations Studies of "adaptations as a cultural phenomenon or practice"[38] the Wigalois narrative can only be understood as a product of both German- and Yiddish-speaking cultures and their engagement with each other's narrative and cultural traditions. The aim of my dissertation is therefore to uncover the dialogical nature of that tradition and show the relevance of a comparative Yiddish-German analysis, as well as a transmedial one. The story of Wigalois, as I will show, is a tale only half-told, if perceived in one adaptation alone.

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[38] Jørgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, "'There and Back Again:' New challenges and new directions in adaptation studies," in *Adaptation Studies. New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. Jørgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen (London, New Delhi, Sydney, New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 1-16, here 10.

1. Approaching Adaptation:
Adaptation Studies and the Arthurian Tradition

Introduction

In 1699 Johann Christoph Wagenseil published an introductory Yiddish teaching book for non-Jews,[39] making him a participant in a movement of Christian Hebraists interested in Yiddish. Among the number of exercises provided in the book to the keen student, one stands out: a romance about an Arthurian knight. The title, given by Wagenseil, is printed in a mixture of Fraktur and Antiqua font: "Jüdischer *Geschicht-Roman* von dem grossen König Arturo in Engelland / und dem tapffern Helden Wieduwilt" (Wagenseil, *Belehrung*, 150). By giving both the Yiddish and German a combined title, Wagenseil marks this particular text as his own product, his own work. In a long introduction to the exercise, Wagenseil acquaints his audience with this Jewish Historic Romance, providing a supposedly historical account of the genealogy and reign of King Arthur and commenting on the debate about the potential existence of King Arthur's grave, all supported by longer references in Latin (Wagenseil, *Belehrung,* 151-153). He further explains that, even in then-contemporary England, a number of people still believed in Arthur's return:

> Noch zu melden fället / daß in Engelland ehemalen viel thörichter Leute gefunden worden / und etwan noch zu finden sind / welche da geglaubet und glauben / der König <u>Arturus</u> [in Fraktur] sey nit gestorben / sondern halte sich an einem einsamen und unbekanten Ort der Welt auf: Werde aber zu bestimter Zeit wieder kommen / und in Engelland wiederum herrschen / da man dann abermals / wie ehedessen unter seiner Regierung / lauter glückseeliger Zeiten geniessen / und von lauter Abendtheuren werde zu sagen haben.

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[39] Sometimes the second edition from 1715 (published in "Franckfurt") is mistaken in scholarship for the first print.

("It is necessary to point out that foolish people used to live and still live in England, who believed and still believe that King Arthur has not died, but rather hides in a secluded and unknown place from which he will return at a certain point in time in order to rule over England once more. When he returns, the people of England will once again – as it was before – enjoy blissful times and they will tell many stories about adventures." Wagenseil, *Belehrung*, 155)

Wagenseil's introduction seems to suggest that the material presented to the reader is of a hybrid English-Jewish origin. He emphasizes the strangeness of the material, clearly demonstrating that he had no idea about the German tradition of this narrative, which dated back to at least the first half of the 13th century. Nevertheless, Wagenseil presents us with a text significant for the Wigalois tradition and with material of both transcultural and translingual origin. The Wigalois text as included in this book by Wagenseil marks the significant transition of the Yiddish material (back) into the German. Although presented by Wagenseil as a seemingly disposable exercise, surrounded by linguistic, midrashic, and legal material, the Yiddish story of an Arthurian knight enabled further German adaptations and ensured the continued fascination and retelling of the Wigalois material long after Wagenseil's death.

On first glance, the printed text of Wagenseil's "Jüdischer Geschicht-Roman" presents simply a Yiddish and German text of one Wigalois adaptation, printed in a polyglot or synoptic translation with Yiddish on the left and German on the right side. Wagenseil's readership was likely primarily interested in learning Yiddish and therefore probably began reading with the German text, comparing it then to the Yiddish, attempting to find corresponding words and phrases. Which text, then, is the translation – the Yiddish or the German? And what about the fact that Wagenseil presents his audience not with two corresponding graphic systems, but with three: Yiddish, set in the so called *Vaybertaytsh* typeface, and German, set in Fraktur and Antiqua? Which is "the text" to begin with? Are there two – a Yiddish and a German – or do both present parts of one text that can only be understood jointly? These various questions of

identity are further complicated by the fact that the Wigalois adaptation used by Wagenseil is only preserved in this textbook. As we can see, this Christian Hebraist presents his audience with a literary phenomenon not easily categorized, with a hybrid text that includes elements of classical and cultural translation, transcription, and intertextuality.

In this chapter, I explore the identity of Wagenseil's *Wigalois*, thereby using it as an example to develop a theoretical background for this dissertation. In the following pages, I show the advantages of applying Adaptation Studies to such complex material as the Wigalois narrative tradition. First, I evaluate the possibilities of established theories, taking into consideration the concepts of inter- and transtextuality, inter- and transmediality, translation and cultural translation/transformation. Then I explore the current state of adaptation theory and its advantages of the theory. Part of my discussion critically reviews problems of Adaptation Studies in regard to Wagenseil's exercise and the Wigalois material in general, explaining how the concept of unstable texts in Medieval Literature Studies lends itself perfectly to the creation of an overarching adaptation theory applicable to a tradition that includes much diverse material. The continued retellings of Wigalois' story spanning many centuries and media prove the successful process of adapting the material through and across cultures.

Finally, working on the Wigalois material allows me to address some issues central to contemporary Adaptation Studies: questions of fidelity; adaptation as one-way-street; and audience perception of adaptation as adaptation. I will show how Wagenseil's Yiddish and German text about an Arthurian knight presents us with an adaptation, as it must be seen as an entry in the Wigalois tradition that combines two languages and is crucial for the future retellings of the material. Wagenseil serves as the test case for the major theoretical analyses of this dissertation. Building on the preceding discussion of adaptation, the chapter concludes by

exploring how some of the Wigalois materials already include reflections on their identity as adaptations. This chapter lays the foundation for my later analyses of the Wigalois material in regard to the topics of religion, gender, and image.

1.1   Wagenseil's *Geschicht-Roman* – A Translation?

Much like some other Christian Hebraists of his time, Wagenseil was chiefly interested in the study of Yiddish for two reasons.[40] First, Yiddish– especially in the form of this early Yiddish[41] – was close enough to German that believed studying it would make a later study of Hebrew easier. Second, Yiddish was the everyday language of the Jews living in the Holy Roman Empire. Therefore, speaking this language was intended to increase the success of missionary work amongst Jews.[42] In her study about the early modern interest in Yiddish, Aya Elyada suggests a third reason. Based on the fact that some Yiddish missionary treatises use a highly Germanized version of Yiddish, Elyada argues that these books presented ways to prepare Jews

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[40] For Wagenseil, it was by no means a philosemitic impetus that motivated him as we can see from the titles of some of his other works such as Johann Christoph Wagenseil, *Denunciatio Christiana, oder Christliche Ankündigung wegen der Lästerungen, womit die Juden, unsern Heyland Jesum Christum, sonder Aufhören, freventlich schmähen* (Altdorf, 1703); Wagenseil, *Hofnung der Erlösung Israelis, oder Klarer Beweiß der annoch bevorstehenden, und, wie es scheinet, allgemach-herannahenden grossen Jüden-Bekehrung* (Nürnberg, 1707); Wagenseil, *Der bey denen Juden erregte Zweifel wegen Warheit ihrer Glaubens-Lehr. Das ist, Wie ein Christ in zufälliger Unterredung mit einen Juden sich zu verhalten hat, damit ihm ein Zweifel wegen der Warheit seiner Jüdischen Glaubens-Lehr erreget werde* (Altdorf, 1707). But, Wagenseil opposed superstition and blood libel too in his work: Wagenseil, *Der Denen Juden fälschlich beygemessene Gebrauch Des Christen-Bluts, Das ist, Unwidersprechliche Widerlegung der entsetzlichen Unwarheit, Daß die Juden zu ihrer Bedürffnis Christen-Blut haben müssen, Welche so viel tausend dieser unschuldigen Leute, um Haab, Gut, Leib und Leben gebracht* (Altdorf, 1707).

[41] The term for this early form of Yiddish is highly controversial and accompanied by a debate about whether or not it represents a dialect or an independent language (Salomon Birnbaum, Max Weinreich). The most accepted names are Old-Yiddish, Middle-Yiddish (Chone Shmeruk, Jean Baumgarten, Yiddish-German and West-Yiddish (Paul Wexler, Jacob Allerhand). Wagenseil refers to the language as "Jüdisch-Teutsch." This form of Yiddish highly differs from the "modern" Yiddish, which originated in the contact with Slavic languages caused by the late medieval move to the East. However, both forms of Yiddish existed simultaneously until – at least – the 19th century.

[42] Already Charlemagne knew that missionary work has a higher chance of success if conducted in the vernacular of the respective target audience. Thus, he commissioned the translation of essential Christian texts such as the Lord's Prayer.

to speak German. If Elyada's argumentation is applied to Wagenseil's text, his *Belehrung* could have been intended to familiare, not only German speakers with Yiddish but also Yiddish speakers with German.[43]

In addition to a linguistic introduction into the Yiddish grammar and language, Wagenseil's book offers longer texts as exercises, some of them as polyglot or synoptic translations with one version of the text in a special form of Hebrew letters on the left and the corresponding German translation in the Latin alphabet on the opposite side. The title promises nothing less than immediate success for the language learner within a few hours of independent study.[44] In the extended title, Wagenseil shows that his book benefits not only the "hobbyist" Yiddishist, but others as well, such as the magistracy, doctors, theologians, and merchants.[45]

In the preface to the 1699 edition (omitted later), the audience learns of the actual novelty of Wagenseil's project.[46] Wagenseil laments in the preface that his creation of a polyglot language-teaching book encountered many problems in the printing process. The work had to be completed in different places, without Wagenseil's presence, and only under his remote coordination: "Es hat die unumgängliche Noth erfordert / gegenwärtiges Buch an mehr als einem

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[43] Aya Elyada, *A Goy who speaks Yiddish. Christians and the Jewish Language in Early Modern Germany* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012), 157.

[44] The full title reads: "*Belehrung Der Jüdisch-Teutschen Red- und Schreibart. Durch welche / Alle so des wahren Teutschen Lesens kundig / für sich selbsten / innerhalb wenig Stunden / zu sothaner Wissenschaft gelangen können*" ("Introduction to Jewish-German speaking and writing through which everybody that is familiar with reading German will be able to acquire these skills within few hours."; "sothan, adj. so beschaffen, solch, s. sogethan" [*Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm,* s.v. "sothan," accessed December 28, 2015, http://woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB.]).

[45] *In einem weitläufigen Fürtrag wird klärlich erwiesen / Daß solche Erfahrenheit / Denen hohen und niedern Obrigkeiten / wie auch deren Rathgeben / und anderen Rechtsgelehrten / denen Theologis, Medicis, Handels-Leuten / und insgemein Jedermann nutzlich / auch fast nothwendig sey.* ("In a comprehensive essay, it will be illustrated how such knowledge may not only benefit counselors, jurists, theologians, doctors, merchants, and everybody else but how it represents almost a necessity." Wagenseil, *Belehrung*, title page).

[46] In the 1715 version this preface is omitted, and thus some scholars were unaware of its existence.

Orth / und zwar / ohne alle meine / des Autoris, Aufsicht drucken zu lassen. Solchem nach ist vieles auf eine Weise verfertigt worden / daß ich es wol anders hätte wünschen mögen." ("Inevitable necessity demanded that this book was printed in more than one place without any supervision by me, the author. Accordingly, many things have been completed in a way I wish they had not. " Wagenseil, *Belehrung,* 2). This situation caused a number of errors in Wagenseil's book: "Sonderlich sind die paginae des Fürtrags und der Fürrede nicht numeriret / und das Hebreische / wie auch Juden-Teutsch mit dem wahren Teutsch / nicht / wie sich geziemet / und sofern es sich thun lassen parallel eingerichtet worden." ("Thus, the pages of the preface and the essay are not numbered, and the Hebrew and the Jewish-German have not been arranged parallel to the true German, which they should have been." Wagenseil, *Belehrung,* 2). The latter presumably led to presenting the material in different languages respectively page-wise instead of being on one page. Later, the audience learns that the problem lay primarily in the lack of printers familiar with setting the typefaces of both of the alphabets involved – the Hebrew, in this case presented by the so-called *Vaybertaytsh* typeface*,* and the Latin, presented by the typefaces Fraktur and Antiqua: "Es haben aber die Christlichen Setzer des Hebreischen und Juden-Teutsches / die Jüdischen hergegen unseres Teutsches keine Erfahrenheit gehabt / daß es demnach nicht wol anderst heraus komen." ("The Christian printers had no experience in setting the Hebrew and Jewish-German in type, and the Jewish printers had no experience in setting the German. Thus, the result could not have been any different." Wagenseil, *Belehrung,* 2). Despite the fact that during the early modern period the majority of Yiddish books had to be printed in Christian workshops, there seem to have been very few printers who knew how to set typefaces in both the Hebrew/ *Vaybertaitsch* and the Latin alphabet. Wagenseil thus had to work with printers unfamiliar with one system or the other and eventually he even had to work with

different printers. Nobody seemed able to provide Wagenseil with a directly parallel, interlinear print. These problems underscore the pioneering character of his work.

Among legal and midrashic texts Wagenseil reprinted *Geschicht-Roman*. The text presents – as far as we know – a later edition of the early Yiddish *Viduvilt*, which is not preserved in any other context than this teaching book. The title used in the actual text is different than Wagenseil's suggested name. Printed in both the *Vaybertaytsh* typeface and Fraktur and Antiqua, the title reads (the following is transcribed from the *Vaybertaytsh* by the author of this dissertation):

> Ayn sheyn mase fun kinig Artis hof. Wie er zikh ayn seynem kinigreykh hot ton firn / Un voz er gihot far manirn / un fun dem barimtn riter Viduvilt dem shtreytborn held / gor sheyn in deym gishtalt / ven ir vert drinen leyen / wert zikh ayer herts arfreyen.
>
> ("A nice story about King Arthur's court. How he reigned over his kingdom and what subjects he had under his rule. And about the famous knight called Viduvilt, the combative hero of beautiful stature. If you read [this book], it will cheer your heart." Wagenseil, *Belehrung*, 157).

The corresponding title is set in Fraktur, except for the word "Maase," ("story") which is set in Antiqua. Following this title page, *Geschicht-Roman* is reprinted correspondingly in Yiddish (*Vaybertaytsh* typeface) on the left and in German (Fraktur with Antiqua insertions) on the right as seen in these first two pages of the text:

Figure 1: Beginning of the actual tale in Wagenseil's *Belehrung*
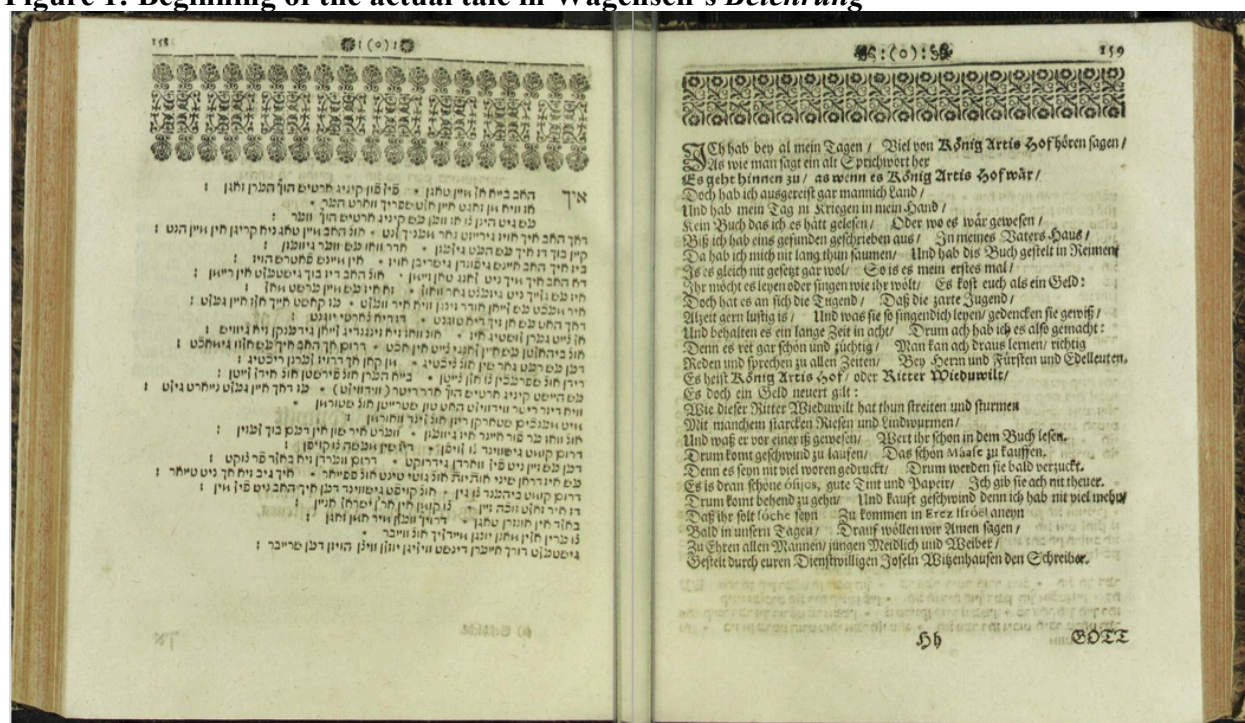
Wagenseil, *Belehrung* (1699)*,* 158-159, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 L.as. 223.

This layout suggests translation as the first potential framework that might come to mind in order to describe Wagenseil's *Geschicht-Roman* as a polyglot or synoptic translation of a Yiddish text and a corresponding German text side-by-side. Translation, according to Sebastian Möckel, can be defined as the simplest form of transformation; in Wagenseil's case, the transformation of one alphabet into another.[47] Building on the idea of transformation, Peter Burke describes translation as process of de-contextualization and re-contextualization, a process that Linda Hutcheon defines as a core feature of adaptations.[48] Similarly, John Bryant sees

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[47] Sebastian Möckel, "Zwischen Muster und Anverwandlung. Übersetzungen des antiken Liebesromans in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Übersetzung und Transformation*, ed. Hartmut Böhme et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 137-155, here 139.

[48] Peter Burke, "Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe," in *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 7-38, here 10. See also Wirth, who emphasizes that adaptation consists of absorption and transformation of another text (Uwe Wirth, "Hypertextuelle Aufpfropfung als Übergangsform zwischen Intermedialität und Transmedialität," in *Transmedialität. Zur Ästhetik paraliterarischer Verfahren*, ed. Urs Meyer et al. [Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006], 19-38, here 23).

adaptors in the tradition of a translator "Like translators, they transform a text for new or different audiences, and address new conditions and problems in a culture."[49] This idea of translation as transformation deconstructs the notion of translation as "faithful" or accurate, a debate prevalent in earlier translation studies.[50]

Taking into account the diachronicity and the language historicity, Möckel points out that no translation offers complete "fidelity" due to the temporal difference.[51] The only known early Yiddish versions of Wigalois outside of Wagenseil's had been written down no later than the 16th century, at least two hundred years before Wagenseil's presentation of the material. Thus, the temporal difference already creates distance– a notion prevalent in the works of Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida. According to Walter Benjamin, a translator has first to face the otherness of the language of origin, going beyond words.[52] Benjamin criticizes translations, such as Friedrich Hölderlin's Sophokles, that are too deeply entrenched in the word, the mere letter. According to Benjamin, the good translator must rather translate something deeper: the sense.[53] Thus, fidelity for Benjamin means first of all fidelity to the deeper meaning of a text, not accuracy in finding the equal words in the target language. Benjamin's ideal translator, therefore, exceeds the "original" and adds an even deeper meaning by bringing the text to a new language.

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[49] John Bryant, "Textual Identity and Adaptive Revision. Editing Adaptation as Fluid Text," in *Adaptation Studies. New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. Jørgen Bruhn et al. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 47-68, here 48.

[50] Translation, Mindt points out, is always a transformation, but also a de-contextualization (Nina Mindt, "Die optimale Transformation (der Antike). Ein Überblicksversuch über die Übersetzungsdiskussion in der Gegenwart," in *Übersetzung und Transformation*, ed. Hartmut Böhme et al. [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007], 47–60. here 57-58).

[51] Möckel, "Zwischen Muster und Anverwandlung," 139.

[52] Walter Benjamin, "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 4 (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1973), 9-21, here 14.

[53] Ibid., 20.

Some scholars criticize that this transition from one language into another as a movement of appropriation and assimilation in the context of intercultural encounters constitutes a violent process that strips the object of its heritage in order to serve the new purpose and culture alone.[54] Benjamin, in contrast, has a harmonizing approach, as he searches for a memorial heritage space shared by both cultures involved in the process. The process of translation is thus not a violent one for Benjamin, but one that benefits the material. His concept of a translation's surplus value is similar to the idea of adaptation in the sense that it does not judge reworkings as faithful or not. It is this understanding of giving the material additional and new meaning that we will see in the Wigalois adaptations; it is already visible in Wagenseil's take on the material, in that he tries to capture one font, the *Vaybertaytsh*, with two corresponding typefaces, Antiqua and Fraktur. The adaptation exceeds the model text, encounters a dialogue, finds frictions and creates tensions in bringing the text over to a new language and culture.

Jaques Derrida builds on Benjamin's theory and emphasizes the moment of improvement in the translation process even further: "If the translator neither restitutes nor copies an original, it is because the original lives on and transforms itself. The translation will complete itself in enlarging itself. The translation will truly be a moment in the growth of the original, which will complete itself in enlarging itself."[55] For Derrida translation means growing rather than copying[56] since the "original" itself cannot be without flaw.[57] Thus, Derrida extends the idea of

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[54] Klaus Reichert, *Die unendliche Aufgabe. Zum Übersetzen* (München: C. Hanser, 2003), 25, 40.

[55] Jacques Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel," trans. Joseph F. Graham, in *Difference in Translation,* ed. Joseph F. Graham (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 165-207, here 188.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

translation "Translation is a poetic transposition (*Umdichtung*)."[58] Yet, although the translator

seeks a fulfillment that he cannot attain (which Derrida leaves in a somewhat ambiguous sphere

without clearer definition), he aims for it at least: "This law collapses at the slightest challenge to

a strict boundary between the original and the version, indeed to the identity or to the integrity of

the original."[59]

Both Benjamin and Derrida understand translation in the broader sense of transmission,

as connected to the Latin *transducere*. This sense of translation is still preserved in Medieval

Studies in the concepts of *translatio imperii* or *translatio studii*.[60] Benjamin's and Derrida's

ideas of translation share a core similarity with Adaptation Studies that is essential to the

Wigalois material. With Wigalois, re-tellings converge in a shared narrative comprised of all the

adaptations in a dialogue with another. Similarly, for Derrida and Benjamin, a translation can

never be perfect or singular, but rather complements the translated text. The translations thus

interact with each other and only reach their full potential in union. Wagenseil's *Geschicht-*

Roman – two texts side by side – examplifies such a translational union in the sense of Derrida

and Benjamin. Taking into account that this was intended for German speakers to learn Yiddish

(if not also the other way round), the reader would go back and forth between the two texts and

compare single words, phrases, and complete sentences.[61] Only in combination, in translational

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[58] Ibid., 189.

[59] Ibid.,196.

[60] The medieval concept of *translatio imperii* ("transfer of empire") perceives the previous history as linear succession of great imperial powers. Similarly, *translatio studii* ("transfer of knowledge") traces the transmission of knowledge by creating a teleological line, beginning often in Eden or Jerusalem, sometimes in Greece. Both concepts are believed to have their origin in the biblical book of Daniel.

[61] The idea of a Germanized transliteration works in favor of Elyada's argumentation that these texts were not just meant for German speaking learners of Yiddish, but also for Yiddish speakers as learners of German (Elyada, *A Goy who speaks Yiddish*, 157).

union, do those two texts serve the purpose of teaching language and – what even for Wagenseil's audience must have played a role, based on the choice of material – offering a pleasure in reading.

1.2   Cultural Transfer and Translation

At first glance, Wagenseil's German text represents a word-for-word translation in the actual sense as well as the translational union Derrida and Benjamin propose. The text – the words – seem to correspond and to represent their counterparts in the respective other language. Rhymes are generally kept. As mentioned above, Wagenseil's Yiddish is printed in the so-called *Vaybertaytsh*, a font commonly used for early Yiddish publications, in contrast to the square script of Hebrew prints. The German text is printed chiefly in a Fraktur typeface. However, words of a strict Hebrew origin, not differentiated in the *Vaybertaytsh* setting, are marked and stand out as "different" in the German text on the right side as they are set in an Antiqua typeface. The words of Hebrew origin set in Antiqua interrupt the Fraktur typeface. Wagenseil decided not to keep the Hebrew term exactly un-translated, but rather transliterated it – or so it seems. Although the Yiddish text includes no distinction within the typeface in regard to Hebrew words, unknown names, such as *Wieduwilt*, are printed in *Vaybertaytsh* font, but are (inconsistently) presented in brackets upon the first mentioning and are thus marked as different. But Wagenseil's German text includes markings where there are none in Yiddish and breaks with the homogenous typeface and the notion of a homogenous language. He uncovers what he understands to be the Hebrew and thus what he believes to be foreign elements to the Yiddish language, presenting it to his audience as a language with two distinct lingual traditions. Therefore, in Wagenseil's understanding, words of Hebrew origin are not an integral part of Yiddish, but rather loanwords, Hebraisms, which he highlights for the language learner and

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thereby alienates from their place in the Yiddish language. Wagenseil achieves this by the means of the typeface, which presents the reader not just two but three different graphic systems as it translates the Yiddish printed in *Vaybertaytsh* into German in Fraktur and Hebrew in the Latin Antiqua.[62]

This would suggest a transliteration rather than a translation. Yet, Wagenseil does not offer a probable biblical Hebrew pronunciation in Antiqua, but aims for a supposed Ashkenazi pronunciation of the corresponding word, such as "Méschiach" (in Antiqua) and "Omen" (in Antiqua) (Wagenseil, *Belehrung,* 302). But Wagenseil is by no means consistent. Already the first page of the German presents us with an "Amen" in Fraktur (Wagenseil, *Belehrung,* 159). He tends to present the sound of the Hebrew letter Aleph as "a" rather than as "o" as an Ashkenazi pronunciation would require. Wagenseil's German text meanders between a translation and a transliteration. On one hand, the Yiddish "kinig" finds its German counterpart in "König." Wagenseil not only adjusts the pronunciation, but also matches the Yiddish with the German grammar, adjusting the morphology of the respective word accordingly, "correcting" for example the declination of the Yiddish "ersht" (transliteration A.O.) to "erstes" (in Fraktur) (Wagenseil, *Belehrung,* 158-159). In a second example of morphological changes, Wagenseil combines prefixes and verbs that are separate in Yiddish into single words in German (for example "for mern" [translit. A.O.] becomes "vermehrn" [in Fraktur]; Wagenseil, *Belehrung*, 160-161). On the other hand, the Hebrew letters Tav and Tet are dropped in the German text, as in the Yiddish, thus using "is" in Fraktur rather than "ist"; and "az" [translit.] is presented as "as" in German, whereas a translation would require "als." Wagenseil provides neither a consistent transliteration nor a direct translation of the Yiddish or German, but rather offers a philological

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[62] Another distinction in the German text is the bold printed words. Within the German preface of the text, the title "König Artis Hof" – in contrast to the Yiddish – is written in bold letters.

interpretation, a philological adaptation. Translation theories help to describe a number of aspects of Wagenseil's *Wigalois*. However, looking at these passages, the phenomena of Wagenseil's appropriation (of the Yiddish into the German) exceed translation and require an expansion of the theoretical framework.

Accommodating the aforementioned linguistic aspects of Wagenseil's work, an attempt to adjust the concept of "translation" for this material could draw on the idea of "cultural translation." Two aspects of Wagenseil's text must be taken into account as we look to expand the theory of translation for early modern literature. First, Wagenseil presents a Yiddish text and a corresponding translation in a book aimed primarily at a non-Jewish and non-Yiddish-speaking audience. Second, the Yiddish text itself presents, according to Wagenseil, a Jewish retelling of an English story. Could our analysis benefit, therefore, from a concept of "translation" in the sense of "cultural translation" or "cultural transfer?" These theories have been popular with cultural studies of the last twenty years. The proximity of "cultural translation" to both classical translation theories and (post-)colonial studies, however, results in an immense diversity of interpretations of the concept.

Anthony Pym offers an overview of what the term "cultural translations" can mean by highlighting the problem that many definitions and terms possess.[63] In order to make the term still applicable and useful for an analysis, Pym himself defines "cultural translation" in a somewhat restricted way, as something that has neither a source text nor a fixed target text.[64]

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[63] Anthony Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories* (London: Routledge, 2010), 162.

[64] (Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories*, 144). Opposing such a definition, Bachmann-Medick alludes to the problem of "cultural translation" as there are always only fragments of a culture "and never general and holistic cultural concepts – that are translated" (Doris Bachmann-Medick, "Translation. A Concept and Model for the Study of Culture," in *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, ed. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012], 23-43, here 28). Bachmann-Medick therefore pleads cultural studies to focus more on micro than a macro analyses, only one text or concept rather than larger ideas. Microanalyses, according to Bachmann-Medick,

Anna Veronika Wendland offers an alternative definition. Summarizing both, "cultural translation" and "cultural transfer" under the term "travelling concepts," Wendland presents a stricter terminology and argues that these theories can be the key to cultural research.[65] Wendland makes a claim relevant for an analysis of medieval literature, as she points out that the term "cultural transfer" in contrast to "cultural translation" is by no means a new one, but rather was part of the concepts *translatio imperii* and *translatio studii*.[66] Furthermore, she argues that there is no such thing as a failed transfer, because terms such as "right" and "wrong" do not apply to the processes of cultural transfer, and that the concept of "kulturelle 'Missverständnisse'" leads away from the idea of a dynamic transfer.[67]

The idea of dynamic transfer seems fruitful for an interpretation of the Wagnseil material, since the audience encounters the *Geschicht-Roman* (in the introduction) as the product of an English-Jewish heritage. Furthermore, Wagenseil ascribes some significant elements in *Kinig Artis Hof* to its "Jewish background:"

> [D]ie Juden haben sich hierüber gemacht / und den Hof des König Artus (den sie zwar / wie es der gemeine Mann ausspricht / Artis genannt /) samt den seltsamen Begebnussen / der darin lebenden Ritter / auf folgende Weise in ungebundener und gebundener Rede zu beschreiben sich nit entrechen können. Davon ist uns das Poetische Gedicht zugekommen / welches wir hiemit gemein machen. Die Einfälle sind lustig / und auch so wie sie von den Juden herkommen können.

> ("The Jews undertook the task and could not resist to describing *King Arthur's Court* (calling him Artis like a common man) in the following manner, rhymed and un-rhymed.

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will eventually help to foster a more constructive research on larger processes of cultural translations (Bachmann-Medick, "Translation," 29).

[65] Anna Veronika Wendland, "Cultural Transfer," in *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, ed. Birgit Neumann und Ansgar Nünning (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2012), 45-66, here 45.

[66] (Ibid., 48-49). See also Stierle, who points out that classical concepts of translation and transformation include *translatio imperii, translatio studii,* and *translatio sapientiae* (Karlheinz Stierle, "*Translatio Studii* and Renaissance. From Vertical to Horizontal Translation," in *The Translatability of Cultures. Figurations of the Space between*, ed. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996], 55-66, here 57 and 61).

[67] Wendland, "Cultural Transfer," 55-56.

> From that project, this poetic poem came down to us. The inventions are funny, and as expected from Jews." Wagenseil, *Belehrung*, 154).

His astonishment about fantasy creatures such as dwarfs, dragons, and giants displays a lack of knowledge of the Arthurian tradition in general, and of the German Wigalois adaptations in particular. If we dismiss Wagenseil's interpretation as simply "wrong," we may close off an understanding of the adaptation and reception process involved in this (re)creation. Constructive research, as Wendland points out, should focus much more on questions about why a certain cultural knowledge did or did not exist at a respective point in history.[68] Thus, Wendland's criticism affects the way in which adaptations are compared to their models and the understanding of the reworkings of the *Wigalois* narratives and their relationship to each other.

Within this debate about cultural translation and transfer, it seems useful to further subdivide the concept into transcultural and intercultural phenomena. Similar to the definitions of intertextual and international, intercultural implies that the phenomenon of dialogue includes integral entities in dialogue, whereas the term transcultural implies overcoming boundaries.[69] Already Wagenseil's example includes two different texts that react to each other and are part of an ongoing tradition. They do not represent two clearly marked and different cultures. Therefore, to describe the Wigalois narrative as transcultural phenomenon is important in order to acknowledge the shared and combined narrative tradition in which it participates.

1.3   Inter-, Transtextuality, and -mediality

Wagenseil's book is in part a translation. The aforementioned theories help us to understand what is unique and what is typical about his text as a classical and cultural translation and as

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[68] Ibid., 55.

[69] Urs Meyer, Roberto Simanowski, and Christoph Zeller, "Vorwort," in *Transmedialität. Zur Ästhetik paraliterarischer Verfahren* [Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006], 7-19, here 8.

transformation. But to discuss Wagenseil's material only in these frameworks does not account for all the specificities and limits of the text. Wagenseil represents just one example of a large and long tradition of Wigalois narratives, material that includes a variety of different media, languages, and literary ideologies from multiple languages and historical eras. Describing the Wigalois narratives only as phenomenona of cultural translation and transformation falls short. It does not account for all the materials that make up this tradition. In order to understand the phenomenon of the Wigalois narrative and the relationships between elements of its vast corpus, another intellectual framework is needed.

Just as Wagenseil's *Geschicht-Roman* participates in an established tradition, examining the intertextual references might allow for a more thorough and fruitful analysis. The poststructuralist concept of intertextuality can be seen in Julia Kristeva's interpretation of Mikhail Bakhtin's *dialogism*.[70] In a postmodern reading, Kristeva expanded Bakhtin's intertextuality concept such that any given text is always already to be seen as a pastiche of references.[71] Similarly, Roland Barthes argues that every text is an echo of a preceding text, (similar to Derrida's supposed "todo es texto" argument): "The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture."[72] Ulrich Broich and Manfred Pfister criticized this rather broad concept and reworked it within a more strict terminological framework:

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[70] (Manfred Pfister, "Konzepte der Intertextualität," in *Intertextualität. Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien*, ed. Ulrich Broich et al. [Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1985], 1-30, here 6). Further, for Kristeva every cultural structure represents text.

[71] "[D]as Wort (der Text) ist Überschneidung von Wörtern (von Texten), in der sich zumindest ein anderes Wort (ein anderer Text) lesen lässt." "[J]eder Text baut sich als Mosaik von Zitaten auf, jeder Text ist Absorption und Transformation eines anderen Textes." (Julia Kristeva, "Bachtin, das Wort, der Dialog und der Roman," in *Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik. Ergebnisse und Perspektiven*, volume 3: *Zur linguistischen Basis der Literaturwissenschaft. II*, ed. Jens Ihwe [Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1972], 345-375, here 348).

[72] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author." *Aspen*, 5-6 (1967): n. p.

Ins Zentrum der Überlegungen und Analysen sollte nicht ein poststurkutralistischer Intertextualitätsbegriff gerückt werden, der seine revolutionären Implikationen ja gerade seiner undifferenzierten Universalität verdankt, sondern ein enger geefaßter Begriff, der es ermöglicht, Intertextualität von Nicht-Intertextualität zu unterscheiden.[73]

Arbitrating between structuralist and post-structuralist notions of intertextuality, Pfister proposes an intertextuality system based on degrees of intensity.[74]

Gérard Genette developed another very detailed model of intertextuality. In his monograph *Palimpsestes. La Littérature au second degré*, Genette provides his readers with the model of hyper- and hypotext; hypotext as the "model," which leads to a reworking, called hypertext.[75] The concepts of hyper- and hypotext, however, already include very different phenomena and can refer to an extension of a story, as a prequel or sequel for example, or a simple retelling.[76] Genette goes into further detail to provide a more detailed matrix for a variety of cases, such as parodies, plagiarism, and other transformations; he is, however, less interested in a direct translation. Although the majority of scholarship is based on Genette's or Kristeva's theories, each scholar develops his or her own set of terms to address and analyze intertextuality, reworking and expanding or criticizing and developing new theories. Herein lies the essential problem: because the framework varies (qualitative vs. quantitative, all media vs. verbal text

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[73] Ulrich Broich and Manfred Pfister, "Vorwort," in *Intertextualität. Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien*, ed. Ulrich Broich et al. [Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1985], ix-xii, here x.

[74] Pfister, "Konzepte der Intertextualität," 25.

[75] Gérard Genette, *Palimpseste. Die Literatur auf zweiter Stufe* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993), 15-16.

[76] Wirth approaches the concept of hypertextuality differently: "Tatsächlich gehen Konzepte der Hypertextualität und Konzepte der Intertextualität von den gleichen Prämissen aus, nämlich zum einen, dass der Text kein fertiges Produkt ist, sondern ein 'Gewebe', das ständig weiter geflochten wird, zum anderen, dass dieser Text einen aktiven Leser fordert, der die Funktion eines mehr oder weniger gleichberechtigten 'Ko-Produzenten' übernimmt. Dergestalt wird Lesen zum Mitschreiben. Das Schreiben wiederum erscheint als überpersönliche performative Geste, durch die im Rahmen eines intertextuellen Mischvorgangs ein 'tissu de citations' erzeugt wird." (Wirth, "Hypertextuelle Aufpfropfung," 23)

only, announced vs. unannounced), the theories are incompatible, and so are their analytical

tools.

As the sub-categorizations of Genette, Pfichter, and Broich demonstrate, not all

intertextual references can be approached similarly. Intertextual references, when it comes to

adaptations, go beyond a shared motif, name, or scene. In order to keep the discussion of the

relationships within the Wigalois material distinct, I limit my use of the term "intertextuality"

throughout this dissertation to describe relationships between a Wigalois adaptation and another

text that might have contributed larger elements to the tradition, such as *Le Bel Inconnu,* or

another text that only provided a single or selection of elements, such as Hartmann von Aue's

Erec. These limitations include relationships between *Wigalois* and a whole textual tradition,

such as the Arthurian literature, or a significant discourse – which Manfred Pfister and Ulrich

Broich term "Systemreferenz" – or relationships between particular examples – what they call

"Einzeltextreferenz."[77] The stricter terminology as proposed by Pfister and Broich helps to

analyze the relationship between two texts insofar as their relationship can be described. That

posits, however, knowledge of their relationship.

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[77] Pfister, "Konzepte der Intertextualität," 18; Manfred Pfister, "Zur Systemreferenz," in *Intertextualität. Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien*, ed. Ulrich Broich et al. (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1985), 52-57, here 54; Ulrich Broich, "Zur Einzeltextreferenz," in *Intertextualität. Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien*, ed. Ulrich Broich et al. (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1985), 48-52, here 50. Broich is much more strict in his definition than Pfister as he only accepts the term for those processes, in which both author and audience notice and understand the references (Ulrich Broich, "Formen der Markierung von Intertextualität," in *Intertextualität. Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien*, ed. Ulrich Broich et al. (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1985), 31-37, here. 31). Despite being grounded in the theoretical frameworks of Genette and Kristeva, the intertextuality debate is multi-branched and concepts are often incomparable in regard to their analytical tools. In order to differentiate the intensity of intertextualities, for example, Pfirster suggests the use of additional sub-categories (Pfister, "Konzepte der Intertextualität," 25-29). Lindner on the other hand differentiates between quantitative and qualitative intertextuality (Monika Lindner, "Integrationsformen der Intertextualtität," in *Intertextualität. Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien*, ed. Ulrich Broich et al. [Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1985], 116-134, here 121). And von Koppenfels offers a temporal differentiation between synchronic and diachronic processes (Werner von Koppenfels, "Intertextualtität und Sprachwechsel. Die literarische Übersetzung," in *Intertextualität. Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien*, ed. Ulrich Broich et al. [Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1985], 137-157, here 138-139.

Within the Wigalois adaptations, the direct connections between the texts remain hidden for the majority of material (except for cases where references are made explicit).[78] For Wagenseil, it is hard to tell whether he presents his audience with a new retelling (as unlikely as that seems) or whether he uses an already existing Yiddish text and simply reprints it. In both cases, an application of Genette's concept proves problematic and uncovers some of the implications of his theory. If we assume that Wagenseil offers *Kinig Artis Hof* in Yiddish as a hypertext to the preceding model of the Yiddish *Viduvilt*, this would imply that *Viduvilt* in general constitutes the hypotext, the model to Wagenseil. But we are left with the question which manuscript came first? Even today, three different manuscripts are known in scholarship. And what if other Yiddish or German retellings existed that have not been preserved? Employing Genette's model with the Wigalois material presents us with problems familiar to scholars of medieval and early modern literature: What is the actual text? Which version? And, what constitutes a text at all?[79]

Scholars of medieval literature face the question of whether or not a text builds on a specific text and whether an artwork is a distinct recast or just one version on a regular basis. The specifics of the writing process on one hand and the simultaneity of written and spoken text on the other result in many cases in competing variations of a written text. Joachim Bumke points out that there is no such thing as a "coherent text" in medieval literature and that derivation is rather the rule than the exception:

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[78] See for example Ferdinand Roth's *Ammenmährchen* (1786) and Daniel Ernst Wagner's *Erzählungen aus dem Heldenalter Teutscher Nationen* (1780) in the introduction to this dissertation.

[79] To give one example with a very broad definition, Assmann speaks of cultural texts, normative (rules, codified norms), formative, (cumulating in the self-image of a respective group), and finally educative ones (literary texts) (Jan Assmann, "Kulturelle Texte im Spannungsfeld von *Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit*," in *Literaturkanon – Medienereignis – Kultureller Text. Formen interkultureller Kommunikation und Übersetzung*, ed. Andreas Poltermann [Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1995], 270-292, here 272-282).

> Tatsächlich müssen wir für die mittelalterliche Literatur, insbesondere für die
> volkssprachliche, von einem andern Textbegriff ausgehen als für die Neuzeit. Wir
> müssen mit unfesten, beweglichen Texten rechnen, die sich verändern können, ohne daß
> die Veränderungen als Störungen zu begreifen wären. [D]er ‚Text' ist von Anfang an eine
> veränderliche Größe.[80]

Bumke's statement builds on the notions of a "fluctuating" or an "unstable" text as inspired by

the New Philology movement. New Philology promotes research on adaptations, shedding a

different light on the literary production, but also on reception (including the adaptor as

receptor).

The works of Paul Zumthor, Bernhard Cerquiglini, and Joachim Bumke established

"fluidity" as a prominent feature of the genesis of medieval texts.[81] Their argument is based on

the notion that due to the often-oral transmission and creation of an artwork, several versions of a

text have already existed around the time that a physical text of a narrative is composed. The

competing written versions were thus the result neither of corruptions nor of minor changes.

Rather, they are parallel versions, results of text production within the semi-oral culture of the

Middle Ages:

> I believe that we may find the explanation for the numerous hybrid texts, if they are not
> to be explained as the result of frequent contamination, in a phenomenon of manuscript
> transmission that scholars have been aware of for a long time, yet, which has received

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[80] (Joachim Bumke, "Der unfeste Text. Überlegungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte und Textkritik der höfischen Epik im 13. Jahrhundert," in *'Aufführung' und 'Schrift' in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Jan-Dirk Müller [Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996], 118-129, here 125). Thus, Fichte disregards the intertextuality term for Medieval Studies from the point of a semi-oral culture (Jörg O. Fichte, "Arthurische und nicht-arthurische Texte im Gespräch. Dargestellt am Beispiel der mittelenglischen Romanze *Sir Perceval of Galles*," in *Artusroman und Intertextualität. Beiträge der deutschen Sektionstagung der Internationalen Artusgesellschaft vom 16. bis 19. November 1989 an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt a. M.,* ed. Friedrich Wolfzettel (Giessen: Schmitz, 1990), 19-34, here 22). However, Wolfzettel considers the term intertextuality for medieval literature beneficial as far as it is used to discuss genre and genre limitations (Friedrich Wolfzettel, "Zum Stand und Problem der Intertextualitätsforschung im Mittelalter (aus romanistischer Sicht)," in *Artusroman und Intertextualität. Beiträge der deutschen Sektionstagung der Internationalen Artusgesellschaft vom 16. bis 19. November 1989 an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt a. M.,* ed. Friedrich Wolfzettel [Giessen: Schmitz, 1990], 1-17, here 13).

[81] See in particularly: Bernhard Cerquilgini, *In Praise of the Variant. A Critical History of Philology,* trans. Betsy Wing (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Paul Zumthor, *Toward a Medieval Poetics,* trans. Philip Bennett (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1992).

little attention. Most of the courtly epics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have come down to us in several versions.[82]

Thus, whereas a broad definition of intertextuality is too unspecific for an analysis of Wagenseil's *Wigalois*, traditional models of intertextuality, which perceive a text as fixed entity (such as Genette's theory regarding hyper- and hypotext), are difficult to apply to the medieval material as texts often (co-)existed in many variations.[83] This is even the case for the seventeenth-century Wagenseil text since it is unclear to what extent it is based on the earlier Yiddish *Viduvilt*, and since it is further difficult to know which version potentially might have been available to him.

As the Wigalois material beyond Wagenseil's text includes retellings within a variety of media, such as manuscripts, murals, and even an opera, the phenomena of inter-linked texts reach beyond the intertextual into the area of intermedial references. Intermediality is a term coined in 1966 by Dick Higgins.[84] The field of Intermedia Studies is still very much dominated by film scholars, especially with regards to the new "intermedial turn," where the main focus lies on literature-film relationships.[85] However, some scholars, such as Alfred Messerli and Irina O. Rajwesky, aim for a broader debate. Messerli describes intertextuality as precursor of

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[82] Joachim Bumke, "The Fluid Text. Observations on the History of Transmission and Textual Criticism of the Thirteenth-Century Courtly Epic," in *Visual Culture and the German Middle Ages*, ed. Kathryn Starkey and Horst Wenzel (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 99-113, here 103.

[83] In addition, the modern concept of author and the idea of authorship are not easily applicable to medieval literature. The term author/auctor firstly appears in the context of a 1473 Boccaccio translation. Further, Foucault questions the unity of work and author entirely (Volker Roloff, "Intertextualität und Problematik des Autors (am Beispiel des Tristan von Beroul)," in *Artusroman und Intertextualität. Beiträge der deutschen Sektionstagung der Internationalen Artusgesellschaft vom 16. bis 19. November 1989 an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt a. M.,* ed. Friedrich Wolfzettel [Giessen: Schmitz, 1990], 107-126, here 107).

[84] Dick Higgins, "Intermedia," *The something else Newsletter* 1 (February 1966): 1-4.

[85] Regina Schober, "Adaptation as Connection – Transmedia Reconsidered," in Adaptation *Studies. New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. Jørgen Bruhn et al. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 89-112, here 94.

intermediality.[86] He emphasizes the specifics in order to provide for a fruitful analysis of the

phenomenon: "Intermedialität untersucht Konzepte der Medienmischungen […], die sich nicht

als eine pure Addition zweier oder mehrerer Medienwirkungen begreifen lassen, sondern als das

komplexe Resultat der jeweils am Prozess beteiligten Medien."[87] Concentrating on developing a

clear set of tools for intermedial analysis, Rajewsky develops a systematic representation of

common definitions. In his work, Rajewsky differentiates between intermediality between two

media, intramediality within a medium,[88] and transmediality as a narrative or discourse that has

been reworked in different media.[89]

Building on Rajewsky classificatory system, Regina Schober emphasizes that medial

boundaries are also flexible and dynamic regarding the discursive constructedness of their

borders, as well as with regards to their historic developments and changes.[90] Schober goes

further than many scholars in arguing that intertextual and intermedial relationships in reception

are complex and often represent a "web of connections." According to Schober, connections are

always versions of possible relations that scholars and critics can construct.[91]

In the chapters to come, I understand intermediality[92] as a way to describe the productive

dialogue between two or more media within one or more media.[93] According to this definition,

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[86] Alfred Messerli, "Intermedialität," in *Stimmen, Texte und Bilder zwischen Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Luisa Rubini Messerli and Alexander Schwarz (Bern: Peter Lang 2009), 75-110, here 80.

[87] Ibid., 75-76.

[88] Intramedialiy does not cross the borders of a semiotic system (Irina O. Rajewsky, *Intermedialität* [Tübingen: A. Francke, 2002], 71).

[89] Ibid., 12.

[90] Schober, "Adaptation as Connection," 91.

[91] Ibid., 109.

[92] As alternative to intermediality, the term transmediality has been suggested because of the unstable nature of intermedial links (Schober, "Adaptation as Connection," 92). Following up on Rajewsky, she emphasizes that

the Wigalois material is comprised of many instances of intermediality. Scholars of both

intertextuality and intermediality such as Rajewsky often focus on artworks based on verbal

texts, thereby solidifying the supremacy of the word.[94] The Wigalois material offers, however,

distinct pictorial reworkings that offer their own take on the narrative that originated in the oral

sphere. Wagenseil participates with his texts in this retelling of an Arthurian knight, a

phenomenon that could be summarized under what Rajewsky calls a "Wanderphänomen."[95]

    However, similar to the "text" debate in Intertextualtity Studies, Intermediality Studies

struggles with the definition of medium. Rajewsky offers a heuristic definition of the term

medium, which for her is not restricted in the sense of a technical or institutional channel, but is

rather a "conventionally distinct means of communication or expression characterized not only

by particular channels (or one channel) for the sending and receiving of messages, but also by

the use of one or more semiotic systems."[96] Rajewsky's very broad definition hints at the

problematic discussion and critical discourse in Intermedia Studies caused by a lack of coherent

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medial boundaries are flexible and dynamic regarding the discursive constructedness of their boundaries – but also with regards to historic developments and changes (Schober, "Adaptation as connection," 91). Transmediality should not be understood as synonym for media transformations (Ibid., 94).

[93] Another useful definition: "*Intermedialität* bezieht sich auf die Koppelung von Medien im zeichentheoretischen Sinne (das Emblem als Verbindung von Bild und Text oder das Lied als Verbindung von Musik und Text), die Anspielung auf ein anderes Medium (das Buch im Bild), die vollständige Integration eines anderen Mediums (Literaturverfilmung) oder die ästhetische Anlehnung an ein anderes Medium (musikalische Syntax, das durch Text imaginierte Bild, die Kameraperspektive des Actionfilms im Computerspiel). Abgesehen vom ersten Fall geht das Medium jeweils im anderen auf, die Rezeption des Zielmediums verlangt nicht mehr zwingend die Gegenwart oder Kenntnis des Ausgangsmediums." (Meyer, Simanowski, and Zeller, "Vorwort," 8).

[94] Scholars such as Messerli have criticized the *Logozentrism* in the analysis of many artifacts (Messerli, "Intermedialität," 85).

[95] Rajewsky, *Intermedialität*, 12.

[96] Ibid., 6.

definition.[97] Yet the clear definition of medium plays an essential role for theory built on defining and differentiating processes such as intra- and transmediality.

1.4   Adaptation Studies now and then

Although both translation studies in a broader, cultural framework and the concept of intertextuality may be used to describe some aspects of Wagenseil's *Geschicht-Roman* and its place in the larger narrative tradition, neither quite captures the essence of *Geschicht-Roman*. Instead, I propose here to use the theory of adaptation to analyze the test case of Wagenseil's text and its relationship to the material that has been reworked in both the same and in other periods, media, and languages. On first glance, this theory of adaptation seems inapplicable to such historical material. Although some researchers, such as Jørgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen have called for an opening of the field of Adaptation Studies to a variety of media forms, many scholars use the theory only in the context of the relationship between written text and film.[98] When studies of adaptation began in the 1970s, it was first and foremost film scholars who claimed the concept and used it to analyze their artifacts.[99]

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[97] Similar to a more open definition of text by Kristeva, the Canadian anglicist Marschall McLuhan coined the phrase "[t]he medium is the message" (Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Message. An Inventory of Effects* [Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967]*,* 26) and received heavy criticism for example by Hans Magnus Enzensberger: "Unfähig zu jeder Theoriebildung, bringt McLuhan sein Material nicht auf den Begriff, sondern auf den Generalnenner einer reaktionären Heilslehre." (Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien," in *Palaver. Politische Überlegungen (1967-1973)* [Frankfurt a.M: Suhrkamp, 1974], 91-128, here 177).

[98] See for example Thomas Leitch, "What movies want," in *Adaptation Studies. New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. Jørgen Bruhn et al. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 155-176; Sara Brinch, "Tracing the originals, pursuing the past: *Invictus* and the 'based-on-a-true-story' film as adaptation," in *Adaptation Studies. New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. Jørgen Bruhn et al. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 223-244; Anne Gjelsvik, "What novels can tell that movies can't show," in *Adaptation Studies. New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. Jørgen Bruhn et al. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 245-264.

[99] Kamilla Elliott, "Theorizing Adaptations/ Adapting Theories," in *Adaptation Studies. New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. Jørgen Bruhn et al. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 19-46, here 21.

Nevertheless, a plurality of definitions for the scholarly term "adaptation" exists. Certainly, scholars working within the field critically point out the lack of a coherent and comprehensive adaptation theory.[100] This problem can be traced to the origins of Adaptation Studies in the field of intermediality and intertextuality. Nevertheless, Adaptation Studies has the potential to leave the verbal-focused discussion and consider other material as equally important to text-focused appropriations of a story. In her monograph *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon shows the special value of adaptation in contrast to other theories. She emphasizes the triple identity of adaptations as formal units or products as acts of (re)creation, and acts of reception, and abolishes notions of textual autonomy.[101] She further differentiates adaptation within the same medium and adaptation in a different medium (an act she calls "re-mediation").[102]

In her discussion, Hutcheon separates audiences that are familiar or unfamiliar with the model used by the adaptor. In the final chapter she address "transcultural adaptations" and the accommodation of "foreign" material,[103] but remains within a Film Studies framework for her discussion of this phenomenon. Hutcheon defines adaptation "as an extended, deliberate, announced revisitation of a particular work of art," which means "short intertextual allusions to other works or bits of sample music would not be included."[104] Clearly, the focus of adaptation is

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[100] Ibid., 32-33.

[101] (Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* [London: Routledge, 2006], 6, 111). Böhme argues similarly in his introduction to an essay collection about transformations of Antiquity. The threefold transformation includes the object Antiquity, created in the reception, the reception as constructive act, and a self-image that is created as part of the reflection on the other (here Antiquity) (Hartmut Böhme, "Vorwort," in *Übersetzung und Transformation. 1. Jahrestagung des SFB "Transformationen der Antike*," ed. Hartmut Böhme et al. [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007], v-xiii, here vii).

[102] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 16, 130.

[103] Ibid., 150-152.

[104] Ibid., 170.

already different than that of intertextual and intermedial studies, and it excludes such

phenomena as references to other works and ekphrasis.[105] Whereas inter-/transmediality and

inter-/transtextuality can include similar phenomena as well as only short references to another

work of art in whatever form, adaptation always implies that a whole artwork is being reworked

in either the same medium or a different one.[106] (Separately, Lars Elleström argues that

adaptation always has to include some form of transmediation: "The general term for

transmediation of media products is *adaptation*. […] [A]daptation is the transmediation of a

specific media product into a new specific media product."[107])

I use the term adaptation, in accordance with Hutcheon, in a broader sense and include

even reworkings within the same medium. The Wigalois narratives draw on other retellings that

are part of the same media as well as retellings in other media. Although Wagenseil's material is

restricted to the printed teaching book, it draws on the established Wigalois tradition, which by

that time already includes illustrated manuscripts, incunabula, and murals. Media and the choices

of the adaptors play an important role within the tradition as the narratives are marked by

specific abilities and affect the retelling tremendously; we will see this most clearly in chapter

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[105] In contrast to the common derivation of "adaptation," Julie Sanders traces back the origins of the concept to Darwin – at least an old understanding of Darwin, traditionally summarized under the term "survival of the fittest" (Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* [Abingdon: Routledge, 2006], 24). And indeed, if a work is being reworked for a different audience, culture, and/or language, it indicates a certain disposition for adaptation. This disposition, the "adaptability" of the *Wigalois* narrative and its execution, is what I am investigating in my dissertation and is the reason why I chose adaptation as the larger theoretical framework.

[106] Yet, Elleström's restrictions in her definition help to avoid a lack of focus: "The field of adaptation generally does not include media products that belong to qualified media such as scripts and libretti, which are designed to be transmediated." (Lars Elleström, "Adaptation Within the Field of Media Transformations," in *Adaptation Studies. New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. Jørgen Bruhn et al. [New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013], 113–132, here 130).

[107] Ibid. 128, 130.

4.[108] Adaptation Studies acknowledge that neither narrative nor retelling exists independently of the medium. However, it shifts the focus onto the material itself by attempting to avoid a specific definition and delineation of media.

The "announcing" mentioned by Hutcheon can take any form, such as a title or a short reference to the source. Bryant's definition is similar: "Adaptation is an announced retelling of an originating text."[109] He further argues that "[w]hen audiences lose their hold on this tether, the adaptation becomes at best a retelling only, like a fairy tale, whose Ur-text cannot be found," and "if readers were to forget as well the original story it retells, the adaptation would become perhaps an originating textual identity of its own, a text without a link to a defining past or originating source."[110] I suggest that the announcement is not essential and that an adaptation does not need the explicit reference. Its identity as adaptation is not dependent on the announcement, since it adheres to the conventions of such as undertaking regardless of the audience's explicit knowledge. Contrary to Bryant, Hutcheon extends her definition and differentiates between an audience familiar with the identity of a work of art as adaptation, and one unfamiliar with this fact.[111] For a knowing audience the adaptation can result in additional frustration as well as in additional pleasure.[112] Following up on this debate, Sanders problematizes the idea of the "announced retelling" and whether or not the audience has to be

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[108] See further Ryan (Marie-Laure Ryan, "Introduction," in *Narrative Across Media. The Languages of Storytelling*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryam [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press], 1-33, here 1), Elleström calls for an awareness regarding how art forms and media are interrelated (Elleström, "Adaptation within the field of Media Transformations," 113), although she admits that there are different levels of significance: "Simple representations of media may or may not have a major bearing on the significance of the representing media product." (Ibid., 120f). Further, she points out that every change in media causes a transformation (Ibid., 119).

[109] Bryant, "Textual Identity and Adaptive Revision," 65.

[110] Ibid., 65, 48.

[111] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 130.

[112] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 21.

aware of the source text.[113] For canonical (or well known) texts, the familiarity of the text gives a

new pleasure (or –I would add – frustration); the adaptation can be seen as "prolonging the

pleasure of the initial act of reading or the initial encounter with a text."[114]

In order to provide a potential solution to the question of an audience's familiarity with

the material, Sanders differentiates between adaptation and appropriation, suggesting that

appropriations are less clearly marked as reworkings.

> On the other hand, appropriation frequently affects a more decisive journey away from
> the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain. This may or may
> not involve a generic shift, and it may still require the intellectual juxtaposition of (at
> least) one text against another that we have suggested is central to the reading and
> spectating experience of adaptations. But the appropriated text or texts are not always as
> clearly signaled or acknowledged as in the adaptive process. This may occur in a far less
> straightforward context than is evident in making a film version of a canonical play.[115]

Yet by means of an inconsistency, Sanders reveals a problem in the distinct use of these terms:

> Appropriation clearly extends far beyond the adaptation of other texts into new literary
> creations, assimilating both historical lives and events […] and companion art forms, as
> mentioned above, into the process. Painting, portraiture, photography, film, and musical
> composition all become part of the rich treasury of 'texts' available to the adaptator.[116]

Sanders even uses the term "adaptator" for the person appropriating a text, thereby already

deconstructing the difference she is trying to establish. Similarly, I will not differentiate between

these terms but rather understand adaptations as an attempt to appropriate an artifact for an

audience of a different language, time, or culture, and/or within a different genre and/or medium

whether it is clearly marked and perceived by the audience as such or not. For my understanding

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[113] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, 97.

[114] (Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, 25). Leitch argues similarly that the audience familiar with both the model and the adaptation gains pleasure by comparing adaptations to the respective source text (Thomas Leitch, "Adaptation, the Genre," *Adaptation* 2 [2008]: 106-210, here 108).

[115] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, 26.

[116] Ibid., 148.

of adaptation, it is sufficient that the creator of the reworking based his on her aratifact on a model and used it as a source.

Hutcheon raises awareness of the fact that adaptation changes an audience's relationship to its source.[117] The notion that the audience approaches the model differently after the encounter with the adaptation supports an understanding of adaptation as a dialogical[118] process. An audience that knows of an artifact's identity as adaptation can go back and forth between two or more works regardless of their diachronic production. Hence, Bruhn calls for "dialogizing adaptation studies" and argues "we should study both the source and result of the adaptation as two texts, infinitely changing positions, taking turns being sources for each other in the ongoing work of the reception in the adaptational process."[119] Adaptation Studies enable us to focus on the relationship of the retelling of a story and its model as a dialogue, a two-way process.[120] This brings the process of production and reception closer together, which is important for the Wigalois narratives, where adaptations regularly become models for a new reworking themselves, or at the very least reference preceding material. Wagenseil's Yiddish text presents the audience with a text that is already a recreation, becoming within Wagenseil's book the immediate model for another adaptation. It is not a mere translation. The German text Wagenseil offers on the right page becomes the very means by which the Wigalois tradition's continuation

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[117] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 29.

[118] I use the term dialogical here not in the sense of Bakhtin: "Dialogizität meint, daß in einem Romantext nicht eine Stimme, nämlich die des Autors, dominiert und über die Stimmen der Romanfiguren triumphiert, sondern daß viele und teilweise einander widersprechende Stimmen gleichberechtigt nebeneinander erklingen." (Henning Tegtmeyer, "Der Begriff der Intertextualität und seine Fassungen. Eine Kritik der Intertextualitätskonzepte Julia Kristevas und Susanne Hothius'," in *Textbeziehungen. Linguistische und literaturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Intertextualität*, ed. Josef Klein and Ulla Fix [Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1997], 49-81, here 51-52).

[119] Bruhn, "Dialogizing Adaptation Studies," 73.

[120] Ibid., 74.

is ensured. Later adaptors would access the Yiddish narrative on the right through the German on the left, such as Ludwig Uhland, who based his fragmentary poem *Ritter Wieduwilt* either directly or indirectly on the Wagenseil edition.

Thomas Leitch takes the notion of adaptation as dialogue a step further and proposes an understanding of adaptation as genre in which all reworkings form a dialogue, arguing that from an audience's perspective it already is perceived as such.[121] Leitch, in his essay "Adaptation, the Genre" (2013), develops a list of signs that are understood by an audience as markers of adaptation. For his work in film studies these markers are comprised of: historical setting, historical music, fetishizing of the written word, and subtitles.[122] The audience sees a new adaptation and compares it to other adaptations.

The fact that film scholars still contribute the majority of theoretical literature to the field of Adaptation Studies might indicate that literary scholars lag behind in their observation of such phenomena. Yet, research on adaptations is prevalent in literary studies, especially in academic literature on the medieval and early modern periods, and above all, on the Arthurian tradition above all. Although Leitch focuses on modern and post-modern examples, and in particular on Jane Austen film adaptations, it is worth considering his claims as they apply to medieval and early modern Arthurian Romances. First, this list can be reworked and appropriated for adaptations in other media and such criteria can be developed for Arthurian Romances and the Wigalois narrative tradition. Second, not only do Arthurian Romances form a distinct group of literature, they also refer to each other and often use protagonists from the same cast of characters (for example Arthur and Gawein, who both are featured in *Wigalois*). The surplus

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[121] Leitch, "Adaptation, the Genre," 106.

[122] Ibid., 111-113.

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value of perceiving adaptation as genre in itself is, according to Leitch, that "genre provides a primary matrix for interpreting and evaluating each new entry."[123]

Similar to Leitch's idea of adaptation as genre, Andreas Daiber develops a critical theory that places Arthurian literature into an intertextual dialogue. He calls this the phenomenon "des literarischen Wiedergängers."[124] Arthurian texts, he argues, live off quotations and the retelling and continued narration of the biography of a set of typological figures.[125] Both the stories and the figures are continual adaptations of their earlier instantiations. Daiber points out that the reader familiar with the Arthurian material gains the most from these figure-related intertextual references.[126] He goes even so far as to speak of a genre: Gawein and Sir Kay, Daiber argues, represent genre constituent figures that can be traced throughout the Arthurian world. Sir Gawain, Sir Kay, and Sir Bedevere are often seen as Arthur's oldest companions: "The shadowy Celtic deities behind these figures are the river god Kai, the one-armed war god Bedwyr, and Gwalchami, a British Hercules figure."[127] Gawain is one of the most active knights, and one of the religious grail knights.[128] Even Thomasîn von Zerclaere references Gawein in his didactic

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[123] Leitch, "Adaptation, the Genre," 107.

[124] Andreas Daiber, *Bekannte Helden in neuen Gewändern? Intertextuelles Erzählen im "Biterolf und Dietleib" sowie am Beispiel Keies und Gaweins im "Lanzelet", "Wigalois" und der "Crone"* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 9.

[125] "Indem vorrangig nach dem Zustandekommen, den Funktionen sowie den zugrundeliegenden Rezeptionshaltungen und -bedingungen der Fremdtextreferenz gefragt wird, konzentriert sich dieser intertextuelle Ansatz eindeutig auf das Folgewerk und verkehrt damit die bisher durch die Quellen- und Einflußforschung einseitig festgelegte Perspektive auf den oder die Vorlagen exakt in die Gegenrichtung." (Daiber, *Bekannte Helden in neuen Gewändern?*, 22).

[126] (Ibid., 12). "Im Einklang mit der Umbewertung solcher Texte durch die jüngere Forschung sowie in Bezugnahme auf bisherige intertextuelle Fragestellungen, wäre an solchen Beispielen literarischer Markierung bei wiederverwendeten Figuren der Nachweis erbracht, daß der souveräne Umgang mit tradierten Versatzstücken in Übernahme, Anspielung, Ausbau, Modifikation und Kontrastierung für den Geschmack der Zeit zumindest ein, wenn nicht das wesentliche künsterliche Qualitätsmerkmal dieser Werke bedutet haben könnte." (Ibid., 17).

[127] Day, *The Search for King Arthur*, 99.

[128] Ibid.

text *Der welsche Gast* (1215/16) as the most ideal knight.[129] Wigalois, Gawein's son, is part of

the Gawein narrative tradition, as his story presents us with a sequel or spin-of. Peter Kern

argues that Wirnt's story evokes and solidifies preexisting knowledge about Arthurian romance

within his audience.[130]

The studies by Daiber and Leitch display similarities to Adaptation Studies and Medieval

Literature Studies. The very fascination of the Arthurian material is represented by its identity as

a net of adaptations. Through different media, languages, and epochs, artists created a manifold

universe of tales centered around King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table (albeit not

always without contradiction). We as the audience can pick up any material related to this topic

and find ourselves in a world already familiar to us. We are familiar with the inherent logic of

the narratives, even if a specific work inverts or criticizes it. Thus, genre in the Arthurian

Tradition is not marked by a shared form, style, or narrative structure.[131] Instead, it is marked by

recurrent figures. Daiber refers to them as "gattungskonstitutive Figuren."[132] Recurrent figures

become the characteristic of these adaptations. Arthurian Adaptation represents its own genre.

The Arthurian adaptations include not just romances, but prose, poems, plays, and opera, and

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[129] Volker Mertens, "'gewisse lêre', Zum Verhältnis von Fiktion und Didaxe im späten deutschen Artusroman," in *Artusroman und Intertextualität. Beiträge der deutschen Sektionstagung der Internationalen Artusgesellschaft vom 16. bis 19. November 1989 an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt a.M.*, ed. Friedrich Wolfzettel (Giessen: W. Schmitz, 1990), 85-106, here 86.

[130] Peter Kern, "Die Auseinandersetzung mit der Gattungstradition im *Wigalois* Wirnts von Grafenberg," in *Artusroman und Intertextualität. Beiträge der deutschen Sektionstagung der Internationalen Artusgesellschaft vom 16. bis 19. November 1989 an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt a.M.*, ed. Friedrich Wolfzettel (Giessen: W. Schmitz, 1990), 73-83, here 80.

[131] Especially for medieval literature, genre is a very debatable term. Tzvetan Todorov asks: "One can always find a property common to two texts, and therefore put them together in one class. But is there any point calling the result of such a union a 'genre'?" Tzvetan Todorov, "The Origin of Genres," *New Literary History* 8 (1976): 159-170, here 163. The most prominent debates focus on the "genres" of the medieval comical short stories (Maeren) and the early modern prose novels.

[132] Although he draws on Kristeva and Bakhtin, Daiber acknowledges the independency of a text as singular entity that is not simply a result of other pretexts (Daiber, *Bekannte Helden in neuen Gewändern?*, 19-20).

they go far beyond the verbal sphere to include a strong pictorial tradition. A broadened concept of genre based on Arthurian Adaptation helps us discuss the material without privileging word-based material or romances in a strict and formal sense.

Where Adaptation Studies is still concerned with identifying direct relationships between, an artifact A with an artifact B, recent Medieval Literature Studies acknowledges the existence of parallel versions of narratives and texts. Such a notion renders the hunt for a direct source obsolete, furthering the idea of a net of adaptations, of material interwoven one with another. Similarly, a strict idea of translation implies one model text and a corresponding translation, without taking into account prior or following processes, therefore failing to describe the Wagenseil case in which the Yiddish text is already a reaction to prior versions of the tale, continuing, deepening, and changing previously established discourses within the narrative.

Introducing both the idea of an unstable text and the genre of Arthurian literature to the field of Adaptation Studies can make a significant contribution to the development of the theoretical discussion for Medieval Literary Studies. The success of Arthurian stories is based on an enduring interrelationship between reception and production, and extends over so many centuries that frequent media changes are common. Often, transmediality is a result of this ongoing process of adaptation, since the Arthurian tradition outlived several media, such as codices and incunabula, and witnessed the birth of new ones, such as printed books, comics, and movies. The fact that King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table still fascinate audiences proves that adaptors of Arthurian stories across the centuries have successfully appropriated the narratives for their own period and medium.

Wagenseil presents us with a distinct entry in this tradition, one that has to be perceived as both an act of reception (re)creation and the continuation of tradition. Adaptation Studies shift

the focus from a model-copy discourse onto the threefold identity of the adaptation, therefore

breaking from the debate of "fidelity," which implicitly assumes a "right" and "wrong." The

relationships in these adaptation processes are complex and form not a clear line but rather a

"web of connections."[133] Sometimes, the direct connections can only be assumed and not traced

along a clear line of adaptation. The connections among adaptations, as Schober remarks, are

always only versions of possible relations that critics and scholars – and I would add, audience

members – can construct.[134] Wagenseil's *Geschicht-Roman* text is clearly connected to *Viduvilt,*

but whether it is a direct reworking of it or was only influenced by it (and via which channels)

remains unknown.

1.5   Markers of Adaptation

Wagenseil himself was apparently unaware of any preceding Wigalois adaptations, let alone a

Yiddish one. Despite this apparent lack of knowledge about the Wigalois material, the narrator of

the Yiddish text as printed by Wagenseil presents us with an introduction that mentions a

preceding Arthurian text. The prologue commences with a supposedly well-known proverb "es

git hinen tsu az wen es kinig artis hof wer" (translit.) ("It is like at King Arthur's court there."

Wagenseil, *Belehrung,* 158). In this introduction, the narrator tells a personal story about how he

knew this proverb since his childhood and had searched for a book about this King Arthur but

been unable to find any further mention of him until, to his surprise, he finally came across a

book at his father's house.[135] In order to make the story contained in this book known to a wider

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[133] Schober, "Adaptation as Connection," 109.

[134] (Ibid.) The Middle Ages themselves represent no fixed construct, but an entity reshaped repeatedly by reception. For a similar discussion about antiquity, see Böhme, "Vorwort," ix.

[135] The notion that he searches everywhere only to find such a text in his father's house deserves further contemplation.

audience, he decided to put it into verse:[136]

> dokh hob ikh oys gireyst gor menikh land un hob meyn tog ni krign in meyn hant keyn
> bukh doz ikh es het gilesn oder wu es wer giwezn biz ikh hob ayns gifundn gishribn oyz
> in meyns foters hoiz. do hob ikh mikh nit long ton zeymen un hob diz bukh gistel in
> reymen." (translit.)
>
> ("I travelled many countries, trying in vain to find a book that I could read or finding
> whether it was true, until I found a written book [in prose?] in the house of my father. I
> did not put it off to turn this book into a rhymed version." Wagenseil, *Belehrung,*
> 158.).[137]

The prologue encourages the reader to receive the text in a variety of ways and alludes to a semi-

oral culture: "Ir mekht es leyen oder zingen wi ir welt." ("You may read or sing it – as you

prefer." Wagenseil, *Belehrung,* 158). Similarly, the Yiddish *Gabejn* from 1789 refers to old

stories about a king named Arthur and a long-standing fascination with the material: "Di alten

geschicht-schreiber melden unter andern eine schehne geschichte welche bei einem kenig ARTIS

werklich geschehn war." (transliterated by Leo Landau) ("The writers from long ago mention a

nice story which truly happened in the realm of King Arthur.")[138] This introduction to *Gabejn*,

however, implies a true historical account of Arthur's kingship rather than a folkloric story. With

the references to predecessors, whether factual or fictional, both Wagenseil's *Kinig Artis Hof* and

Gabejn follow in the footsteps of medieval vernacular literature but, unusually, reflect on their

identity as retellings. They support the idea of an "announced adaptation" as promoted by

Hutcheon and Bryant.

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[136] This need to put the story into verse presents us with a mystery since it implies his model was in prose. Yet, the narrative in all three Yiddish manuscripts, which the text seems to follow closely, is in verse. On the other hand, it seems unlikely that the adaptor of this version had an Early New High German prose version at his disposal since there are too many differences that already appear in the Yiddish manuscripts.

[137] The presumable fictional and detailed account of "finding" a story is by no means new. The probably most famous example in Middle High German literature presents Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, in which the narrator tells the story of a complex lingual and geographical transmission process from a script in the starlit sky to the very text the audience is enjoying at that very moment (Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, 453, 11-454,23).

[138] Landau, *Arthurian Legends,* 136.

Leitch argues that many adaptations announce their identity as adaptations by including "adaptation markers."[139] The Wagenseil and the *Gabejn* case present extremes. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Thomas Leitch suggests that "genre provides a primary matrix for interpreting and evaluating each new entry."[140] These markers, he argues, are visible for an audience unfamiliar with the respective tradition too: "The genre markers of adaptation […] as identified, however, show that even viewers who know nothing of a film's nominal source can identify it as an adaptation purely by generic conversions[…]."[141] Leitch provides the readers with a list of such markers, pointing out, however, that it is not conclusive. His suggested markers include a historic setting, seemingly historic music (anachronistic or historically accurate), and a fetishisizing of the story, which leads to an obsession with word, authors, and books.[142] Leitch's suggested markers are only possibilities, and can certainly be added to.

Many adaptations within the Wigalois material announce their identity as adaptation by referring explicitly to sources or referencing the Arthurian framework, thereby placing themselves within what could be referred to as an Arthurian Genre, drawing on Leitch's adaptation concept. Moreover, the Wigalois material demonstrates an obsession with telling stories – one of the genre markers indicated by Leitch. It is the very absence of a story that constitutes a problem for the Arthurian society and thus sets the narrative in motion.[143] Having gathered at the Arthurian court to celebrate a joyful feast, it is explained to the reader that King

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[139] Leitch, "Adapation, the Genre," 111.

[140] Ibid., 107.

[141] Ibid., 115.

[142] Ibid., 111-113.

[143] Uhland's Fragment *Ritter Wieduwilt* (presumable 1809/10) focuses mainly on the topos of the lack of narration, thus bringing to foreground not the actual deed of a knight, but the narration of it.

Arthur only allowed himself and his entourage to eat when a new story has been heard. But there is no story until a stranger arrives at the court, representing a new adventure and a new beginning. It is the later grandfather of Wigalois. In the logic of the Arthurian genre, "stories" include the "actual event" itself, not only the retelling of it at the later time – the time actual narrative took place. When, finally, the unknown knight reaches the court with a gift for the queen, courtly joy is restored and the feast can begin. Although this topos is not uncommon in medieval literature it is one of many indications showing that narration and stories play an even bigger role in Wirnt's *Wigalois* as the motif of narrating reappears throughout the text:[144] Joram and Gawein shorten the ride by telling each other stories (*Wigalois*, v. 660)[145]; stories alleviate the suffering of the messenger maiden (*Wigalois*, v. 1924) and Larie (*Wigalois*, v. 11599-11603); a maiden reads the story of Dido and Aeneas to the daughter of the Persian king from a book (*Wigalois*, v. 2710-2726). Everybody narrates, men, women – even dwarfs. The dwarf himself is singing tales, among them the story of his origin (*Wigalois*, v. 3287-3289). Yet, the obsession with the word in *Wigalois* is present even before the narrative begins – at least in one version of the text,[146] a book actually speaks, addressing the audience: "Wer hât mich guoter ûf getân" ("What good person opened me?" *Wigalois*, v. 1).[147] Taking into account the potential performance situation of the medieval text, this statement further points to intermediality.

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[144] In addition, Wirnt points out the creation of his text, the fictionality of the created world. The narrator claims that he has never seen prettier maidens except for those created by words (787-788), and that he is the actual creator of the weapons (10574-10576).

[145] Here and in the following quoted according to: Wirnt von Grafenberg. *Wigalois*. Edited by Johannes Marie Neele Kapteyn. Translated by Sabine Seelbach and Ulrich Seelbach. 2nd ed. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014

[146] Cologne, Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, MS W6*. This text was not only the basis for Benecke's edition, but also for Kapteyn's edition in 1926, which Sabine and Ulrich Seelbach used as basis for a modern edition (2011; 2nd revised edition 2014).

[147] Freidank's *Bescheidenheit*, composed around the same time (1215-1230), introduces itself too, but does not reflect on its materiality as a book as such.

Wirnt's *Wigalois* ends with a reference to ongoing narration, a promised sequel – a

hypertext in Genette's sense – about the story of Wigalois' son, which, at least as far as we

know, was never composed. Despite this empty allusion, *Wigalois* includes many other

intertextual connections, referencing mainly texts by Wolfram von Eschenbach and Hartmann

von Aue.[148] The fact that Wirnt himself encourages a sequel to Wigalois about the story of the

knight's son indicates an openness and awareness of these parameters of Arthurian adaptation.

Already at the first scenes in the Arthurian court, Wirnt invokes a tradition and places his text

within it.[149] Wirnt reacts to other text, "corrects" them, as Daiber puts it, in regard to the image

of Gawein as the perfect knight.[150] Wirnt brings other texts to the attention of the audience by

using such words as *verligen*, a central motif in Hartman von Aue's *Erec*.[151] A second group of

references to the Arthurian tradition uses figures that appear in other Arthurian texts, such as

Enite, Jeschute, Erec, Iwein, Lanzelot, and Sir Kay and thus adheres to Daiber's claim about the

figures that form an Arthurian genre. Although certainly not as famous as Erec, Iwein, and

Lanzelot, Wigalois himself becomes an intertextual/ intermedial figure and thus a genre-

constituting figure for the Arthurian material in Daiber's sense. In *Kudrun*, Hilde and her

daughter visit Wigalois: "Dô Hilde und ihr tohter / giengen in den sal, vor Wigâleises hûse / sie

hôrten dicke schal […]." ("When Hilde and her daughter entered the hall in front of Wigalois'

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[148] Intertextual references point for example to Hartmann von Aue's *Erec* and *Iwein*, and Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*.

[149] (Daiber, *Bekannte Helden in neuen Gewändern?*, 143). Kern argues that the meaning of Wigalois is only accessible with intertextual knowledge without explaining this argument in depth (Kern, "Die Auseinandersetzung mit der Gattungstradition," 80).

[150] (Daiber, *Bekannte Helden in neuen Gewändern?*, 28). I will discuss this episode in depth in the second chapter.

[151] (Daiber, *Bekannte Helden in neuen Gewändern?*, 248-249). Thomas points further to older material underlying the story of Florye and Gawein, for example *Parzival*'s Gahrmuret and Herzeloyde (Thomas, *A German View Of Camelot*, 31-39).

house, they heard a loud noise […]." *Kudrun*, 582,2-4). This reference interestingly indicates a crossover from the heroic epic into the Arthurian Realm.

Wigalois is not the only version that remarks on the continuation of the narrative and thus presents the audience with markers of adaptation as proposed by Leitch. The early modern German fifteenth- and sixteenth-century adaptations include references to the story of Wigalois' son too, thereby maintaining the notion of a net of adaptations.[152] The version in *Buch der Abenteuer* (1496-1500) announces its identity as adaptation further by combining the allusion to Wigalois' son with the acknowledgment of Wirnt (here: "Wirig") as the author of his (at least supposed) model text:[153]

> Larey dy mynicleiche / in der zeit aynen schönen sun gepar. / do der erwüechs zu ritters weird genüege, / alls ich das hab vernumen, / das er auch preises uil mit ellen trüege, / Doch ward mir nye zu ennde / diß mare kundt gethan, / was der preises genennde / in seiner zeit mit ritterschafft began. / Benesamus, so war der helld genannende. / alls vnns das sagt her Wirig, / lebtens et all mit eren sunnder schannde.

> ("At the same time, Larey, the wonderful, gave birth to a beautiful son. According to what I have heard, he grew up to become an honorable knight. But nobody told me the story about how he earned glory in his time with knighthood to its end. He was called Benesamus. All that lord Wirig tells us is that they lived reputable lives." *Wigoleis*, 316,1-317,7).

The adaptator of this text ends by reflecting on his own identity as recipient of the story and how this role affected his process of contributing a new adaptation. Despite leaving out the food-story-topos, this text emphasizes narrative and narration in the form of an anthropomorphized Lady Adventure ("Aventiure") with whom the narrator has a conversation.[154]

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[152] However, his name changes in the versions in *Wigoleis vom Rade* and *Buch der Liebe* to Bensamos, Benesamis respectively.

[153] This is not to say that Wirnt's version was actually the model for *Buch der Abenteuer*. It could present a residue from another model that also acknowledges Wirnt von Grafenberg.

[154] The reference to a lady adventure is by no means a new idea and has been used by Wolfram von Eschenbach in *Parzival* and even by contemporaries of this Wigalois adapations, such as Hans Sachs. A more modern twist offers

Wigoleis vom Rade (1483/93) begins with a story about its "heritage:" "Durch etlich edel vnd auch ander personen / mann vnd frawen gebeten worden / inen zuo lieb die history / von dem hochberiempten ritter herrn Wygoleis [Sic!] vom Rad / auß rymen in vngerymbt beschriben" ("Many noble and other people, men and women, asked me the favor to compose a story about the famous knight lord Wigoleis of the Wheel in rhymes." *Wigoleis*, Aii r). The text concludes with a reference to Wirnt von Grafenberg (*Wigoleis*, Kiir r) embedded in a classical humbleness topos, in which the author constructs himself as a follower in the shadow of a much larger and more skilled authority (here Wirnt). Finally, the text as found in *Buch der Liebe* (1587) emphasizes the impetus of storytelling on a text-internal level, as the dwarf keeps telling stories of his home in Ireland.

In his anthology, *Erzehlungen aus dem Heldenalter teutscher Nation* (1780), Daniel Ernst Wagner includes Wigalois not as a retelling, but as a reprint of Wagenseil's version. Despite the fact that Wagner probably had access to the prose version *Wigoleis vom Rade* (as he uses the same name form for Wirnt von Grafenberg: "Ehrwürdiger von Grafenberg"),[155] Wagner argues that there was a rhymed version, used as reading-exercise in Wagenseil's Yiddish textbook, and he favors it over the prose version. Since both texts include their date of printing and/or composition, Wagner does not seem to decide on the basis of age, but form, preferring a rhymed version – , Wagenseil's rhymed version, which now has moved beyond its status as a language learner's exercise or a mere translation.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's treatise *Frau Aventiure klopft an Beneckes Thür* (Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm: *Frau Aventiure klopft an Beneckes Thür* [Berlin: W. Besser, 1842]).

[155] Since Weidenmüller argues that *Wigalois* as "Volksbuch" was lost, he cannot have been aware of Wagner or at least his reference (Otto Weidenmüller, "Das Volksbuch von Wigoleis vom Rade" PhD diss., [Universität Göttingen, 1910], 25).

Vom Könige Artus und von dem bildschönen Ritter Wieduwilt. Ein Ammenmährchen

(1786) similarly points to Wagenseil as the source of his inspiration, but offers his very own take

on the narrative:

> Denn ich habe dies Ding von Mährchen nach meiner Weise begukt, begaft, betastet, befühlt, geknetet und gedrückt […]. Aus diesem Gedichte in Versen hab' ich gemacht ein Mährchen in Prose, das ich euch, Herren und Damen, erzählen will, wie mir der Schnabel gewachsen ist. Ich werde mich hüten, so wenig Moral anzubringen, als möglich, weil – sie auch nicht behaget.

> ("I have viewed, examined, touched, palpated, kneaded, and pressed this sort of a fairytale […]. I have this poem in verses turned into a fairytale in prose, which I want to tell you, lords and ladies, by not mincing my words. I will be on guard to offer as little moral as possible, because it would be unpleasant." *Ammenmährchen*, 20, 27).[156]

The audience therefore knows that it will be confronted with a very different adaptation. Divided

into parts for each night ("Abendstündchen") and evoking a performance setting, the text is told

by a very dominant narrator who abruptly ends passages in the style of (for example) Italian

early modern texts by arguing that he is either tired, or wants a drink, or is just not willing to

continue with the story for that day.

An adaptation from 2011 in the form of a comic presents the reader with another instance

of remediation and announces its identity as adaptation in many ways, emphasizing medial

changes in particular . First, the pages imitate a parchment pages and thus reference the history

of the material. Secondly, the comic begins and ends with the frame narrative in which the reader

sees Wirnt composing *Wigalois* and reading the first and the last lines of the 1215 text to his

fiancé. Furthermore, the comic includes the first lines in which the book addresses the audience.

The adaptors of the comic further evoke the "spirit" of Wirnt's *Wigalois* by including longer text

passages based on the medieval version and by leaving the eating-story-topos within the text as

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[156] ([Ferdinand Roth,] *Vom König Artus und von dem bildschönen Ritter Wieduwilt. Ein Ammenmährchen,* Leipzig: Verlag der Dykischen Buchhandlung, 1786). The work was published anonymously.

initial problem of the court. In the spirit of repeated connections to Wirnt's *Wigalois*, both as narrative and as material manuscript, the comic's illustrators and writers added images of their medievalized selves at the end of the Comic. Leitch claims that films adapting previously printed or written material are obsessed with the written word and books.[157] The comic adaptors capture such an obsession by evoking the aesthetics of a medieval codex and by presenting themselves in the tradition of medieval scribes. By including these images of themselves, they connect their work with the first illustrated manuscript, Codex Leiden from 1372, which similarly concluded with the (presumable) "self-portrait" of Jan von Brunswick, the writer of the manuscript. He is presented there on the last page of the *Wigalois* manuscript evoking the idea of copying and illustrating it in this very picture and thereby creating another adaptation, an adaptation that crosses medial borders.

Conclusion

Wagenseil presents his audience with only one of the many Wigalois adaptations that acknowledge their identity as adaptations. Approaching these adaptations as distinct entries in dialogue with each other allows us to move away from a mere model-copy-relationship and to examine the respective comments on the narrative tradition. Wagenseil offers his audience a translation in a Benjamin/ Derrida sense that goes beyond the translated text and adds another layer to it. But Wagenseil marks the text also as cultural translation by emphasizing the linguistic differences and the supposed strangeness of what he portrays as a Jewish-English text – that is, the core of the story originating in England, and the supposed "original" text on which the German is modeled having come from Yiddish, a Jewish language.

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[157] Leitch, "Adaptation the Genre," 112.

Furthermore, as part of the Arthurian universe as well as a specific narrative tradition, Wagenseil's *Geschicht-Roman* is entrenched in interextual references. Each of these theories is useful for describing certain aspects of the text. Yet reducing Wagenseil's text to any of these phenomena limits *Geschicht-Roman* tremendously, and places it with material neither as complex nor as theoretically interesting. In order to better understand Wagenseil's *Geschicht-Roman* and its connection to the entire tradition better, it is worth reviewing the strengths of Adaptation Studies and merging it with modern Medieval Literature Studies. A combined approach allows us to analyze such a diverse tradition as the Wigalois adaptations better and to uncover connections beyond their inter- and transtextual, inter- and transmedial features. It gives us space to show how such texts exceed identities of classical or cultural translation/transformation as discussed in this chapter using the example of Wagenseil.

I firmly believe that including Arthurian Romances in the field of Adaptation Studies can make a sizable contribution to the further development of the theoretical discussion. Working on the material of *Wigalois* allows me to address issues pivotal to contemporary Adaptation Studies, such as questions of fidelity, adaptation as one-way-street, and an audience's perception of adaptation as adaptation. It is important to keep both sides in mind – the theoretical approach to adaptation as well as an understanding of how the adaptations react to and reflect on previous texts. In the following three chapters, I will undertake an examination of several Wigalois adaptations in regard to three dominant and reccurrent aspects – religion, gender, and image – in order to understand the phenomenon of adaptation and to better show how this is a dynamic tradition, a shared narrative that moves beyond the borders of language, culture, and medium.

2. A Messianic Tale?
Myth, Magic, and Religion in *Wigalois*, *Viduvilt*, and *Gabejn*

Introduction

Wirnt von Grafenberg's *Wigalois* has been devalued in early scholarship as a "post-classical"

Arthurian Romance that is characterized by an eclectic use of material. Considering Chretién de

Troyes' and Hartmann von Aue's works composed around 1200 as the standard for the

"classical" and "ideal" Arthurian Romances, early scholars such as Werner Schröder in his essay

"Der synkretistische Roman des Wirnt von Gravenberg" (1986) were particularly critical of the

excessive use of magic and mystical elements in Wirnt's contribution to this tradition.[158] By

contrast, scholars trying to emphasize the value of *Wigalois* used the complex portrayal of

religion to aid them in their endeavors.[159] Trying to prove either Wirnt's genius in his original

take on the established Arthurian tradition or his deconstruction of the same, they compared

Wigalois to the partial French model *Le Bel Inconnu* and, perhaps even more so to Wolfram von

Eschenbach's *Parzival*.[160] At stake in these comparisons was the scholarly value of the romance

and its classification as canonical or non-canonical – a problematic debate in itself that mirrors

the zeitgeist of 19th century literature scholarship. Significantly, both sides highlighted religion in

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[158] Werner Schröder, "Der synkretistische Roman des Wirnt von Gravenberg," Euphorion 80 (1986): 235-277.

[159] "Der Ansatz bei der religiösen Thematik schien den Königsweg zur Neuberwertung des *Wigalois* zu eröffnen." (Eming, *Funktionswandel des Wunderbaren*, 140).

[160] Nevertheless, scholarship discusses the portrayal of religion in *Parzival*, the narrative of an Arthurian knight on a quest to find the Holy Grail, as equally controversial – especially with regard to "God." See for example Susanne Knaeble, *Höfisches Erzählen von Gott: Funktion und narrative Entfaltung des Religiösen in Wolframs 'Parzival*,' Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011.

their argumentation and agreed that *Wigalois* is brimming with Christian motifs and features a messianic Arthurian knight, who frees an endangered land and its people.

However, this seemingly perfect lens through which to re-evaluate *Wigalois* soon proved to be no less a minefield than terms such as "post-classical" or "canon." The last twenty years of research on religion in Middle High German literature demonstrates this by revealing that the "courtly God" was by no means identical with the God of the Bible and that literature, especially the literature around 1200, often referred to as "Christian" displayed a hybrid mixture of dogmatic monotheistic beliefs, pre-Christian myths[161] and philosophy. Religion in *Wigalois*, as we will see, is a complex topic that invokes diverse systems of belief and draws on at least two literary genres, each of which participates in a different discourse on religion.[162] In this chapter I will review the construction of religion in *Wigalois* and then compare it to the two main Yiddish adaptations, showing that all three use religious elements without constructing a coherent religious tale. All three works produce first and foremost non-religious texts that tell the tale of the adventures of an Arthurian knight and therefore have little to no interest in promoting a consistent religious worldview or a coherently constructed messianic hero.

Why then, do I propose religion as a tool for discussing the adaptations and their dialogical nature in this chapter? Religion serves as an excellent theme through which to

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[161] Myth is used here to refer to elements from the early pre-Christianization narratives concerning heroes, Gods, Demons and world-explaining events and their early history for a contemporaneous audience (see "Mythos, Mythologie, I. Begriff und Funktion," *Brepolis Medieval Encyclopaedias - Lexikon des Mittelalters Online*, (Stuttgart: Metzler, [1977]-1999), vol. 6, col. 993, last accessed December 17, 2014.

[162] As already Maksymiuk pointed out, 'Christian' is a very broad term in the Middle Ages in general and many common belief systems included "magical-superstitious patterns" (Stephan Maksymiuk, *The Court Magician in Medieval German Romance* [Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996], 1). Maksymiuk problematizes the attempt to draw a clear line between magic and religion in the medieval belief system. The position of the Early Christian Church was mostly influenced by St. Augustine's definition until the 13th century, when a shift occurred based on Albertus Magnus' theology that allowed for the possibility of a natural magic (Maksymiuk, *The Court Magician*, 9).

compare adaptations of the material for two main reasons. First, adaptors from various religious

backgrounds and epochs noticed the centrality of religion in the text and approached this aspect

very differently in their respective re-appropriations, leading to very distinct retellings of the

Wigalois narrative. Second, in the examples I have chosen the text has been reworked by and for

a group of people that did not share the Christian worldview of Wirnt's intended audience: the

Yiddish speaking Jews of the Holy Roman Empire. Yet, as I will show in this chapter, it would

be very shortsighted to attribute narrative changes only to the religious background of a

respective adaptor and audience or to speak of a "Jewish" and a "Christian" tradition of Wigalois

stories. To avoid such simplistic conclusions it is crucial to connect the adaptations and discuss

them together with their historical aesthetic development. Therefore, religion represents a

powerful *tertium comparationis* to show a dialogue between adaptations with very different

cultural and historical contexts. In order to enable such a discussion, I will first analyse how

religion is constructed in *Wigalois* and address which elements it comprises. In a second step, I

will compare these findings to two distinct Yiddish adaptations, *Viduvilt* (16th ct.) and *Riter*

Gabejn (1789?) in chronological order.[163]

It is noteworthy that the chronological order of the texts also represents a decrease in the

amount of scholarship on each text respectively. Over the last few decades the number of

publications on *Wigalois* with a major focus on religion has increased immensely. Although

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[163] While scholars can agree on a fifteen-year period regarding the composition of Wirnt's *Wigalois*, scholars of the Yiddish adaptations face a potential timeframe of three hundred years. The codices of *Viduvilt* date from the 16th century, but so far no scholar has been able to argue persuasively for a more precise date regarding the adaptation's actual composition. It is assumed that it was written sometime between the 14th and the 16th centuries. *Gabejn,* the second Yiddish adaptation I will discuss, presents us with a different temporal problem, because the text is only available in an edition by Landau and it seems that it has not even been referenced in other texts before that. Unfortunately Landau's source is lost, as we will see later in this chapter. Therefore, until we find further supporting evidence and text witnesses, we can only refer to the date used and suggested by Landau (Landau, *Arthurian Legends*).

available in transcription, research on *Viduvilt* is still sparse and includes only one monograph.[164]

Yet, *Wigalois* scholars are currently (re-)discovering *Viduvilt* and an increase in research in the

future is to be expected. However, *Gabejn* available only in transcription and the only Arthurian

tale in which the realm of the roundtable is extended to the Asian Empire, has been absolutely

ignored thus far and is utterly under-researched. One potential reason for this is the lack of

publications that mention *Gabejn* and therefore raise an interest in the text.

The three examples I have chosen for my discussion of religion in the Wigalois

adaptations stem from very different epochs. This seeming disadvantage is, in fact, an advantage,

as it requires one to consider one's findings in a specific historical context, rather than simply

attributing changes blindly to the religious background of the intended audience. Awareness of

the historical framework becomes particularly important in helping us understand how Hans

Robert Jauß' dictum about the "alterity and modernity" of medieval literature can guide our

discussion:

> Die unmittelbare oder präreflexive Leseerfahrung, die implizit ja immer schon ein
> Erproben der Lesbarkeit einschließt, bildet die unentbehrliche erste hermeneutische
> Brücke. Die vermittelnde Leistung oder hermeneutische Funktion des ästhetischen
> Vergnügens erweist sich daran, daß es durch fortschreitende Einstimmung oder auch via
> negationis, durch ein eintretendes Mißvergnügen an der Lektüre, die erstaunliche oder
> befremdende Andersheit der vom Text eröffneten Welt gewahr werden läßt. Sich diese
> Andersheit einer abgeschiedenen Vergangenheit bewußt zu machen, erfordert das
> reflektierende Aufnehmen ihrer befremdenden Aspekte, methodisch ausführbar als
> Rekonstruktion des Erwartungshorizonts der Adressaten, für die der Text ursprünglich
> verfaßt war.[165]

Jauß' approach is crucial, because it calls for an awareness that does not differentiate between

texts that seem "closer" to our contemporary understanding of a reader's background and those

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[164] Achim Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel), 2000.

[165] Hans Robert Jauß, *Alterität und Modernität der mittelalterlichen Literatur: Gesammelte Aufsätze 1956-1976* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1977), 10.

that are further removed. All three texts in this chapter, which are from different epochs and are received by different audiences, need to be approached the same way: first, by considering the material from a modern perspective, but then by historicizing the texts and one's own conclusions about them. This is important not just for the Middle High German material, but also for the early modern and Modern Yiddish material. Such an approach aids a critical reading of all three of these texts as adaptations and helps to avoid interpretative fallacies.

My research in this chapter is further informed by Niklas Luhmann's definition of religion.[166] In Luhmann's account, religion presents a process and a form of communicating ideas used to construct one society in contrast to another.[167] It is a mode of both creating and differentiating that draws on binaries. The advantage of Luhmann's definition – as used for example in Susanne Knaeble's comprehensive monograph on 'God' in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* – is Luhmann's avoidance of evaluating of beliefs as well as his definition's applicability to seemingly hybrid forms of religion that – like Christianity – absorb and reuse other traditions as well.[168] Furthermore, it is important to note that religious systems are constructed on the basis of inclusion and exclusion: "Strukturbildung ist immer Beschränkung der Freiheit der Kombination von Elementen. […] Systembildung erfordert, auf welcher Ebene immer, die Ausgrenzung einer nicht zum System gehörigen Umwelt."[169] Luhmann's definition of religion, set against the larger backdrop of his *Systemtheorie* as a

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[166] With his system theory, referred to frequently as 'mega theory,' Niklas Luhmann tries to explain the evolution and basis of societies. Luhmann understands the construction of systems from a communicative approach. Arguing that systems utilize binary codes as their basis of construction, he applies his theory to microstructures such as personal relationships, as well as macro structures like the law, art, and religion.

[167] Niklas Luhmann, "Das Medium der Religion. Eine soziologische Betrachtung über Gott und die Seelen," *Soziale Systeme* 6 (2000): 39-51.

[168] Ibid., 40; Knaeble, *Höfisches Erzählen von Gott*.

[169] Niklas Luhmann, *Die Funktion der Religion* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), 13.

concept that essentially draws on delineation, proves useful for an analysis of the Wigalois

material since Wirnt's text is concerned with ideas of the Other and the Otherworld. Religion and

the Other go hand in hand when it comes to the constitution of a society: "Jede soziale und

kulturelle Gesellschaft entwickelt folglich ihr eigenes Verständnis des Fremden, weshalb die

Unterscheidung von 'eigen' und 'fremd' eine Begünstigung von primären Ablehnungsverhalten

und Stereotypbildungen zur Folge hat […]."[170] In medieval literature, the heathen is the classical

'other,' often as part of a triad that also includes Jews and heretics.[171] How does this idea,

underscored within the research on *Parzival*, and which is inherent in Wirnt's *Wigalois*, transfer

to a text for Jews, an audience that is perceived in the text itself as part of this triad of non-

Christians?

The main question scholarship asks about the Yiddish adaptations of Middle High

German literature including *Viduvilt*, is whether the texts were "De-Christianized" and

subsequently "Judaized." Yet, *Viduvilt* – the text that most interests scholars because of its

audience's Jewish background – is, as I will show, utterly uninterested in a discussion of

religion. Religion will only return to the Wigalois material as an important theme in *Gabejn*, but

in a very different form: as a tale of personal piety. Therefore, in this chapter I will consider the

question of whether or not *Wigalois* represents a stringent religious narrative at all after which I

will discuss the question dominant in scholarship on Old Yiddish non-religious[172] literature in

general, and on *Viduvilt* in particular: How "Jewish" is this text? To answer this question we will

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[170] Manuela Schotte, *Christen, Heiden und der Gral: Die Heidendarstellungen als Instrument der Rezeptionslenkung in den mittelhochdeutschen Gralromanen des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 17.

[171] Ibid., 19.

[172] With the term, "non-religious," I am referring to literature that does not tell an explicit and primarily religious story or that is not a retelling of a religious narration or Biblical story. I am giving the term preference over "secular," which is a much more absolute term that embodies the negation of anything religious.

look closely at the narrative itself as well as its structure and its paratexts.[173] Beginning with

Wigalois we will see a de-stabilization of and gradual detachment from the religious and

mythical center of the Arthurian tradition: the Arthurian court – until it eventually becomes the

otherworld itself.

2.1 *Wigalois*: Myth, Magic, and the Messiah

Wigalois has often been described as a Messianic hero, who frees the bewitched land of Korntin

and delivers its prior king Lar and his knights from their sins.[174] In this context, Wirnt von

Grafenberg is frequently hailed as the author who perfected Wolfram von Eschenbach's idea of a

religious hero.[175] Both *Wigalois and Parzival* feature religious elements and a hero raised by his

mother in a realm far removed from the Arthurian court. Both heroes are distinguished from the

rest of the Arthurian knights as chosen by God for a special task that involves salvation: in

Parzival's case the salvation of the grail king Amfortas, and in Wigalois' the freeing of Korntin

from the heathen usurper Roaz. In contrast to Parzival, however, Wigalois does not need to learn

about God's nature and develop a trust in the guidance of the almighty.

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[173] Gérard Genette presents the paratext model first in his monograph *Palimpseste* and develops it further in an independent monograph (Gérard Genette, *Paratexte* [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp], 1989). According to Gérard Genette everything that is not the story itself is paratext, everything that accompanies a narrative and turns it into what we receive as text – including title, preface, prologue, epilogue, index. Genette further differentiates as "Paratext = Peritext + Epitext," defining epitext as forms detached from the actual texts, such as reviews, adverts, and interviews concerning the text (Ibid., 12-13).

[174] See for example: Christoph Fasbender, "Gwigalois' Bergung: Zur Epiphanie des Helden als Erlöser," in *Aktuelle Tendenzen der Artusforschung*, ed. Brigitte Burrichter et al. (Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2013), 209-222, here 218. Fasbender furthermore argues that the concept of redemption imbues all of Wigalois' deeds: "So wiederholt sich das immer gleiche Muster im Kleinen, bis in der Summe aller Erlösungstaten das große Erlösungswerk vollendet ist." (Fasbender, "Gwigalois' Bergung," 213).

[175] To some extent already in *Parzival*, but "erst im *Wigalois* wird der Protagonist als wahrlich christlicher Erlöser gezeichnet und in das weltliche Genre des Artusromans eingespielt." (Bianca Häberlein, "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive in Wigalois, Widuwilt und Ammenmaehrchen," in *Rezeptionskulturen: Fünfhundert Jahre literarischer Mittelalterrezeption zwischen Kanon und Populärkultur*, ed. Mathias Herweg and Stefan Keppler-Tasaki [Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2012], 66-86, here 69).

Although scholars have referred to Wigalois as a Messianic hero, it is important to notice that the narrator abstains from explicitly referring to him as such.[176] It is the people at the Arthurian court and in the besieged land of Korntin who hail Wigalois as a Messiah: "der sol hie wollekomen sîn / uns allen ze trôste" ("He shall be welcome her, as a comfort to us all." *Wigalois*, 3989-3990). This praise of Wigalois as the chosen one is not only verbal. Baleare, for example, turns the search for the missing Wigalois into a procession that commemorates the supposed death of the hero for the redemption of the people.[177] Some of the later adaptations compare this notion of Wigalois as a Messianic hero with descriptions of the Saints. One of the cursed knights of Korntin in Ulrich Füetrer's 1473 adaptation in *Buch der Abenteuer*, for instance, perceives the hero as a saint, whom he and his fellow men turn to by requesting intercessional prayer: "Pitt got fur vnns mit vleisse, / das sich wenndt vnnser not, / dy pein vnnd vnnser weysse!" ("Pray for us diligently so that our pain, and hardship, and current lives may change." *Wigoleis*, 170, 1-37).[178] We can see that in these Middle High German adaptations the lines between messiah and saint are blurred.

Wirnt's Wigalois is not a messianic hero per se, but rather, he embodies a variety of different narratological types. Wigalois' dependence on God's intervention in the vast majority of events, as well as the hero's saint-like characteristics mark him as a passive hero of a hagiographic tale who succeeds only by the means of God's will. Yet, in the second part of the

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[176] Häberlein for example refers to Wigalois as "christliche[] Erlöserfigur" (Häberlein, "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive," 74), Fuchs argues that Wigalois participates in God's plan as tool of salvation (Fuchs, *Hybride Helden,* 142) and Grubmüller talks about the core *aventiure* as the messianic "Erlösungsaufgabe" (Klaus Grubmüller, "Artusroman und Heilsbringerethos: Zum *Wigalois'* des Wirnt von Gravenberg," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 107 [1985]: 218-239, here 221).

[177] Fasbender uses this episode further to discuss the scenic elements of a religious play throughout *Wigalois* (Fasbender, "Gwigalois' Bergung," 215f).

[178] Ulrich Füetrer: *Wigoleis*, ed. Heribert A. Hilgers. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1975.

narrative, which features the epic battle against heathens in the *Chanson de geste* tradition –
stories about Charlemagne's and his officials' heathen fights – Wigalois is portrayed as the
Christian hero who overcomes his opponents not just on the battlefield, but also through
religious means, in this case through baptism. Therefore, Wirnt's hero, who combines the
qualities of the *Minneritter*[179], Arthurian knight, passive saint, and *miles christianus*, has been
called a hybrid hero.[180]

   We see the inclusion of multiple elements in the hybrid hero of Wigalois, and we can also
find in it the tools that aid him on his quest. These tools consist of a magic belt, a flower, and
bread given to him by Larie, an angel's lance, and a sword that has been blessed by a priest.
Already the story of Wigalois' parents features marvelous items: the belt and the wheel, which
connect the stories of Gawein and Wigalois. Scholarship has discussed the magic and meaning of
these objects at length. Certain scholars have disregarded the objects entirely and refer to them as
blind objects.[181] But all of the objects fulfill a function at some point in the text. The bread gives
Wigalois strength, the flower protects him against the dragon's breath, and he kills the dragon
with the lance. These objects may not be particularly emphasized within the story, but they do

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[179] Yet, this intention provokes problems that Wirnt does not always solve. For example, it remains unclear whether the heathen Japhite is saved at the end or not. Wirnt struggles bringing the concepts of a faithful lover and the heavenly salvation together (Ingrid Hahn, "Gott und Minne, Tod und triuwe: Zur Konzeption des Wigalois des Wirnt von Grafenberg," in *Personenbeziehungen in der mittelalterlichen Literatur*, ed. Helmut Brall, Barbara Haupt, Urban Küsters [Düsseldorf: Droste, 1994], 37-60, here 56).

[180] Fuchs, *Hybride Helden*, 123, 163. Cormeau further writes about the notion of Wigalois as *miles christianus*: "Die Aventiurenwelt im zweiten Teil wird zum Feld metaphysisch böser Mächte, der Held besteht sie wie ein Glaubenskämpfer." (Christoph Cormeau, "Fortuna und andere Mächte im Artusroman," in *Fortuna*, ed. Walter Haug and Burghart Wachinger [Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1995], 23-33, here 31).

[181] Brinker argues that the bread is a blind motif and finds support in Fuchs, who not only sees blind motifs in the text, but argues that complete structures are blind, because they are constructed from the end of the narrative only to emphasize Wigalois' role as Messiah (Claudia Brinker, "'Hie ist diu aventiure geholt!' Die Jenseitsreise im Wigalois des Wirnt von Grafenberg: Kreuzzugspropaganda und unterhaltsame Glaubenslehre?" *Contemplata aliis tradere. Studien zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Spiritualität* [1995]: 87-110, here 95; Fuchs, *Hybride Helden*, 136).

fulfill a role in helping Wigalois in his quest. [182]

A second group of scholars utilizes these objects to support their claims that *Wigalois* is a homogenous religious narrative, arguing that these tools operate within a Christian framework.[183] The central debate connected to this argument concerns the question of whether or not they obtain their power from a religious-Christian or a magical source.[184] The point of contention derives from Lion's accusation that Wigalois employs magic in order to defeat Roaz: "daz weiz ich wol und ist mir kunt / daz er den helt [Roaz] mit zouber sluoc." ("I know for sure and have been told that he defeated him with magic." *Wigalois*, 10169f). But like the hero's success, the strength of these tools can be attributed to their double connotation. At first glance, these objects seem to adhere to a higher power utilized to aid the hero. But as we look closer, we see that their impact also derives from other inherent qualities. The bread draws its power from a special selection of herbs, the branch emits a beautiful aroma, the lance is made of Indian steel and a skilled dwarf forged the harness. The bread further functions as a token of love given to Wigalois

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[182] Therefore, Fasbender argues more moderately that Wirnt never lives up to the expectations raised with the introduction of the magical objects. Their meaning remains marginal (Christoph Fasbender, *Der 'Wigalois' Wirnts von Grafenberg: Eine Einführung* [Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2010], 174).

[183] Some objects such as the lance seem to more clearly indicate religious references. The lance of Lar is probably the object that has been mostly perceived by scholars as religiously significant referencing the lance of Longinus (Fasbender, *Wigalois*, 84). Lohbeck emphasizes the additional political aspect of the lance: since Heinrich II the lance of Longinus has been part of the imperial regalia and therefore adds the important aspect of sovereignty within a historical context to the narrative (Gisela Lohbeck, *Wigalois: Struktur der 'bezeichenunge'* [Frankfurt am Main, Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 1991], 140). Lohbeck sees religious references in bread too, claiming that the meaning of Jesus as the bread has to be seen as part of the object's significance (Lohbeck, *Wigalois,* 182). Thomas differentiates stronger between the first set of adventures and the second, arguing that the objects in the beginning originate in a fairytale realm and remain within such (Neil Thomas, "Wirnt von Gravenberg's *Wigalois* and Heinrich von dem Türlin's *Diu Crône*," in *German Literature of the High Middle Ages*, ed. Will Hasty [New York: Camden, 2006], 203-214, here 207). He further argues that these magic properties, such as Fortuna's belt, are metaphorical properties symbolizing knightly fortune and valor (Neil Thomas, *Wirnt of Gravenberg's Wigalois: Intertextuality and Interpretation* [Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005], 45). Brinker perceives the tools as important; but their importance is reduced in favor of absolute devotion to God so much so that in some episodes it is exclusively prayer and making the sign of the cross that provide Wigalois safety and success (Brinker, "'Hie ist diu aventiure geholt!'," 95-96).

[184] Eming suggests that the marvelous objects Wigalois possesses can be categorized according to their Christian or magical provenience, but with regard to their actual role and function this differentiation is suspended (Eming, *Funktionswandel des Wunderbaren*, 213).

by his lady Larie. Like the bread, most of the seemingly magical items obtain their actual power

through their connection to a second context. They do not need to be consistently shaped as

objects drawing their strength from magic or from Christian sources, because they are not

helping the hero fight against a consistently shaped otherworld. Wigalois' tools are as hybrid as

the hero himself and the world he faces.[185]

In addition to the tools, God's constant support and intervention are important for

Wigalois' success. Wigalois' devotion is visible in the hero's utter reliance on God and his help

– so much so that scholars have considered whether or not Wigalois actually overcomes any

obstacles through his own wit and power or whether it is only God's actions that lead him to

success.[186] However, Lady Fortune also provides for the framework of destiny in Wigalois'

story. With fate and providence representing the higher order, God's guidance and Lady

Fortune's blessings are intertwined. Wigalois's position as a figure that is both God's chosen one

and Lady Fortune's knight again displays this hybridity, this double connotation that permeates

the text with regard to religion.

Especially in the first part of *Wigalois*, Lady Fortune and her wheel play an important

role. Gawein's soon-to-be father-in-law Joram owns a wheel of fortune, which he displays in his

palace to ensure never-fading fortune: "ez [the wheel] bezeichnet das dem wirte nie an deheinem

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[185] Pointing out their hybrid nature, Grubmüller talks about the items as magic-Christian tools (Grubmüller, "Artusroman und Heilsbringerethos," 221). Or, as Maksymiuk rephrases it, Wigalois uses divine help that looks like magic from time to time itself (Maksymiuk, *The Court Magician*, 128).

[186] Thomas for example calls Wigalois "a largely inerrant knight," who only acts within a predestined framework as a passive hero (Thomas, "Wirnt von Gravenberg's *Wigalois*," 207). Dietl uses the example of the Namur battle to support a claim of Wigalois as passive hero. She points out how the Namur battle portrays a chess game and argues that like providence, the chess game cannot be understood from within, but rather from an outside perspective (Cora Dietl, "Wigalois der Schachkönig," *Text und Kontext* 24 (2002): 98–112, here 109). The battle of Namur is headed by Gawain, not Wigalois, which shows that the hero is not only without crisis, but without free will. He is predestined and never truly decides his own actions (Dietl, "Wigalois der Schachkönig," 105). Thomas argues similarly: "Wigalois no longer reflects the conventional (literary) ideal of a solitary knight whose feats are all his own. Wigalos has become a delegator of responsibility." (Thomas, *A German View Of Camelot*, 76).

dinge missegie, wan daz gelücke volget im ie." ("It ensures that the owner never fails in any endeavor as Fortune follows him." *Wigalois*, 1050-1053) The *rota fortuna* is an addition of Wirnt not featured in his potential model *Le Bel Inconnu*, and it shows an emphasis on the double connotation of fate as both God's destiny and Lady Fortune's blessing. Yet, the two are not mutually exclusive. Since Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, Fortuna was understood within a Christian framework and thus within God's order – philosophy turned into theology.[187] Fortuna was no longer the personification of instability, but of godly providence.[188]

In *Wigalois* the wheel of Lady Fortune represents a patriarchal lineage and connects the stories of Joram, his son-in-law Gawein, and his grandson Wigalois. Although the wheel is important since it represents Wigalois' code of arms, its significance has been either strictly rejected as yet another blind motif[189] or seen as important only in its destruction[190]. Some scholars even used the wheel to uncover a conflict within the narrative between the two forces of Fortuna and God along the lines of what Luhmann calls a binary code to construct a religious system:

> The loss of Fortuna's trophy bears a programmatic significance, announcing a new phase in the hero's career where he leaves behind the championship of purely knightly ideals under the tutelage of Fortuna. Instead, *Wigalois* espouses the Christian mission of redeeming the soul of the murdered king.[191]

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[187] See Haug for a thorough investigation of the Fortuna concept in medieval and early modern literature: Walter Haug, "O Fortuna: Eine historisch-semantische Skizze zur Einführung," in *Fortuna*, ed. Walter Haug, Burghart Wachinger [Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1995], 1-22.

[188] As some scholars, for example Fasbender, point out, the wheel in Joram's kingdom adheres to the concept of *Fortuna caesarea,* which describes the fortune of the sovereign (Fasbender, *Wigalois*, 152). Fasbender further explains that this does not mean that Joram is always lucky, but the wheel indicates that his luck will always come back (Fasbender, *Wigalois*, 153).

[189] for example Cormeau, "Fortuna und andere Mächte im Artusroman," 23.

[190] Fasbender, *Wigalois*, 158.

[191] Thomas, "Wirnt von Gravenberg's *Wigalois*," 207.

These scholars base their interpretation on a scene in which a maiden rejects the connection of the wheel to Fortuna and instead reinterprets it as the Round Table of king Arthur, marking Wigalois as an Arthurian knight: "an sînem schilte was ein / guldîn tavelrunde […]. / der [Wigalois] vuorte die tavelrunde / daz man dâ bî kunde / sehen unde wizzen daz / er zer tavelrunde saz" ("His shield displayed a golden table round […]. He kept the table round so that people could see and know that he was a member of the round table." *Wigalois*, 5612f; 5629-5632). Notwithstanding this marginal figure's interpretation, the narrator himself refers to Wigalois throughout the text as "der rîter mit dem rade" ("The knight with the wheel," for example *Wigalois*, 5132). The wheel remains Wigalois' essential accessory over the centuries to come, as it is continuously present in the illustrations of *Wigalois* adaptations from the 15th century up to 2013, especially on the title pages of these texts.

If we abstain from an interpretation of the wheel as promoting a God-Fortuna binary that is eventually dissolved in favor of God, we uncover more evidence that Wirnt is not telling a strictly Christian narrative. Rather he is opening the Arthurian romance up to include other elements as well. In this case, the originally non-Christian element of Fortuna and her wheel are combined with divine predestination in order to emphasize the unique chosenness of the narrative's hero.

This chosenness is further emphasized by another object in the text: the stone of virtue, which is used early on to illustrate Wigalois' perfection.[192] Before he reaches the Arthurian court

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[192] The general debate about Wigalois' perfection resembles the question as to whether or not Parzival learns over the course of Wolfram's narrative. Many scholars describe this passive, messianic knight, as an infallible hero without a crisis (Fasbender, *Wigalois*, 86; Grubmüller, "Artusroman und Heilsbringerethos," 224; Fuchs, *Hybride Helden*, 120; Karin Lichtblau, "ein tier sô wol getân: Zum Motiv der Tierverwandlung im Wigalois des Wirnt von Grafenberg," in *Tierverwandlungen. Codierungen und Diskurse*, ed. Willem de Blécourt and Christa Agnes Tuczay [Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2011]: 221-239, here 221; Thomas, *Intertextuality and Interpretation*, 70). Thomas and Heinzle argue that the first set of adventures already illustrates Wigalois' perfection (Thomas, *Intertextuality and Interpretation*, 38f; Joachim Heinzle, "Über den Aufbau des *Wigalois*," *Euphorion. Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte* 67 (1973): 261-271, here 267). Yet, a few scholars, among them Eming and Lohbeck, oppose

for the first time, Wigalois rests on a stone, which turns out to be the stone of virtue. The audience learns that only Arthur himself was ever able to sit on it. Only one other knight could even touch it with his hands: Gawein. This episode underscores Wigalois' perfection before even reaching the Arthurian court. It includes a further, more radical message: Wigalois is on par with King Arthur: "Das aber bedeutet, dass Artus, bislang alleinige Verkörperung des statischen Prinzipts, in dem *Greenhorn* einen ebenbürtigen Repräsentanten der höfischen Kultur und mutmaßlichen Nachfolger als deren Leitstern gefunden hat."[193] I argue that not only is Arthur's monopoly on virtue in question in this scene, but also that Wigalois has the potential to replace the Arthur of the German tradition around 1200 as sovereign over a kingdom of peace.[194]

Traditionally, love in the form of the adulterous love affair between Lancelot and Guinevere causes the decline and eventual fall of the Arthurian court. Yet, Wigalois poses a threat to the court within a religious framework and turns virtue into a potential danger for King Arthur. Wigalois' virtue endangers the uniqueness of King Arthur as an exemplary Christian king and as ruler of his court. And as we will see in the following two texts, *Artishof* and even more so in *Gabejn,* the Arthurian kingdom gradually loses its relevance in the tradition of *Wigalois* adaptations until it eventually becomes the otherworld itself.

The perfection of the hero, which the stone of virtue illustrates, affects Wigalois' environment. Nobody is equal to him because of his distinguished standing and it is clear that he is even better than his father. The perfect hero that lacks a crisis causes the rest of the world to

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this common interpretation (Eming, *Funktionswandel des Wunderbaren*, 144f). Lohbeck even argues that Wigalois represents an imperfect hero, who only gradually learns virtuous, knightly conduct (Lohbeck, *Wigalois*, 289f).

[193] Sybille Wüstemann, *Der Ritter mit dem Rad: Die stæte des Wigalois zwischen Literatur und Zeitgeschichte* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2006), 39.

[194] Heinzle connects this loss of significance of the Arthurian court with the lack of a crisis, which traditionally reflected the state of the hero (Heinzle, "Über den Aufbau des *Wigalois*," 271).

appear in a more negative light. Not only does Wigalois' perfection increase the contrast between good and bad,[195] but it also places him in the position of the shining center of perfection and goodness. This is especially visible in his primary duty, to fight with the heathen usurer Roaz.[196] The German literature scholar Klaus Grubmüller describes this scene as an eschatologically connoted fight with the Devil himself.[197] Yet, others observe that the Devil and all magic are actually banned before the fight takes place due to a priestly blessing.[198] Therefore, it is only two knights who compete in the final fight for Korntin; during the actual fight with Roaz, God and the Devil remain absent. At the end, Wigalois wins over a knight, not the Devil. Although it has been argued that the anticlimactic end to the *aventiure* of salvation must have frustrated the audience,[199] the scene supports the claim that Wirnt only partially utilizes religious elements, and abstains from bringing them together in order to shape a consistent religious tale. Wirnt employs the dangerous giant merely to enhance the contrast between him and Wigalois, the perfect knight of Fortuna and God.

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[195] Brinker and Haug argue similarly (Brinker, "'Hie ist diu aventiure geholt!'," 100; Walter Haug, "Das Fantastische in der späten deutschen Artusliteratur," in *Spätmittelalterliche Artusliteratur. Ein Symposium der neusprachlichen Philologien auf der Generalversammlung der Görres-Gesellschaft Bonn, 25.-29. Sept. 1982,* ed. Karl Heinz Göller [Paderborn: Schöningh, 1984],133-149, here 143).

[196] Brinker and Hahn interpret Wigalois' fight with Roaz as symbolizing the battle between *humilitas* and *superbia* (Brinker, "'Hie ist diu aventiure geholt!'," 106; Hahn, "Gott und Minne," 49).

[197] Grubmüller, "Artusroman und Heilsbringerethos," 234. Brinker claims that Roaz is a dark magician and cannot be overcome in a knightly fight (Brinker, "'Hie ist diu aventiure geholt!'," 95) and Fuchs writes "Die Gegner sind jeweils zu Figuren eschatologischen Ranges gesteigert, der Kampf nimmt universelle, endzeitliche Ausmaße an" (Fuchs, *Hybride Helden*, 182). Henderson argues similarly: "Wirnt designed the Korntin adventure and, in the last analysis, the romance as a whole, to deliver a message of apocalyptic urgency to his age and reaffirm God's grace as man's only hope for salvation." (Ingeborg Henderson, "Dark Figures and Eschatological Images in Wirnt von Gravenberg's Wigalois," in *The dark figure in Medieval German and Germanic literature*, ed. Edward R. Haymes and Stephanie Cain Van d'Elden [Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1986], 99-113, here 110).

[198] Dietl, "Wunder und *zouber* als Merkmal der *âventiure* in Wirnts *Wigalois*?" in *Das Wunderbare in der arthurischen Literatur: Probleme und Perspektiven*, ed. Friedrich Wolfzettel (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2003), 297-311, here 305; Fasbender, *Wigalois*, 101-102.

[199] Fasbender, *Wigalois*, 103.

Furthermore, the scene is filled with atmospheric elements such as night, pitch, and fog, to create a mood of danger. Walter Haug was the first to point out the importance of Wirnt's use of topography and natural phenomena to create an intense uncanny atmosphere.[200] The closer Wigalois gets to the final adventure, the darker the night, the more opaque the fog.[201] Finally, out of thunder, lightning, and fog appears Roaz. But, the overall atmosphere first and foremost indicates danger and intensifies suspense. Wirnt takes elements of literature focusing on netherworld journeys, but never consistently shapes Wigalois' adventure in Korntin as a journey into the netherworld.[202] By doing so, Wirnt functionalizes elements from a religious sphere and connects them with traditional motifs that evoke danger to create an Arthurian Romance with a "darker," uncanny theme and more suspense.

Yet, scholars have put a lot of effort into depicting *Wigalois* as a consistent religious narrative, employing motifs such as the dragon Phetan for their interpretations.[203] One scholar even goes so far as to argue that the dragon represents the seven deadly sins, but that he also shows that the evil forces in this world are part of God's creation and partake in the history of

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[200] Haug, "Das Fantastische," 147. See further Brinker, "'Hie ist diu aventiure geholt!',"94.

[201] Brinker, "'Hie ist diu aventiure geholt!',"94.

[202] Eming and Fasbender argue similarly that Korntin is not a coherent or consistent of a netherworld. (Eming, *Funktionswandel des Wunderbaren*, 210: Fasbender, *Wigalois*, 85).

[203] Häberlein, for example, emphasizes the role of the fight with the dragon within the framework of the messianic theme: "Die Überwindung eines Drachen, der die düsteren unterweltlichen Mächte verkörpert, bedeutet die Wiederholung und Wiedervergegenwärtigung Christi, der dem Chaos ein Ende setzte und die göttliche Ordnung bestätigte." (Häberlein, "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive," 75). Wüstemann argues that the dragon as a motif marks Wigalois' opponents as morally bad and binds them together (Wüstemann, *Der Ritter mit dem Rad*, 51). "Das Drachenmotiv taucht in verschiedenen Phasen des Erzählverlaufs auf, um die Gegner Gwigaliois' (moralisch) zu kennzeichnen und sie auf einander zu beziehen." (Wüstemann, *Der Ritter mit dem Rad*, 51). Lohbeck argues similarly: In combination, the dragon and the wild woman Ruel, Lohbeck claims, represent the double evil in medieval thought: Death and the Devil (Lohbeck, *Wigalois,* 223). The dragon Phetan references the incarnation of the Devil in the form of the heathen usurper Roaz (Lohbeck, *Wigalois*, 263).

salvation.[204] And another one argues that the dragon Phetan, like all the other "monsters" in

Wigalois, is a descendent of Cain.[205] The fact that all marvelous figures are progeny of Cain:

> […] identifies the realm of Korntin as the corrupt, temporal world of fallen man in dire
> need of divine intervention lest it sink back into total chaos. God's power is made
> manifest in the long awaited arrival of the hero in the land of Korntin and in his triumph
> over the forces of darkness, which extirpates all evil and regenerates the wasteland.[206]

This perspective links all of the "marvelous" figures in Korntin together, even the centaur

Marrien. Yet, figures like the centaur can be traced back to the tradition of the *Matière de*

Rome[207] and therefore show a significant influence from other very distinct narrative traditions.

Just as the fight between Roaz and Wigalois is a fight only between two knights, Marrien can be

seen as yet another indication that Wirnt does not consistently shape Korntin as the netherworld

in a Christian-religious framework, but rather incorporates Christian elements into a narrative

that participates in the tradition of Arthurian Romances.

Neither Roaz nor the dragon represents the Antichrist or participates in an apocalyptical

fight. Roaz is even depicted as a courtly, yet heathen knight. But the figure of Roaz opens the

text up to the binary that enables the construction of a religious system in *Wigalois*: the contrast

between Christians and Heathens. It is the heathens as the binary Other that eventually help to

construct a religious system in the text:

> Für eine Theorie von Religion zahlen sich Ansprüche an größere Genauigkeit im
> Verständnis binärer Codierungen nur aus, wenn auch Religion eine binäre Codierung
> benutzt. Das versteht sich nicht von selbst, sondern muß gezeigt werden. Daß Religion
> nur beobachtet und beschrieben werden kann, wenn man sie unterscheiden kann, ist klar.

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[204] Lohbeck, *Wigalois,* 201, 208, 210-211.

[205] Henderson, "Dark Figures and Eschatological Images," 109.

[206] Ibid., 109-110.

[207] According to the Jean Bodel (1165-1210) the three dominant topics in medieval literature are defined as: Matière de Rome (stories pertaining to antiquity), matière de Bretagne (stories pertaining to king Arthur and his knights), and matière de France (stories pertaining to Charlemagne).

Auch gehen wir davon aus, daß diese Unterscheidung von der Religion selbst getroffen werden muß und daß nur diese Selbstlokalisierung auf der einen und nicht auf der anderen Seite der identitätsgebenden Unterscheidung die Religion zum System werden läßt.[208]

Religion in the text is not constructed in opposition to magic or the devil, but based on a Heathen-Christian binary. Most of the heathens, like Roaz, share a courtly heritage, but not the Arthurian-Christian beliefs.[209] Traditionally, the Arthurian romances of Chretién and Hartmann employed binaries as modes of construction; for instance, the Arthurian court exists in contrast to the non-courtly sphere, the fairy realm, the forest and/or untamed nature. Yet, essential for the construction of the Christian courtly sphere in *Wigalois* is the Other, the heathen. Heathens represented a heterogeneous image of the Other used to construct and define the borders of Christianity:

Die Heidenfiguren erscheinen daher oft (wie die Fremden insgesamt) als negative Stereotype, in denen alle Unterscheidungen zwischen biblischen, antiken und zeitgenössischen Andersgläubigen sowie zwischen verschiedenen Religionen zusammenfallen. Sie werden als Polytheisten gezeichnet, die an meist anthropomorphe Götter glaube – und dies, obgleich in vielen Regionen Europas die Begegnung mit Andersgläubigen zum Alltag gehörte und mithin grundlegende religiöse Vorstellungen bekannt gewesen sein müssen.[210]

Heathens are a more common topic in the *Chanson de geste* tradition than in Arthurian

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[208] Niklas Luhmann n, *Religion der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Surhkamp, 2002), 74.

[209] This Christian-Arthurian world still overlaps with the heathen world that retains some courtly components (Armin Schulz, "Das Nicht-Höfische als Dämonisches: Die Gegenwelt Korntin im *Wigalois*," in *Artusroman und Mythos*, ed. Friedrich Wolfzettel et al [Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2011], 391-407, here 397). However, Schulz points out that this residue does not suffice: Notwithstanding their courtly virtues, Japhite and Roaz have to die without being integrated (Schulz, "Das Nicht-Höfische als Dämonisches," 398). Nevertheless, the lines between heathens and Christians are blurred when it comes to knightly ethics and morals (Fuchs, *Hybride Helden*, 182). Wigalois's opponents are just as hybrid as he is. All four knights Wigalois fights in battle are Christian and courtly (Jon Sherman, "The Structure of *Wigalois*: Parallel Confrontations in the Christian / Arthurian and Heathen/ Demonic Realms," in *Medieval German textrelations: translations, editions, and studies*, ed. Sibylle Jefferis [Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 2012], 73-82, here 76). Some of these knights make references to God, sometimes Wigalois even prays with his opponents before battle (Sherman, "The Structure of *Wigalois*," 77-78). Even Roaz is both bad and courtly at the same time. Maybe, as Heinzle suggests, Roaz was used to illustrate that the courtly sphere is only meaningful if grounded in God: "Vielleicht sollte an ihm gezeigt werden, daß das Höfische ohne Sinn ist, wenn es nicht auf Gott gründet." (Heinzle, "Über den Aufbau des *Wigalois*," 270).

[210] Schotte, *Christen, Heiden und der Gral*, 23.

Romances. But, with the transformation of the Arthurian quest into a *Chanson de geste* featuring an epic battle against heathens at the end, Wirnt allows this construction to enter *Wigalois.* The end of *Wigalois* turns the fight of Good versus Evil into a battle between Christians and Heathens, but it does not entirely leave the Arthurian sphere behind. Quite the contrary: the essential quality of *Wigalois*, according to Jon Sherman, is the "ability to transform them [the heathens] into followers of Arthurian-Christian ideal."[211] Wigalois demonstrates the "ability of the Christian-Arthurian knight to overcome – and more importantly to transform – his monstrous and heathen opponents, creating a courtly, Christian world, both within King Arthur's kingdom and in the purgatorial landscape of Korntin."[212] It is important to note that Sherman consistently refers to a Christian-Arthurian world in his essay, rather than merely a Christian one.

Wigalois emerges from the final epic battle as a Christian sovereign who converts his heathen subjects: "Kreuzzug und arthurische Aventiure werden miteinander verbunden, die heidnische Anhängerschaft des besiegten Roaz wendet sich dem Christentum zu und erkennt so die Überlegenheit nicht nur des Helden, sondern auch seines Gottes an."[213] Wirnt presents his readers with the common notion of a sovereign, who is interested in his subjects' salvation, and he illustrates this with the baptism of Wigalois' former heathen opponents.[214] Although it has

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[211] Sherman, "The Structure of *Wigalois*," 81.

[212] Ibid., 82.

[213] Hans-Jochen Schiewer, "Mythisierung als Vereinfachung. Ein Versuch zum (späten) Artusroman: Wigalois," in *Höfische Wissensordnungen,* ed. Hans-Jochen Schiewer, Stefan Seeber (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2012), 39-50, here 50. Schiewer writes further: "Die klassische arthurische Befreiungsaventiure ist zum Kreuzzug geworden." (Schiewer, "Mythisierung als Vereinfachung," 49).

[214] Fasbender, *Wigalois*, 113-114.Thomas sees Wigalois as the model for a sovereign: "This fusion of the genres [*chanson de geste* and *roman courtois*] is anything but accidental. It derives from Wirnt's desire to show Wigalois' enlightened kingship to be a practicable ideal." (Thomas, *A German View Of Camelot*, 81). Sovereignty in *Wigalois* means both, caring for the suspect's this- and other-worldly needs, which is why Grubmüller refers to him as "Heilsbringer und Friedensfürst" equally (Grubmüller, "Artusroman und Heilsbringerethos," 238). And within that framework "Wigalois's conversion of Roaz's subjects is a logical extension of his conquest of their leader […]." (Thomas, *A German View Of Camelot*, 77).

been pointed out that it is unusual that the topic of heathen conversions is portrayed almost like the *cuius regio, eius religio* system emerges within the framework of an Arthurian romance,[215] I read this as Wirnt's attempt to construct the boundaries of religion within *Wigalois.* That "the Other" is eventually integrated into the system does not pose a problem, but rather emphasizes the superiority of the Christian-Arthurian system.

Regardless of the portrayal of the heathens as courtly, Wigalois is fashioned against the larger backdrop of an Arthurian-Christian framework as a hero on a quest in an otherworld that is comprised of magical, mythical, and more classical religious elements from a variety of traditions.[216] Later adaptations will decrease the significance of these eschatological motifs and the notions of heathens. Neither with the hero, nor with his tools and his quest, does Wirnt shape a consistent Christian narrative. Instead, he uses a variety of elements from religious as well as non-religious backgrounds to fashion his contribution to the Arthurian tradition. Therefore, the *Wigalois* narrative was opened up to adaptations for audiences with different religious backgrounds.

2.2   *Viduvilt*: A Jewish Arthurian Knight?

Consisting only of roughly 4200 verses, *Viduvilt* presents a much shorter version of the Wigalois narrative. Primarily it is the descriptions of clothing, fights, and festivities that have been cut out.[217] This tendency is common in many early modern adaptations of medieval texts.

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[215] Fasbender, *Wigalois*, 180.

[216] Cormeau argues that *Wigalois* dismantles Celtic beliefs and brings them into a new myth that centers around the Christian concepts of the otherworld and demons. And Fasbender points out that the narrative advocates Christian ethics, but is not consistent in its tendency to give everything a strict Christian meaning (Fasbender, *Wigalois*, 84).

[217] Another major difference concerns the quest for the hero's father and the revelation of his identity as Gawein. Father and son recognize each other immediately in *Viduvilt*, therefore the whole question of identity plays a much smaller role. The scene in which Viduvilt/Wigalois imagines an alternative life and questions his memories, for example, consists only of a couple of verses. The emphasis of the text has shifted to something else entirely.

Furthermore, the author of *Viduvilt* drastically reduces sententious reflections and the magic

tools that Christoph Fasbender and other scholars have referred to as "blind motifs." The most

essential difference lies in the omission of the entire Namur episode, which, in *Wigalois,* takes

place after the wedding festivities. Instead, *Viduvilt* concludes the narrative with the wedding

itself. Yet, the wedding scene is extensively expended due to a female competitor to the bride-to-

be, whose claim has to be refused by Arthur during a lawsuit at the end of the text. By ending the

text with the marriage of a royal couple and omitting the *Chanson de geste* episode, the text

aligns itself more closely with the narratological tradition of Chrétien's romances and leaves the

essential binary required to construct a religious system from *Wigalois* out of the text.[218] When

we look at how religion is constructed without such a binary, it will become clear that religion as

a system plays a reduced role in *Viduvilt*.

Nevertheless, many scholars have argued that *Viduvilt* and *Wigalois* agree in terms of

their plotlines.[219] Allegedly, the names have only been changed to more familiar ones, such as

turning the castle Roimunt into Vaksenshteyn, which appears in *Nibelungenlied* and *Dietrich von

Bern*.[220] Yet, *Viduvilt* and *Wigalois* resemble each other only until the beginning of the Korntin

episode. By omitting the final battle of Namur, *Viduvilt* reduces the text by one-quarter. Even the

central task, the fight between Roaz and Wigalois is completely altered in the Yiddish text. The

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[218] Warnock uses this fact to reestablish a double cycle, claiming that the inexperienced *Viduvilt* gains a bride in a first cycle and then proves his "'heldenhaften' Wert" in a second cycle (Robert G. Warnock, "Wirkungsabsicht und Bearbeitungstechnik im Altjiddischen 'Artushof', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie 100 / Sonderheft* [1981]: 98-109, here 99).

[219] See for example Christoph Cormeau, "Die jiddische Tradition von Wirnts *Wigalois: Bemerkungen zum Fortleben einer Fabel unter veränderten Bedingungen*," *LiLi Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 8, 22 (1978): 28-44, here 32; John Anderson Howard, "Hebrew-German and Early Yiddish Literature: A Survey of Problems" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1972), 171. Häberlein argues that the Yiddish text largely kept the *histoire* of the narrative with more extensive changes only in the Roaz battle (Häberlein, "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive," 70).

[220] Howard, *Hebrew-German and Early Yiddish Literature*, 218.

tendency in scholarship to claim more or less similar plotlines despite these clear divergences is highly problematic. These significant changes underscore the adaptation's completely different style of narrative and independent agenda.[221]

Research on *Viduvilt* has been less interested in the function of the adaptation as a retelling of the story than in its "Jewish character." Most previous research centers around a desire to find religious motifs in order to make the Yiddish retelling of *Wigalois* for a Jewish audience simply a Jewish adaptation of the earlier Middle High German text.[222] Achim Jaeger, especially, traces many motifs in the Jewish text back to Judaism in his monograph, which he tellingly titles *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*. He sees, for example, Korntin as a stand-in for Sheol and Gehenna, concepts of the Biblical underworld, arguing that the motifs of pitch and nebula support such a claim.[223] Yet, these motifs are already established in *Wigalois* and are part of the atmospheric staging of an apocalyptic netherworld as we have seen earlier in this chapter.[224] Jaeger cites further examples to support his claim, such as the dragon, which, he suggests, resembles the Biblical Leviathan.[225] There seems to be only one element of the text that Jaeger excludes from baring "Jewish" traces at all: the giant. With his statement that the giant is part of

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[221] Only Warnock acknowledges that both texts are very different in some regards as he argues that the omission of the comments about morals and courtly ethics by the narrator and the omissions of the final episode already change the general character of the work profoundly (Warnock, "Wirkungsabsicht und Bearbeitungstechnik im Altjiddischen 'Artushof'," 99).

[222] Cormeau, for example, sees the potential Jewishness of *Viduvilt* in its retaining of marvelous elements, many of which are also often found in rabbinical fables (Cormeau, "Die jiddische Tradition von Wirnts *Wigalois*," 40). Yet, he fails to support his claim with clear textual evidence from either *Viduvilt* or the mentioned fables. Margot Behrend Vales claims: "*Vidvilt* engages Jewish themes and values in so far as the poem adheres to religious and cultural principles that demand the separation of the divine from the realm of the foreign." (Valles, "Judaized Romance and Romanticized Judaization," 16).

[223] Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 258, 288.

[224] Haug, "Das Fantastische in der späten deutschen Artusliteratur," 147.

[225] Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 269. Furthermore, Jaeger and Häberlein point out that the text even expands the dragon motif since Viduvilt not only kills the dragon, but also its progeny (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 271; Häberlein, "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive," 76).

a classical narrative tradition and does not represent any Jewish influence, Jaeger is likely taking on the position held by Robert Warnock.[226] In Warnock's essay on *Viduvilt,* he first hesitantly, and later more definitively claims that the hero's fight with the giant displays parallels to the fight between Moses and the giant Og, featured in the Talmud tractate *Berakoth*: "Man muß stark mit der Möglichkeit rechnen, daß die Og-Legende im 'Artushof' ihre Nachbildung gefunden hat."[227] Unfortunately, Warnock's argument lacks further support except for the fact that both stories contain a giant fighting with a "normal-seized" hero. Warnock and Jaeger represent the group of scholars who at all costs try to argue that *Viduvilt* is primarily a Jewish tale.

Yet, the discussion of "Jewish traces" not only focuses on the *histoire*, but also on the paratextual elements of *Viduvilt*, in particular the prologue and epilogue. Of the three early *Viduvilt* manuscripts, only the Codex Cambridge includes an epilogue. In addition to that, the version by Josl von Witzenhausen (1671), used as model in Wagenseil's edition, includes a prologue. Witzenhausen's prologue makes two religious references: "Men lobt bilikh di edle kinig, un firshtn un hern, / vi si ton ire hershaft vor mern. / Dokh iz ez alz eyn vikht, / on gots hilf ken'n zi es fol[] brengen nikht." (translit.) ("The noble kings, and dukes, and lords are being praised justly for the way in which they expand their regiment. But it is all nothing as they could not do it without the support of God." Wagenseil, *Belehrung*, 160). The Cambridge manuscript concludes with the following lines: "Dos fun Viduvilt hot ayn end. Got zul uns zeyn hilfn zendn. Un' zol uns firn tsu hant in dos haylig lant. […] Un bit und bigert der shreyber der do dint gern ale fromen veyber." (That about Viduvilt ends. God may send us his help. And he may bring us soon to the Holy Land. […] And [that is what] the writer, who happily serves all pious women,

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[226] Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 298.

[227] Warnock, "Wirkungsabsicht und Bearbeitungstechnik im Altjiddischen 'Artushof'," 104.

prays and hopes for." *Viduvilt* [MS. F.12.44], 84r). But do these lines actually set the agenda for

Viduvilt and indicate the dominant presence of religious motifs similar to what we have seen in

Wigalois?

Far from it – the expression of desire for the advent of the Messiah and the return to the

Holy Land in the paratexts of Early Yiddish literature are typical and imply no particular

religious focus.[228] We find many such examples in Early Yiddish, non-religious literature. For

example, the so-called Love and Adventure Novel *Paris un Viene* from 1594 shares many

similarities with the *Viduvilt* prologue, especially the notion of God as the one without whom a

living being can achieve nothing:

> Keyn mensh kunt shten nokh gen fun shtot/ Nokh adeler nokh oks noch leben / Nokh
> kunt sikh riren keyn blot; / Keyn ding het end nokh kent zikh onheben -/ Ez sey den got,
> der ez geshtot, / Un iz zeyn hayliklikhen nomen eben. / Er beshaf di welt oys nisht azo
> kliglikh; / Drum iz akh nisht wider zayn nam meglikh.

> ("No man could stand nor walk, neither eagle or ox or any living being; nor could any
> leaf move; nothing could end nor nothing begin if not God and his holy name would
> permit it. He created the world from nothing so wisely. Therefore, nothing is possible
> against his will." Levita, *Paris un Wiene*, 1, 1-8)[229]

The epilogue concludes: [the messiah] "sol uns brengen in di shtat, / di got for longst hot tun der-

velen, / do mit dos do zol zayn beshtat / al unser leyb un unser zelen /" (He may bring us to the

City that he has chosen a long time ago so that all our bodies and souls may rest there." Timm,

Paris un Wiene, 717, 1-8). And the Yiddish adaptation of *Magelone*, printed about 100 years

after *Paris un Viene* in 1698, ends with the lines: "Nun hot dos lid veyter ayn end / Dos unds got

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[228] See further Howard and Jaeger: Howard points out how the rhymed prologue and epilogue are "of typical Jewish character" (Howard, *Hebrew-German and Early Yiddish Literature*, 171). Jaeger argues similarly (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 182). For a more comprehensive study on paratexts in Early Yiddish literature see Shlomo Berger: *Producing redemption in Amsterdam: early modern Yiddish Books in Paratextual Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

[229] Elia Levita, *Paris un Wiene: ein jiddischer Stanzenroman des 16. Jahrhunderts von (oder aus dem Umkreis von) Elia Levita*, ed. Erika Timm and Gustav Adolf Beckmann (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1996).

meshiakh send / amen selah" ("Now, this song has come to an end. May God send us the Messiah. Amen. Selah." *Ayn sheyn lid*, 9.)[230] Both texts, *Paris un Viene* and *Magelone,* express hope for the return of the Messiah. The prologue from the version used by Wagenseil with its employment of religious topoi further adheres to economic standards of early modern printing culture in order to advertise and sell the book: "Drum kumt gishvind tsu loyfn / diz sheyn mase tsu koyfn […]. un koyft gishvind den ikh hob nit vil men / doz ir zolt sokhe zeyn / tsu kumn in erets ysroel aneyn." (translit.) (Therefore, come hither quickly to buy this beautiful story […]. And buy quickly for I have not many so that it can be your gain to enter into Eretz Yisrael." Wagenseil, *Belehrung*, 258).[231] Such expressions were common *topoi* in prologues and epilogues of non-religious Yiddish literature and do not indicate religious content.

References to God and the Messiah are not only topical paratextual elements of *Viduvilt*, but they also reappear throughout the text. This becomes especially clear when we compare the hero Wigalois to Viduvilt. Jaeger argues that the text reduces the number of elements that characterize Wigalois as a Christian hero, but it nevertheless tells the story of a virtuous and pious hero, emphasizing the few lines in which Viduvilt shows his trust in God[232]: "gelobt zay got, der mir ayn zoylkhen foter beshert hot!" ("Praise be to God, who provide me with such a father." *Viduvilt*, 10v)[233] "[…] vider rot mirs nit un los got valtn!" ("Do not advise me against it

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[230] *Ayn sheyn lid fun ayn riter oyz frantsiyen land. Zigmund iz zeyn nomen ginent. Un fun ayn kingstokhter Magelene* … [translit. A.O.]. Fürth 1698.

[231] As Jaeger suggests, this prologue could be a later addition since none of the three early codices includes it (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 181). Schüler argues similarly, supporting this claim by pointing out parallels to Witzenhausen's edition of Psalms (Meir Schüler, "Der 'Artushof' und Josl von Witzenhausen," *Zeitschrift für die Hebræische Bibliographi* VIII (1904): 117-123, 145-148, 179-185, here 120).

[232] Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 236, 263, 299.

[233] Here and in the following now quoted according to Cod. Hebr. 289 (16th ct.), Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Hamburg; transliterated by the author of this dissertation.

and permit God to prevail." *Viduvilt*, 16v); "[…] got der huilft[234] mir aus ale not" ("God helps

me out of distress." *Viduvilt*, 16v). Yet, the text only retains a few of these lines, which can be

seen as conventional expressions like the hope for the return of the Messiah in the prologue and

epilogue. *Viduvilt* does not display the religious devotion we saw in *Wigalois*, nor does his

success follow prayers for God's guidance.

Furthermore, the hero's qualities are already undermined by his name. Whereas Wirnt's

Gawein leaves his pregnant wife unknowingly, Viduvilt's father knows what he is doing when

he leaves. Confronted with this fact, Gawein's wife asks her husband in the Yiddish text how to

name their future child. Gawein responds unceremoniously: Heys es vi du vilt" ("Name it as you

wish," *Viduvilt*, 4v). Viduvilt's name results from a misunderstanding that instigates comic

moments throughout the text. Warnock claims that the narrator of *Viduvilt* reverses the courtly,

knightly conduct of the (former) hero into ridicule and portrays him as an "arthurischer

Schlemiehl."[235] Although Warnock's claim is extreme no other critics acknowledge the, at least

implicitly, humoristic tendency resulting from the naming of the hero. Whenever asked for his

name, the hero has to answer with "Viduvilt" – "As you wish!" His authority and significance

are therefore undermined from his birth onwards.

One could assume that our somewhat weakened hero would now have to rely even more

on the support of magical, mythical, or religious tools than Wigalois. Yet, only two of the objects

remain: the belt and the lance.[236] Furthermore, the former lance of an angel bestowed to Wigalois

by his soon-to-be father-in-law, the bewitched King Lar, is reduced to a simple, albeit powerful

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[234] The word reads in Hebrew letters: he-vav-yod-lamed-pe-tet

[235] Warnock, "Wirkungsabsicht und Bearbeitungstechnik im Altjiddischen 'Artushof'," 102.

[236] Schüler sees The reduction of magical tools in the context of the tendency in *Viduvilt* to explain things naturally without invoking God (Schüler, "Der 'Artushof'," 185).

lance.[237] Contrary to the lance's heritage, the magical qualities of the belt are increased. Not only does the belt confer incredible strength upon its wearer, it also allows for quick travels, similar to the Seven-league boots featured in Charles Perrault's fairytale collection from 1697:

> fun dem guirtleyn wegn hostu zvelvs mans kraft […] tsu dem wil ikh dir mer zogn in welkher shteyt dir shteyt deyn zin di du gern velst zeyn un wer es shon zeyhen toyzent maylen du bedarfst dikh drum nit meyn zu aylen du kanst in fir vokhen dar dos glob mir zikher war.

> ("And because of the belt you have the strength of twelve men. […] I want to tell you more about it: No matter in which city you would like to be – even if it was ten thousand miles away – you do not have to hurry as you will arrive there within fur weeks. You can take my word for it." *Viduvilt*, 8v)[238]

In contrast to *Wigalois*, Viduvilt never loses his belt for good, but re-obtains it later and continues to gain strength from its power. Yet, overall, the plethora of tools used to aid Wigalois in his quest is forgone in *Viduvilt* in favor of the belt.[239]

This reduction of magic tools does not necessary stem from a cultural point of view.[240] Particularly the magic of the written word, such as in the letter bound by the priest to the sword that Wigalois receives, is something familiar to Judaism as well. In fact, Judaism has a rich tradition of offering protection via religious-magical objects that draw their strength from the written Hebrew word, in particular from the name of God; moreover "writing amulets" was

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[237] Landau points out that the lance displays the general tendency of *Viduvilt*'s author to rationalize. In contrast to Wigalois, Viduvilt needs a new spear because he looses his old one in the battle with the doomed knights (Landau, *Arthurian Legends*, LXXVII).

[238] Objects that support travels seem to be of particular interest in early modern literature. The early modern bestseller *Fortunatus* (1509) for example includes a hat ("Wunschhütlein") that enables its owner to travel immediately wherever he wants to.

[239] In *Wigalois*, Dreeßen and others argue, the loss was necessary to teach Wigalois only to trust in God's help and nothing else. Since the trust in God plays no significant role in *Viduvilt* anymore, Dreeßen suggests, Viduvilt can keep his magical belt (Wulf-Otto Dreeßen, "Wigalois – Widuwilt. Wandlungen des Artusromans im Jiddischen Westijiddisch. Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit," *Le Yiddish occidental.actes du colloque de Mulhouse* 1 [1994]: 84-98, here 90).

[240] See also Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 265.

common in Jewish tradition in the Middle Ages.[241] The most commonly known example for the

employment of word-magic besides such amulets would be the Golem, who according to the

Sefer Yetzirah only comes to life when a piece of paper containing a name of God in Hebrew is

put in his mouth (but who is, however, only really well established as figure in the 19th century).

The answer to the question of why the number of supernatural tools in *Viduvilt* is reduced

nevertheless lies once more in the adaptor's choice not to create a "Jewish" or "Judaized"

retelling of *Wigalois*, but a story disinterested in religion. The author of *Viduvilt* apparently

decided against keeping religious-magical items in the text in favor of a clearer narrative.[242]

Although magical, mythical, and religious elements are reduced, many motifs from the

realm of the supernatural (for example, the giant and the belt) have been kept. However, their

religious connotation is often reduced.[243] We have already seen that the lance is only a lance and

no longer a religious symbol. In the description of Korntin, religious references to paradise and

purgatory are drastically reduced as well. Korntin's usurper for example, although referred to as

the devil from time to time, is only a giant with the name Luzifer (*Viduvilt*, 12v).[244] The actual

fight in *Viduvilt* is no longer with the giant himself, but with his mother, a she-devil. Scholars

have argued that this she-devil is a reference to a demonic woman from the Jewish tradition:

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[241] See for example Daniela Schmid, "Jüdische Amulette aus Osteuropa – Phänomene, Rituale, Formensprache" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 2012).

[242] One later print version retains the sword as former magic tool. It includes the story of a magic sword with a perpetual calendar that helped Viduvilt win (Landau, *Arthurian Legends*, LXXXII) and is part of the treasure left to him by his forefather. But because servants stole it, he has lost his power. *Simplicisimus Teutsch* contains a similar story, which according to Landau shows that it must have been a common motif (Landau, *Arthurian Legends*, LXXXIII).

[243] Häberlein and Warnock argue similarly that the text displays a certain de-mystification in that regard (Warnock, "Wirkungsabsicht und Bearbeitungstechnik im Altjiddischen 'Artushof'," 98; Häberlein, "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive," 77).

[244] Warnock writes: "In der altjiddischen Bearbeitung ist Viduvilts Erlösungsaufgabe kein Kampf mit einem Ritter, sondern mit einem Giganten, dem *starken ris*." (Warnock, "Wirkungsabsicht und Bearbeitungstechnik im Altjiddischen 'Artushof'," 101)

Lilith.[245] But as we will see in the following chapter, the adaptor does not use her to promote a demonization of womanhood in the tradition of notions of Eve as the first sinner, but in fact empowers women throughout the text on the hero's and even God's expense.

A second claim, connected to Viduvilt's female opponent has been offered by Bianca Häberlein, who argues that the former wild woman now she-devil is the female counterpart to the "actual Devil."[246] Yet, Häberlein never differentiates between a Christian and a Jewish concept of "the Devil." Although the giant is called Luzifer, the narrator refers mainly to the giant's mother as a devil or as devil-like: "aytel toyfels wayb" ("nothing but a she-devil," *Viduvilt*, 40r), "rekhte toyfelin" ("true deviless," *Viduvilt*, 56v). Nevertheless, it is important to notice that the term "devil" is used to describe more than one figure and therefore refuses the characterization of Viduvilt's enemy as a unique evil that Viduvilt must overcome in an eschatological battle. Furthermore, if we consider this topic with an understanding of the devil in a Jewish cultural and religious framework, we notice several important differences. In Judaism, the devil does not function as a representative of all of the evil in the world in opposition to God. Although he antagonizes God regularly, the devil still remains subordinate to God's power. The fact that we do not encounter a Christian devil, but rather demonic creatures in a Jewish framework, explains, for instance, why the mother is allowed to remain alive. That is, the text does not end with an overall victory, with an extermination of the threatening demonic elements. Viduvilt overcomes

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[245] Jaeger argues, must be seen as representation of Lilith, especially since she is now portrayed as a mother of a giant much like Lilith, who is the mother of demons (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 286). And Thomas writes: "Something of the logic of matriarchal evil reappears in the Jewish versions where the mother of 'Luzifer' [i.e. Wirnt's Roaz] is likewise depicted as being an even more devilish figure than her son." (Thomas, *Intertextuality and Interpretation*, 61) Häberlein too follows Jaeger and Thomas in their argument that Lilith could function as the model for the mother of the giant, although she admits it is only a possibility (Häberlein, "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive," 82).

[246] Häberlein, "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive," 82.

magic, but not the source of it, the she-devil.[247] Luzifer's mother thus retains her right to

existence. That the hero's opponents and these evil forces remain alive also emphasizes the fact

that Viduvilt is no longer portrayed as a messianic hero, whose task is to bring salvation to the

people by extinguishing the evil and establishing an eternal kingdom of peace.

Furthermore, with regard to Viduvilt's enemies, it is important to notice that the giant and

his mother as well as the dragon are the only (evil) "others" within the text. In his attempt to

minimize religious motifs, the adaptor excludes heathens and reduces the eschatological

character and the ultimate evil of the hero's opponents. The Heathen-Christian binary that allows

the construction of a religious system is entirely omitted from the text, and the ambiguity of the

Arthurian-Christian world that included magic, antiquity, and Celtic myth is radically reduced.

As we have seen, some scholars have argued that these changes originate in the "Jewish

character" of the adaptation.[248] Yet, before concluding that these amendments indicate a Jewish

audience's unease with Christian motifs, we should review other potentially contemporaneous

Wigalois adaptations of the time. Wulf-Otto Dreeßen for example compares *Viduvilt* to *Wigoleis*

vom Rade and demonstrates that both have changes in common, such as the reduction of magical

tools and the reduction of the heathen motif.[249] Like Dreeßen, Jaeger argues that a comparison

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[247] Cormeau, "Die jiddische Tradition von Wirnts *Wigalois*," 38.

[248] The first problem of this debate lies in the term "Jewish." The *Encyclopedia Judaica* defines Jewish Literature as "Literature on Jewish themes and in languages regarded as Jewish […] : (1) works written by Jews on Jewish themes in any language; (2) works of a literary character written by Jews in Hebrew or Yiddish or other recognized languages, whatever the theme; (3) literary works written by writers who were essentially Jewish writers, whatever the theme and whatever the language." For the Viduvilt manuscripts we do not know the author and the themes are not covering explicitly Jewish themes. The language is the only criterion that holds true to this definition. Yet, the criteria of the language ignores the problem of translations, such as Shakespeare's Yiddish complete works, and thus offers no stable category either. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik.*,* s.v. "Jewish Literature," by Meyer Waxman, Mordecai Waxman, and Jerold C. Frakes, accessed February 19, 2016, http://go.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.duke.edu/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX2587512632&v=2.1&u=duke_perkins&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=9764efeac716c15eda5a0024cbaad6af

[249] Some scholars have even argued that *Viduvilt* could actually have been based on *Wigoleis vom Rade*. Other scholars have argued that the text does not directly derive from Wirnt's text but from a non-preserved prose version,

with the aesthetics of the time show that many changes, including the reduction of the extensive

comments by the narrator, have to be attributed to contemporaneous aesthetics and needs rather

than an effort to make the text more Jewish.[250] Furthermore, Jaeger claims that *Viduvilt* reflects

the audience's need for acculturation in the 16th and 17th century.[251] These changes, therefore,

should primarily be attributed to contemporaneous aesthetics rather than to the religious

background of an adaptor and/or audience.

Nevertheless scholars suggest that some changes arise from the fact that *Viduvilt* is

written for an audience unfamiliar with the genre of courtly romance and separated from the

courtly sphere.[252] Some further claim that the omission of the narrator's excurses and an "abased

language" indicate that the audience of *Viduvilt* was rhetorically and aesthetically not as well

educated as the audience of *Wigalois*.[253] None of these scholars seem to be aware of an ongoing

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which is more similar to the adaption in Ulrich Füetrer's *Buch der Abenteuer* in 1481 or the 1493 *Wigoleis oder der Ritter vom Rade* (Volker Honemann, "The Wigalois Narratives," in *The Arthur of the Germans. The Arthurian Legend in Medieval German and Dutch Literature*, ed. W. Harry Jackson und Silvia. A. Ranawake [Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000], 142-153, here 152). The question regarding sources already interested the (in)famous pioneer of the study of Old German literature, Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, who argued that the Yiddish version is based on a lost prose adaptation (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 64). Jaeger at least refers to Wirnt's *Wigalois* as "Orientierungsgröße" and uses the text as a comparison for his main analysis of the Yiddish version (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 72).

[250] Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 96, 195.

[251] Ibid., 90.

[252] Cormeau, "Die jiddische Tradition von Wirnts *Wigalois*," 39; Dreeßen, "Wigalois – Viduvilt," 85; Häberlein, "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive," 86; Schüler, "Der 'Artushof'," 185. "Weil die kulturellen und literarischen Kontexte für sein jüdisches Publikum nicht aktuell und interessant zu sein schienen oder die Rezipienten mit diesen Themen und literarischen Anspielungen nicht vertraut waren, blendet der *Viduvilt* zeitkritische Themen und literarische Tradititionen des *'Wigalois*-Kontextes' aus […]. Die Grundstruktur des Erzählstoffes bleibt erhalten – und öffnet sich doch einem neuen Rezipientenkreis." (Häberlein, "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive," 86) Or Schüler: "Als eine für einen ästhetisch ungebildeten Leserkreis geschriebene Unterhaltungslektüre kann der 'Artushof' den Verlgeich mit ähnlichen Werken anderer Literaturen aushalten." (Schüler, "Der 'Artushof'," 185).

[253] Dreeßen, "Wigalois – Viduvilt," 85, 86; Howard, *Hebrew-German and Early Yiddish Literature*, 217. Dreeßen's examination of the Yiddish text as adaption employs verdicts such as 'correct' and 'incorrect' to describe the relationship between *Viduvilt* and *Wigalois*, stating for example that the Yiddish adaptor translated the motif of a lack of new stories correctly (Dreeßen, "Wigalois – Viduvilt," 88). This procedure of comparing two texts tends to understate the value of an adaption by perceiving it as the copy of an original without taking any potentially

dialogue with courtly tradition amongst Jews in the late medieval/ early modern Holy Roman

Empire. In the preface to his Yiddish translation of the Psalms from 1545, Elia Levita promotes

his text as an alternative to a non-religious literature that seemed to have been too popular for his

taste amongst his contemporary readership. For example, he names tales about Dietrich of Bern

and Meister Hildebrand as popular works among his readership.[254] Earlier examples include

murals from a patrician's house in Zürich, discovered in 1996 and dating from around 1330.

These murals, which display courtly dancing scenes, were commissioned by the home's Jewish

owner as decorations for the hall.[255] These examples are only two among many and they by no

means imply a Jewish audience that was unaware of medieval courtly literature – quite the

contrary! Of course, as is the case in Middle-High German literature, it is problematic to extend

these findings to the entire Jewish minority in the Empire.[256] Nevertheless, these examples

illustrate a familiarity with the courtly literature and tradition within the Jewish community.[257]

Further, certain features in *Viduvilt* indicate the author's possinle familiarity with

Hartman von Aue's *Erec*. In *Wigalois* the hero helps a lady in need who had the prize for her

victory in a beauty competition stolen. She is presented as being beautiful and rich. The Yiddish

constructive approaches of the adaptor into account. In contrast to Dreeßen's and Howard's negative verdict, Cormeau more moderately points out that *Viduvilt* is not a product of destruction, but rather the result of a constructive replacement of old structures with new ones, arguing that the author of *Viduvilt* further resolves former contradictions found in *Wigalois* (Cormeau, "Die jiddische Tradition von Wirnts *Wigalois*," 36, 37).

[254] Howard, *Hebrew-German and Early Yiddish Literature*, 11.

[255] See the article and comprehensive analysis of Edith Wenzel, "Ein neuer Fund. Mittelalterliche Wandmalereien in Zürich," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 116 (1997): 417-426.

[256] Yet, the literacy rates among the medieval and early modern Jewish community were arguably higher than in the German speaking Christian majority.

[257] With regard to the topic of heathens, Frakes emphasizes this claim: "Finally, the *Vidvilt* poet quite effectively eliminated the anti-Muslim bigotry ubiquitous in *Wigalois* and that likewise formed a wide-spread characteristic of medieval and early modern Christian epic [...]. In this matter the *Vidvilt* poet systematically excises the entire bigoted plot motive and substitutes an alternative motivation for the romance's plot that indicates an extensive knowledge of Arthurian narratology." (Jerold Frakes, *Early Yiddish Epic* [New York: Syracuse University Press: 2014], 182).

author seems to have noticed the parallels to Enite's and Erec's first meeting and intensified these parallels in his own text. Not only is the lady wonderful and pretty in *Viduvilt*, but she is also the daughter of an impoverished knight – just like Enite (*Viduvilt,* 24r). These potential references to Erec have been ignored so far by scholarship, but seem significant since they support the claim that this is not a Jewish adaptation in religious sense, but merely an adaptation of an Arthurian tale for a Yiddish speaking audience. Although these parallels have not yet been noticed in scholarship, it seems worthwhile to continue exploring *Viduvilt* in the light of references to other works of courtly literature. Future research efforts may well find more examples that will further support the claim that the Jewish audience had exposure to this literature than we previously thought.[258]

Another tendency in explaining the changes in *Viduvilt* draws on the explicit religious background of the audience.[259] An expert on Early Yiddish literature, Jerold Frakes speaks of de-Christianization in this context: "As was the conventional practice, the Yiddish poet de-Christianizes the narrative to a great extent, especially with respect for the divine role in mundane affairs."[260] Indeed, as we have seen, the author of *Viduvilt* reduces Christian motifs, including the heathens as part of the aforementioned Christian binary. Along with the heathens, the motif of baptism also disappears, giving us yet another indication that the entire religious discourse of *Wigalois* has been disposed. The Christian elements that remain in the text are primarily Christian holidays that embed events within a temporal frame. That Jews were familiar with the holidays of the Christians encountering them in their everyday environments need not

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[258] One could argue that such motifs do not necessary indicate a familiarity of the audience, but only of the respective author of a Yiddish work. Yet, intertextual references make very little sense if attributed merely to the pleasure of an author.

[259] See especially Dreeßen's "Wigalois – Viduvilt" and Jaeger's *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*.

[260] Frakes, *Early Yiddish Epic*, 181.

surprise us.[261] With regard to Pentecost: there is a second reason for leaving it in the narrative. Shortly after Chrétien's romances, this feast became a symbol for courtly joy itself, much more related to the Arthurian court and historical courtly feasts – such as Friedrich I Barbarossa's celebration in Mainz in 1184 on the occasion of his son's accolade – than to its original Christian meaning.

Although these holidays are the only explicitly Christian elements that remain in the text, *Viduvilt* undergoes neither a "De-Christianization" nor a "Judaization."[262] Instead, religion as concept is reduced in general and removed from many aspects of the text. Only in the portrayal of the giant and his mother could one see a potential religious influence, in this case a Jewish one. Except for these figures and the prologue and epilogue, I cannot see explicitly "Jewish" elements in *Viduvilt*.[263] Overall, the text shows extraordinarily few "Jewish" characteristics as disappointing as this might to be for some scholars. But the notion that a Jewish audience can only show an interest in explicitly Jewish texts is flawed and highly problematic, as it reduces the literature of early modern Jewry to a ghetto existence. Nothing can be further from the historical findings and the examples that have been preserved. If we only ask whether a text is "Jewish" or "Christian," we are asking the wrong questions when it comes to this Early Yiddish literature. *Viduvilt* is one example among many that shows that early modern Jewry displayed an interest in what is currently referred to as "literatures of the world."

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[261] See also Dreeßen, "Wigalois – Viduvilt," 95, Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 130.

[262] It is important to notice that texts that "Judaize" originally Christian material did exist. Jaeger for example argues that the only Hebrew Arthurian romance that we know of, *Melekh Artus*, in contrast to *Viduvilt* deliberately replaces Christian motifs with Jewish motifs (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 90). See also: Martin Przybilsky, "Ein anti-arthurischer Artusroman. Invektiven gegen die höfische Literatur zwischen de Zeilen des 'Melech Artus,'" *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 131 (2002): 409-435.

[263] It has been pointed out that some later versions use minimal Yiddish vocabulary of Hebrew origin. But Frakes argues that the avoidance of vocabulary with Semitic components is typical for Early Yiddish literature (Frakes, *Early Yiddish Epic*, 182).

2.3   *Gabejn*: An Arthurian Knight Goes East

Similar to Wirnt's romance, *Viduvilt* itself became a template for a variety of adaptations. A later

Yiddish adaptation from 1789 in which Viduvilt travels to China and Russia, has received very

little attention in scholarship. The original print of the text called *Historie oder Moralische*

Erzehlung handelt von wunder-bahre Begebenheiten eines jungen Riter Gabejn (1789?) is

unfortunately lost today and is only preserved in transcription in Leo Landau's *Arthurian*

Legends or the Hebrew-German Rhymed version of the Legend of King Arthur (1912), who used

the copy owned by the Jewish folklorist Moritz Gaster.[264]

Until Gawein's – here: Gabejn's – departure from the Arthurian court to travel with the

stranger to his homeland, the plot is similar, but after this point the story diverges significantly

from previous versions. In order to understand the significance of this adaptation, it is necessary

to include a brief summary. The narrative consists of two parts. The first part begins with the

suspended festivities at King Arthur's court. Yet, the Arthurian court is no longer waiting for

new stories as in former versions, but instead, for the arrival of a stranger, any stranger.[265]

Finally, the desired person arrives offering a belt to the queen, which she refuses based on

Gabejn's advice. This refusal leads to the traditional fight between the stranger and Gabejn. The

Arthurian knight loses and therefore agrees to return with the stranger to his realm. Shortly

before arriving there, Gabejn notices an imposing structure; not the palace of the stranger, but a

wall, which then is recognized as the Great Wall of China! Simultaneously, the stranger

introduces himself as Kadukus the Tenth, emperor of China. He explains that he abducted

Gabejn in order to marry his daughter, the princess Schartine, and to become his successor as

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[264] For more information about the history of the lost manuscript see Jaeger (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 338).

[265] As Jaeger points out, the moment of narratological reflexivity is therefore missing (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 340).

emperor. Shortly after the wedding, Gabejn asks to leave the court in order to fulfill a promise he gave to his parents to bring them wherever he lives. Unfortunately, on his way home, highwaymen rob Gabejn. For four days he seeks refuge in a nearby forest until he hears gunshots. Following these noises, Gabejn discovers a ship in distress and rescues two of its passengers. In gratitude for his help, the couple offers him their daughter's hand in marriage, which Gabejn refuses due to his marriage with Kadukus' daughter Schartine. When the three find two ships, they part company; the couple boards an English ship, and Gabejn an Arthurian one: "[…] waren wir so gliklich zwei schife vor uns ver bei pasihren zu sehn eine nach ARTIS di andre nach LONDON, wir lisen uns ouf dem englischen schife bring, gingn nach London un' dan Sardinien, eier vatr abr ging ouf dem Artischen schife." ("We rejoiced when we saw two ships passing by, one to Arthur, the other to London. We were taken to the English ship, traveled to London and than to Sardinia; but your father boarded the Arthurian ship." *Gabejn*, 145).

In the meantime, Schartine gives birth to a son in China, whom she names Viduvilt Gabejn. The second part focuses on the story of Gabejn's son and begins with Viduvilt's quest for his father, which leads him from the Chinese imperial court to Sardinia. There, he successfully fights two highwaymen. Due to the gratitude of the people for overcoming the highwaymen, Viduvilt receives an invitation to the Sardinian court. At the court, Viduvilt is told that the king and the queen were the very couple that Gabejn saved in the forest many years ago. Deeply indebted to Gabejn, they now offer the hand of their youngest daughter in marriage to his son Viduvilt. Furthermore, Viduvilt learns that Gabejn himself faced many obstacles on his journey to the Arthurian court and only just arrived there – seventeen years after having left the pregnant Schartine. Arthur, who just happened to be planning a visit to the Sardinian court, brings Gabejn along and therefore brings about the happy reunion of father and son. Fortunately,

98

not only King Arthur, but also the Chinese emperor with his daughter Schartine felt a surprisingly sudden urge to visit the Sardinian court, leading to a complete family reunion. In the presence of his family, the royalty of Sardinia and China and King Arthur himself, Viduvilt marries the Sardinian princess. Viduvilt remains in Sardinia for now, whereas Gabejn travels with his parents, wife, and father-in-law back to China, where he becomes the new emperor and administers the empire until Viduvilt will come into his inheritance. Although the plot differs from *Viduvilt*, the general structure still includes Gabejn's abduction and the conception of Viduvilt in a realm far removed from the Arthurian court. It also includes Viduvilt's search for his father, who was unable to return by himself, and the final reunion of the family along with the appointment of a new ruler. Yet, the story no longer takes place in a bewitched otherworld longing for salvation, but in the more locatable places of Sardinia and China.

More than in the earlier versions of the story, Viduvilt is a passive hero and now lives mainly off of his father's success. The messianic hero has become a spoiled son who eventually takes over the Chinese empire based not on his own qualifications, but through paternal heritage. His only actual deed is the fight with the two highwaymen – perhaps substitutes for the giants Wigalois originally fought – but a far cry from the devil or she-devil in *Viduvilt*. Therefore, the intention of this retelling of *Viduvilt* can by no means be the retelling of an exceptional hero, let alone a messianic hero, who gains kingdom and wife on his quest of bringing salvation to the suppressed. The key here lies in the figure of Gabejn, who himself is not characterized by fortune as the 17-year odyssey shows, but by religious devotion. Gabejn takes back the figuration of a pious knight that was part of what Wirnt applied to Gawein's son Wigalois in the 13th century. Gabejn's devotion and piety turn the story into a "moral tale" as emphasized in the subtitle of the work.

I suggest that in Gabejn's piety lies the key to understanding religion in this adaptation. But it is not religion in Luhmann's sense – religion as a system of binaries that are part of society. Rather, religion here is represented in a discourse about personal piety, and it therefore exits the very social sphere that Luhmann relies upon in his systems theory. Although Jaeger claims that God's guidance receives more emphasis here than in *Viduvilt*,[266] the text does not describe God's actual intervention, but rather focuses on the piety of individuals, mainly Gabejn in his prayers and his perception of God. Gabejn's devotion is new in the way that it presents belief as a personal and individual choice, yet it is also traditional in the way it draws on the motif of a hero who prays, which we already encountered in *Wigalois*. Two prayers of Gabejn are included in the text, one of which is about the length of a page and the other about half a page. Taking into account that the text itself is not longer than 12 pages in Landau's edition, the prayers are given an enormous space in the text.

The first prayer, rendered shortly after the arrival in China, is a doxology in which Gabejn not only thanks God for his wisdom and guidance, but also promises to announce God's deeds forevermore. Furthermore, he praises the Kudukus as God's angel and proclaims that he happily gives his hand in marriage. A second prayer takes place during Gabejn's preparations for the wedding: "(mir misen hir bei diser stelle an fihrn das gbeth welches ritr Gabejn eine stunde vor der trou ver-richtet hat)." ("Here, we have to insert the prayer, which Gabejn said one hour before the wedding." *Gabejn*, 140, 38-39) It begins by addressing God with different names and stating gratitude for God's recognition of his humble servant. Then Gabejn praises the divine providence that led him to be wed to Schartine, and makes a proclamation of original sin. Confessing his sins, Gabejn remembers his parents, who lost their only son without knowing

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[266] Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 348.

what happened to him. Therefore Gabejn prays to God that he might speak to them in the form of

a dream, showing them their son's happy union with the daughter of the Chinese emperor. The

prayer ends with an oath to bring his parents to China in order to happily live out their last days

at the imperial court with their son and daughter-in-law.

Although the content of both prayers remains in the broader sphere of a monotheistic

religious devotion without explicit Jewish or Christian elements, it has nevertheless been argued

that the form of these prayers – together with the linguistic features of the text – indicate clearly

that *Gabejn* is a "Jewish" text.[267] Yet, I argue that these prayers should not be taken as examples

proving that this is a "Jewish" text. They are doxologies and prayers of gratitude that put all the

narrated events into a religious framework of predestination. While it might seem plausible to

locate the notion of "original sin" contextually within the context of its long Christian tradition

and therefore interpret *Gabejn* as assimilatory piece, by 1800 the idea of "original sin" was by no

means only discussed in a Christian framework anymore. For instance, Glikl von Hameln

already entertains reflections on "original sin" in her memoirs, written between 1645-1719.

Clearly, these prayers are different from the hero's requests for help that we have seen in

Wigalois. They neither lead to the solution of a particular problem nor are they rendered in a

difficult situation in which divine help is needed. God no longer needs to support the hero

against demons, bewitched kingdoms, or magic mechanisms. Only robbers and bad weather at

sea pose threats to the figures in the narrative. God is not employed to deal with supernatural

forces, nor does he act in the text anymore. He is only present linguistically in the prayers and

the figure's speeches. The reduction of an active God to a mere expression of a figure's personal

belief in God's guidance is a development that is visible in many Early Yiddish non-religious

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[267] Landau refuses this claim, arguing that *Gabejn* lacks any explicit Jewish element and should rather be perceived in the framework of "moral tales" in general.

texts such as *Bovo de Antona*, *Paris un Viene*, and *Magelone*.

Although supernatural forces are now entirely excluded, the German literature scholar

Christoph Cormeau claims that these adaptations eventually reached the realm of fairytales.[268]

Cormeau bases his argument on his perception of *Viduvilt* as an active hero who succeeds against

all odds – a claim that I already refuted. Furthermore, according to Cormeau, the places and

names of places display a fairytale-like quality and cannot be perceived as the actual places with

which a "modern readership" might be familiar.[269] Opposing this claim, Jaeger refers to the

Great Wall of China and other places in *Gabejn* as 'particles of realism.'[270] Indeed, the places

mentioned in this adaptation are real places that can be found on a contemporaneous map.

Cormeau seems to argue from the perspective of a medieval audience, because by 1800, the

places featured in *Gabejn* no longer represent incredible and highly fantasized places. *Gabejn*

shows that these very real places fascinated a contemporaneous audience, albeit differently. An

essay on literary genres during the second half of the 18th century explains:

> Zu Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts hatte Europa begonnen, den Rest der Welt
> wahrzunehmen und ihm Interesse entgegenzubringen. Europa war den Europäern
> außerdem zu eng geworden; das empfanden sie gegenüber den geographischen oder
> politischen Begrenztheiten ihrer Vaterländer und auch gegenüber der dort waltenden
> Enge des Denkens und des Fühlens.[271]

Part of this movement is a "um 1750 einsetzende[] Begeisterung für Asien und die Neue Welt,

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[268] Because of similarities to fairytales, Cormeau calls *Viduvilt* a "Heilbringermärchen" (Cormeau, "Die jiddische Tradition von Wirnts *Wigalois*," 38) and Dreeßen refers to Viduvilt's final success as "Märchenglück." (Dreeßen, "Wigalois – Viduvilt," 91). The fairytale character of the story, Cormeau claimes, is enhanced by the increased occurrence of the number three: three potential brides, three days Viduvilt needs to be addressed by Lorel, three meetings with Lar in Korntin, three days of captivity in the tree etc. Cormeau argues that the number 3, in combination with the motifs, is of fairytale origin (Cormeau, "Die jiddische Tradition von Wirnts *Wigalois*," 37).

[269] Cormeau, "Die jiddische Tradition von Wirnts *Wigalois*," 41.

[270] Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 340.

[271] Kurt-Ingo Flessau, "Familien-, Unterhaltungs- und Reiseromane," in *Deutsche Literatur: Rationalismus, Empfindsamkeit, Sturm und Drang; 1740 - 1786*, ed. Ralph-Rainer Wuthenow (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1986), 204-218, here 211-212.

für China, Indien und Persien zumal."[272] Jaeger also points out that the interest in China follows

a general zeitgeist that has nothing to do with Judaism or potential Jewish contacts in Asia.[273]

Indeed, the text displays an interest in China that exceeds a general fascination with the

country. Although it scarcely describes China – except for the example of the Great Wall of

China – the narrator of *Gabejn* understands China as a realm with its own rites and religion. The

narrator explicitly states that the wedding ceremony of Gabejn and Schartine is conducted

according to Chinese rituals. Even though the audience never learns what such a ceremony looks

like exactly, it is important to note that cultural differences are acknowledged.[274] At the same

time, Gabejn as the Arthurian hero overcomes these differences and proves to be adaptable. The

goal is not to integrate the Other anymore by imposing one's own Christian-Arthurian religion

and culture, but to be able to navigate between the different spheres. In the end, Gabejn – and

eventually Viduvilt as well – submits to Chinese culture and religion. The result is not the

construction of a new Arthurian kingdom in a faraway land, but the continuation of the Chinese

Empire. In all three discussed texts, Gabejn returns to the realm of his father-in-law at the end of

the narrative.

However, the audience is regularly assured that eventually Viduvilt himself will return to

this realm to take his place as emperor. In *Wigalois* and *Viduvilt,* the hero remained as King of

Korntin. In *Gabejn*, Viduvilt's place in the line of succession as the husband of the youngest

princess of Sardinia place a very marginal role within the framework of the narrative. His future

lies in China, the new center of the world that we encounter in this text. It is the Arthurian court

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[272] Flessau, "Familien-, Unterhaltungs- und Reiseromane," 211-212.

[273] Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 345.

[274] According to Confucianism, an emperor only ruled with God's blessing. If a dynasty lost its "Mandate of Heaven," it would forfeit its right to rule.

that, in the end, no longer plays a role. With the turn towards a world with other religious

traditions and an emphasis on belief as a personal and private concept, the Arthurian court, the

religious center of the Christian-Arthurian world, has become the otherworld of the text.

Nevertheless, *Gabejn* represents no consistent religious tale either, nor does it focus on

eschatological battles between Good and Evil or the history of salvation. Religion in *Gabejn*

means personal piety, albeit it is impossible to specify whether this piety follows in a Jewish or

Christian tradition. Therefore, the text tells the story of a pious hero, but combines this personal

piety with the contemporary fascination with the East.

As we have seen, the textual evidence does not support promoting either *Gabejn* or

Viduvilt as texts with a particular interest in "Jewish topics." Nevertheless, scholars have referred

to these adaptations as "Jewish texts." But what is a "Jewish text" anyway? The question that is

always implicit, whether acknowledged or not is: What is "Jewish?" Traditionally, and similar to

Luhmann's attempt to define religion, "Jewish identity" has been perceived in difference to the

identity of the 'other,' which was defined depending on the context. One scholar argues: "Die

Frage der jüdischen Literatur ist […] nicht nur das Problem einer endogen jüdischen Verortung,

sondern bezieht immer auch das Verhältnis zur nicht-jüdischen Literatur ein."[275] Another one

writes similarly:

> Identitätsgenerierung ist ein Vorgang, der das soziale Miteinander wie auch Gegenüber
> benötigt: Ersteres zur Identifizierung und Letzteres zur Abgrenzung. Die beiden Prozesse
> bedingen einander und sind engstens miteinander verbunden. Jeglicher Form von
> Identitätsgenerierung durch Juden ist eine Bezugnahme zu Nichtjuden, ob identifizierend
> oder ablehnend, inhärent. Das Nichtjüdische ist somit aus dem Jüdischen nicht
> wegzudenken – und das gilt natürlich auch umgekehrt.[276]

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[275] Dorothee Gelhard, *Mit dem Gesicht nach vorn gewandt* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 14.

[276] Klaus Hödl, *Der 'virtuelle Jude'* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2005), 54.

Yet, in postmodern thought, recognizing the inherent instability of thinking in binary oposition, what can be defined as "the Other"? The historian Moshe Rosman rephrases this question from a contemporary view: "If nothing can be defined objectively, how can we identify a unitary, continuous, coherent Jewish People with a distinct culture and history?"[277] He argues that the answer has to be given anew in each situation. Especially with regard to the early modern period, hybridity and mobility mark Jewish identity.[278] There is no fixed set of features when it comes to defining the 'Jewish identity' of a literary text. And even the outer form of an artifact does not help. Should we, for example, count Protestant conversion treatises aimed at a Jewish audience and therefore written in Yiddish, in Hebrew characters, as "Jewish"? In the case of *Viduvilt* and *Gabejn* we can detect a clear disinterest in explicitly "Jewish" topics. Therefore, if we want to take this adaptation seriously in its aim to retell a fascinating story for a Yiddish speaking audience, we should refer to it as "Yiddish adaptation." This perspective opens up our eyes as modern scholars for changes far beyond "De-Christianization" or "Judaization" and helps us to re-evaluate this text for what it is: an independent adaptation with its own agenda rooted in a larger historical context beyond just religion.

Conclusion

The loss of significance of the Arthurian court already played a role in *Wigalois*. No matter how passive, the infallible hero in *Wigalois* posed a threat to King Arthur as the perfect Christian regent over a kingdom of peace. The Yiddish *Wigalois* adaptations we discussed in this chapter take this notion further and display a gradual detachment from this center of the Christian-

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[277] Moshe Rosman, *How Jewish Is Jewish History?* (Oxford, Portland, Or.: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007) 1, 97.

[278] David B. Rudermann, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 102-105.

Arthurian world (and worldview) until King Arthur's court itself becomes the otherworld of the text.

Out of the three adaptations with their different temporal and religious backgrounds and their own takes on religion, *Gabejn* is the only one to portray a thoroughly religious hero who is renowned for his virtue and piety. But even *Gabejn* offers no comprehensive religious tale. Nevertheless, religion helps us to review the form and reception of these adaptations. An examination of the theme of religion in these texts demonstrates that Wirnt by no means offers his readership a Christian tale, but rather a fantastic story portraying religion as a hybrid concept, combining magical and mythical traditions and constructed with the help of binaries. Wirnt's hybrid concept of religion draws on apocalyptical material and constructs its outer boundaries through the figure of the heathen. Due to the lack of religious motifs it is not important to define religion and the boundaries of it in the text, and this renders the figure of the heathens obsolete. *Viduvilt* does not present a religious narrative, but rather a mode of narration about various adventures of a knight in world that lacks the moral extremes of its predecessor. The author of *Gabejn* returns to religion as a theme, telling the story of a pious hero that perceives the events of his world in a framework of Godly order and predestination; however, he also displays an interest in telling a story that is rich with detail about different cultures and real topographical places. Furthermore, *Gabejn* is mainly the story of the title hero, who only displays personal piety, and no messianic qualities. His son has become a very minor figure. The perfect and passive messianic hero we encountered in *Wigalois* became a slightly comic and helpless figure in *Viduvilt* until he eventually lost the battle for significance against his father in *Gabejn*.

Yet, neither *Gabejn* nor *Viduvilt* present their audiences with an explicitly Jewish tale; nor was *Wigalois* a tale that consistently told a Christian story: rather it was a Christian-

Arthurian tale that experimented with the possibilities of fictional literature around 1200. This might serve as an explanation for why a Yiddish audience was entertained by the story. Instead of basing an analysis of these three texts on the categories of "Christian" or "Jewish," one should view them from a temporal perspective as texts that rework the tale of an Arthurian knight for the needs of their respective contemporaneous audience. As we have seen, many of the changes in these adaptations align with general tendencies found in a variety of contemporaneous texts. That does not mean that these three adaptations should be read in a teleological framework, but rather, that they need to be understood as unique takes on the story of Wigalois and his father Gawein, which employ some religious elements to underscore their own agenda for the adaption of this Arthurian tale. All three texts participate in the shared narrative tradition regardless of the respective audiences' cultural-religious background.

3. Adapting Gender:
The Construction of Female Agency in *Wigalois*, *Wigoleis*, and *Viduvilt*

"Swer sînen rât læt an diu wîp, dern ist ein wîser man."
("He, who turns to women for advice, is not a wise man." *Wigalois*, v. 1358f).

Introduction

This statement of the narrator in *Wigalois* fulfills two functions. Firstly, the narrator supports the main hero Wigalois, who just at that moment threw his mother's caution about searching for his long lost father to the wind and left for the Arthurian court. He calls into question Wigalois' mother's authority. Secondly, the "generous" narrator uses this scene to advise his audience not to consult women in general. In contrast, in a different adaptation, Wigalois' mother's advice even receives the narrator's support: "un dos er ir rot nit beyt doz wurd im nokh leyd" ("And he later regretted, that he did not take her advice." *Viduvilt*, 4v). With these words, the narrator of *Viduvilt* construes Gabein's refusal to listen to his wife's advice and take the belt with him upon leaving his new home. What that narrator anticipates is that Gabein will not be able to return due to the lack of the magic belt. Between these two extremes – the warning about listening to women and the appreciation of female advice – the rich tradition of Wigalois adaptations unfolds.

Female figures are a key element to a knight's complete success in medieval Arthurian literature. The Wigalois narrative presents no exception. However, the participants in this narratival tradition can be subdivided in two larger groups according to their respective portrayals of women and women's agency. Whereas in one group women play the voiceless

extra, they rise to agency and execute their power in the second. Since these variations in female

figures entail consequences for the entire setup of the respective narrative, I propose using the

portrayal of female agency as *tertium comparationis* similar to religion in the previous chapter. I

define agency in accordance with the *Encyclopedia Brittanica* as capacity of an individuum to

make individual choices.[279] As I showed in the previous chapter, scholarship on the "Jewish

character" of *Viduvilt* often centers on female figures. Therefore, this chapter complements that

analysis on the textual level and the preceding thoughts on religion. The construction of female

figures in the adaptations centers on female agency. A focus on this topic will help us understand

the mechanisms within the narrative better and will further support an investigation of the

narratives within the dialogical framework of adaptation studies, because we see that a change of

the *tertium comparationis* reveals new and very different connections among the adaptations. A

focus on female agency allows a very different categorization of the texts than religion does, and

furthers our understanding that changes in the adaptations are occurring both diachronically and

synchronically.

I will discuss three texts with regard to female agency: Wirnt's *Wigalois* as earliest

medieval example and point of comparison for the following texts and two early modern

adaptations that crucially differ in their depiction of female agency, *Wigoleis vom Rade*

(1483/93) and the Yiddish *Viduvilt*. In *Wigalois* women have nearly no agency, and if they

attempt to gain some, the respective women will be deconstructed and eventually be eliminated

from the text. The sexual violence that appears three times in the narrative underscores this lack

of agency. Indeed, sexual violence is downplayed if caused by an otherwise perfect knight,

enables the flawless, institutionalized hero to show his skills and is treated as a transgression if

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[279] *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Philosophical Feminism," by Diana T. Meyers, accessed February 19, 2016, http://www.britannica.com/topic/philosophical-feminism#ref1049944.

caused by an active woman. *Wigoleis* takes the lack of agency further and increases female passivity by drawing on a religious figure: Mary. Here women play an even lesser role than in *Wigalois*. The discussion of the third text, *Viduvilt*, shows, however, that the very different portrayals of women coexist in contemporaneous adaptations. The Yiddish *Viduvilt* offers a completely different take on women, a radical new interpretation of the narrative with regard to the construction of female figures that displays a drastic power shift.

3.1   *Wigalois: On the Matter of Female triuwe (constancy)*

Women in Wirnt von Grafenberg's *Wigalois* play a marginal role and only function as extras, the passive other to complete the knight's adventures.[280] There are only two ways for women to establish some sort of agency. The first one is as women who either dress the hero or manufacture vestiture. Women or fantastic creatures, such as dwarfs and salamanders, mainly craft the cloths and armor that employ supernatural strength in *Wigalois*. Some women dress the hero and even provide him with sword and armor. The queen, for example, sends six splendidly crafted outfits for Wigalois (*Wigalois*, v. 1631f). Further, the lady Baleare recovers the naked Wigalois in the wilderness and dresses him with her own fur coat (*Wigalois*, v. 5893f and v. 6067-6090). A dwarf, we learn, crafted the harness given to Wigalois, and a woman steals it (*Wigalois*, v. 6079-6081). Although the narrator justifies the fact that many women dress men in the text by problematizing knight who refuse being handed the sword by women (*Wigalois*, v. 6196-6203). The second possibility for women to establish some sort of agency is to excessively

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[280] Wigalois is by no means representative, but rather presents an extreme in that regard. Some women in other contemporaneous Arthurian romances have some agency. As Alexandra Sterling-Hellenbrand, for example, shows in her monograph on women and gender construction in Hartmann von Aue's *Erec* and *Iwein*, Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, and Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan*, women have space to gain agency in these romances written around 1300. Female agency is not granted, but negotiable: "What is fascinating, however, is the dialectic or the tension between old attitudes and new (perhaps more restrictive) attitudes that occurs in the romance genre […]." (Alexandra Sterling-Hellenbrand, *Topographies of Gender in Middle High German Arthurian Romances*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 2001), xv.

mourn a lost husband, lover, or male family member. As soon as they step out of the designated

sphere of activity, women present a problem for the text. The female figure's lack of agency is

underscored by the topic of sexual violence in *Wigalois*, which is touched upon three times in the

text, as we will see. I will conclude the discussion of Wigalois with two female figures who

deviate from the narrative model and attempt to gain additional agency by physical action: the

wild woman Ruel and the Amazon Marine. Ruel even acts dominantly within a sexual

framework, emphasizing her deviation from the passive role. The narrator uses Marine and Ruel

to illustrate how a women's active aiming for agency has to fail; neither of them can be

integrated into the text.

Compared to its Arthurian predecessors, in *Wigalois* women have become the mere

"conflict-free" extras for a successful and renowned knight.[281] The central conflict in *Wigalois*

lies in the besieged kingdom of Korntin and in the hero's battle with supernatural forces, not in

love and marriage like, for example, in Hartmann von Aue's or Gottfried von Straßburg's

romances.[282] Although Simone Leidinger argues that *Wigalois* features two love concepts –

erotically determined in Joram's realm and more in the tradition of Middle High German love

songs in the Arthurian realm[283] – I argue that the love concept throughout *Wigalois* culminates in

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[281] As Böcking writes: "Dass Wirnt sich mit den divergenten Frauenrollen nur oberflächlich auseinandersetzt, ist angesichts eines Helden, der seine Karriere derart geradlinig durchläuft, nicht verwunderlich." (Cordula Böcking, "'daz wær ouch noch guot wîbes sit.' Streitbare Frauen in Wirnts Wigalois," in *Aktuelle Tendenzen der Artusforschung*, ed. Brigitte Burrichter et al. [Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2013], 363-380, here 380). Leidinger summarizes the lack of female agency: "Eine Dame ist der Lohn für den Dienst, den ein Ritter allen Damen geleistet hat […]." (Simone Leidinger, "Überlegungen zur Minnehandlung und zur Treue in Wirnts Wigalois," in *Aktuelle Tendenzen der Artusforschung*, ed. Brigitte Burrichter et al. [Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2013], 403-420, here 409).

[282] Mertens argues: "Die Liebe ist für Gwigalois kein Problem – damit geht allerdings ein Verlust an Personalität einher. Das erotisch-gesellschaftliche Thema scheint ausdiskutiert, Wirnt verfügt über die richtige Minnehaltung und kann sie seinen Protagonisten verleihen, Gwigalois ebenso wie Larie: ihr Verhalten ist ohne Frage und ohne Schwanken vorbildlich." (Volker Mertens, "Iwein und Gwigalois – der Weg zur Landesherrschaft," *Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift* 31 NF [1981]: 14-31, here 23).

[283] Leidinger, "Überlegungen zur Minnehandlung und zur Treue in Wirnts Wigalois," 408.

the concept of *constancy* (Middle High German: *triuwe*). This *triuwe* represents a feature innate

to all female figures in *Wigalois*, courtly or not, and is a concept broadly featured in medieval

literature. I understand *triuwe* in this context as selfless devotion and fidelity to a male or female

person, related or not, thereby including all female and figures within the narrative.[284] Although

the predominant form in *Wigalois* features a woman's *triuwe* to a man, which causes the death of

the women in response to her male counterpart's death, other forms such as the messenger

maiden's fidelity to the queen of the besieged kingdom and the Amazon Marine's loyalty to her

grandfather are part of the larger concept in *Wigalois* as well. Whereas male *triuwe* – often

within the framework of fiefdom – requires the men to react proactively and take up arms in

order to protect and avenge the person they are devoted to, female figures in *Wigalois* often

cease to exist if the object of their *triuwe* dies or even just leaves their realm. During the object's

existence, constancy (*stæte*) is the essential co-feature of female *triuwe*.

Already the back-story of Gawein and Florie foregrounds the importance of female

triuwe within the narrative. Florie becomes the icon for motherly and wifely love and devotion,

which leads to her death from grief over the loss of "both her men," her son and husband.

Carmen Stange argues that due to the impact on her son's life, Florie is the contrasting figure to

Parzival's Herzeloyde, who – deprived of husband and son – dies of a broken heart and did not

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[284] Hahn refers to *triuwe* as so-called *minnetriuwe* in *Wigalois,* thereby excluding the devotion of Neraja to her lady, of Florie towards her son Wigalois, or Marine towards her grandfather (Hahn, "Gott und Minne," 37). Leidinger contrastingly points to the significance of the messenger maiden's *triuwe*: "Im *Wigalois* ist die Bewährung vor der Botin ausgedehnt und die Beziehung erhält eine zweite Ebene: das höfische und treue Verhalten Wigalois', der sich an Nereja orientiert, stets ihre Einwilligung sucht und ihr dient."[284] Nereja, Leidinger argues, functions first as substitute for Larie and only is called by an actual name after having reached the realm of Wigalois' future wife (Leidinger*,* "Überlegungen zur Minnehandlung und zur Treue in Wirnts Wigalois," 415). Stange also argues that Neraja has enormous responsibility and even agency: "Bevor sie ihn ihrer Herrin präsentiert, hat Nereja Gwigalois umfassend geprüft, und seine Befreiungstat gibt ihr Recht." (Carmen Stange, "Florie und die anderen. Frauenfiguren im *Wigalois* Wirnts von Grafenberg," in *Mertens lesen. Exemplarische Lektüren für Volker Mertens zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Carmen Stange et al. [Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2012], 127-146, here 138). Yet, Wigalois does undertake most of the adventures on his own account. Rather, Nereja refuses to support Wigalois' endeavors and keeps riding on.

prepare her son sufficiently for his life as knight.[285] But despite the fact that Wigalois' mother endows her son Wigalois with the magic belt and prepares him for the world he will have to face, one should acknowledge that both women die of broken hearts over the loss of son and husband. Further, Florie has no say in her son's leaving, but rather tries to convince him to stay initially. The narrator even ridicules her request: "Swer sînen rât læt an diu wîp, dern ist ein wîser man." ("He, who turns to women for advice, is not a wise man." *Wigalois*, v. 1358f). As soon as Wigalois' mother has fulfilled her function, she dies. She is only there to ensure the continuation of the line and to raise her son in the absence of the father until he is old enough to continue his education at another court, the court where he finds his father. As female figure without a male counterpart (son or husband) she cannot exist and is eliminated from the narrative after fulfilling her function, representing *truiwe*.

Wigalois' mother is not the only female figure who shares this fate. Another figure shows that this concept of *triuwe* even transcends the religious and cultural background of the figures. Japhite, wife of the usurper Roaz, dies of a broken heart over her dead husband. More than 100 verses are devoted to the praise of Japhite's *triuwe* (*Wigalois*, v. 7995-8092), which is finally immortalized in the form of a magnificent memorial. Buried inside a gigantic red jewel (*Wigalois*, v. 8230-8231), a golden ring in the form of two hands holding each other represents her *triuwe*: "umb diesen sarc wart geleit / von golde ein grôsez vingerlîn: – / dar an was ir triuwe schîn – zwô hende nâch der triuwe" ("Around this tomb a large golden ring was placed as icon of her devotion – two hands symbolizing the devotion."*Wigalois*, v. 7995-8092). Further, an inscription in French and Arabic ("heidnisch," *Wigalois*, v. 8258) is affixed to her tomb, communicating her remarkable *truiwe* through a variety of medial channels (*Wigalois*, v. 8261-

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[285] Stange, "Florie und die anderen," 132.

8289).

Wigalois' wife Larie, who equally shares the character trait of *triuwe* with Roaz' wife

Japhite, illustrates that the "right" *triuwe* in the case of a living object of devotion leads to

passivity. Whereas Japhite dies like her "lord," Larie's Wigalois survives and thus remains her

focus. After the fight with Roaz, Wigalois and his wife-to-be are reunited permanently. Ensuring

their everlasting reunion, Larie's passivity culminates in a majestic tower in the final campaign

against the count Lion in Namur (*Wigalois,* v. 10508- 10645; "*kastel,*" for example *Wigalois*, v.

10608). In a display of strong devotion, Larie accompanies Wigalois in the final battle in a

tower-like construct on the back of an Elephant, safeguarded by the two well-known and

distinguished Arthurian knights Iwein and Erec (*Wigalois,* v. 10645). Larie's tower becomes the

final and conclusive icon for women's lack of agency and their passivity in *Wigalois.*

As illustrated by Japhite, an essential part of the *triuwe* concept in *Wigalois* is mourning.

All the adventures in *Wigalois* include or are even initialized by a woman's grief: a lady

lamenting the robbery of her price in the beauty contest (*Wigalois*, v. 2425ff), the excessively

mourning women that accompany the fight with the red knight (*Wigalois*, v. 3046- 3051), the

lady in distress over the loss of her husband and the other knights (*Wigalois*, v. 4915-4938) and

later over Wigalois' supposed death (*Wigalois*, v. 5256-5263), the many verses about Japhite's

devotion and the death caused by her broken heart, and Liamere's excessive mourning prior to

the Namur battle (*Wigalois*, v. 9983-10037).[286] Lament characterizes all of these ladies – some in

key scenes – and stimulates the following action. In her dissertation on the female lament in

Tristan, *Erec*, and the *Nibelungenlied*, April Lynn Henry criticizes former scholarship for

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[286] Notice that the mourning crowd after Schaffilun's death includes men (*Wigalois*, v. 3561-3564).

overlooking the function of mourning as a vehicle for female agency.[287] Using Butler's *Bodies*

that matter, Henry points out that mourning provides women with agency from within the

system and not from an opposition to power.[288] In this sense, the women in *Wigalois* regain their

agency from being a wife or a lover who is marked by *triuwe*. However, this agency does not

exceed mourning and death by a broken heart. Although Henry points out the potential of

mourning with regard to Hartmann's *Erec*,[289] in *Wigalois* grief and mourning underscore the lack

of agency. Liamere's lament at the end of the romance instigates the epic battle of Namur,

thereby re-emphasizing the topic of *triuwe* and the loss of a beloved one close to the narrative.

Liamere and Japhite gain a respected reputation through their exemplary mourning. For

the narrator, they are even worthy of being introduced by name. The two ladies who fall victim

to sexual harassment and attempted rape, however, remain nameless. Underscoring the lack of

female agency, sexual violence is a reoccurring motif besides *triuwe* in *Wigalois.* It often appears

as a theme – albeit not as a main-topic – in medieval romances to discuss social issues and as a

vehicle to offer a critique of certain societal practices and norms.[290] In the past, rape as a form of

sexual violence has often been defined as "sexual relation forced on a woman,"[291] which causes a

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[287] April Lynn Henry, "The Female Lament: Agency and Gender in Medieval German Literature" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008), 11-13.

[288] Ibid., 7.

[289] "Hartman uses the motif of the lament as a space within which the female protagonist is able to become the active subject of the poem and develop her voice as a queen." (Henry, "The Female Lament," 3). Further, Henry differentiates between productive and unproductive grief. With regard to the *Nibelungenlied* she uncovers an unproductive grief that can have a destructive effect on a society. In a broader comparative approach Henry expounds: "It is through the absence of their husbands and/or family members and the socially constructed space for expressing their grief that the female figures Enite, Kriemhild, and Dietlinde are able to emerge as subjects." (Henry, "The Female Lament," 6).

[290] Albrecht Classen, *Sexual Violence and Rape in the Middle Ages. A Critical Discourse in Premodern German and European Literature,* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 231.

[291] See for example Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens. Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 6-7.

problem in the discussion of *Wigalois* as the readership encounters an attempted rape of a male figure, the hero himself.[292] Despite the fact that there was no medieval concept of raping men, it is important to discuss both forms as they similarly occur in *Wigalois* and equally help us understanding the construction of female agency or the lack of such. Although scholars have discussed the three scenes that are concerned with attempted rape in *Wigalois,* they rarely approached them in connection to the lack of female agency.[293] However, analyzing these scenes within the framework of power and gender can be key to understanding the lack of female agency in *Wigalois* – even the attempted rape involving a male victim

The topic of sexual violence is by no means unique to *Wigalois*. Despite condemning the use of sexual violence, the topic becomes aestheticized within the knightly logic of the courtly fiction. With regard to the "father of Arthurian literature," Chrétien de Troyes, Gravdal points out: "Chrétien's romances teach that rape is wrong […]. But they simultaneously aestheticize rape as a formulaic challenge: potential assaults are set up at regular narrative intervals so that knights can prove their mettle. The audience is led to ignore the literal consequences of violence against women."[294] Chrétien's German pendant, Hartmann von Aue, includes the topic of sexual

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[292] In contemporary discourses on rape, in particularly in legal cases, the term "sexual assault" is often preferred as a "reconfiguration that serves to place rape on a continuum of sexual violence but ultimately refuses its specificity." (Ann J. Cahill, *Rethinking Rape*, [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001], 11).

[293] In his essay on sexual violence and rape in the Middle Ages, Classen draws a connection between the violence to the so-called "Orientierungslosigkeit" that some scholars have seen in *Wigalois* (Albrecht Classen, "Gewaltverbrechen als Thema des spätarturischen Romans. Sozialkritisches in Wirnts von Grafenberg Wigalois," *Etudes germaniques* 62, no. 2 [2007]: 429-456, here 434).

[294] (Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens*, 44). Gravdal further explains: "A fecund paradox informs Chrétien's use of sexual violence: rape is both proscribed and moralized, banished and aestheticized, so that it can be contemplated again and again. In romance, 'ravishment' seems as natural as heterosexual love. Chrétien blurs the lines between seduction and aggression. Violation can no longer be distinguished clearly. Rape becomes one of the poet's tropes. Chrétien's troping of rape leads the audience to ignore the physicality of rape and its literal consequences so that the audience will focus instead on the ideology of chivalry. Chrétien interrupts the immediacy of violence to open a locus of moral reflection on chivalric codes." (Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens*, 43.); "Courtly romance discovers in the representation of rape a space where the audience can enjoy the taboo pleasure of a titillating scene without transgressing romance decorum. The moral and social complexities raised by erotic moments work to deflect attention away from the pleasure of imagining violence against the female body. […] Far from empowering a female

116

violence in his *Erec* (1180/90) several times, often under the veil of abduction or efforts by counts to marry Enite urgently.[295] In contrast to the Arthurian romances, the Middle High German humoresque short stories called *Mæren* diminish the empathy with the victim, but still with the aim of pointing towards problems in society as they outline the limits in society.[296] *Wigalois* also includes a scene of sexual violence within a comical framework, to criticize the lack of order – in this case a woman seizing power.

Yet, the first hint of sexual violence only appears in a brief and seemingly subsidiary sentence within the stone-of-virtue-scene. After explaining that only a person who has never done anything morally wrong is able to sit on the stone of virtue, the narrator names King Arthur and Wigalois as the two people who achieved that.[297] But the audience learns further that another person is at least able to touch the stone: "her Gâwein der reichte dar / mit der hant, und niht baz; / Ich sagiu wie er verworhte daz / er zem steine niht moht komen, / als ichz hân vernomen: / eine maget wol getân / die greif er über ir willen an, / sô daz sie weinde unde schrê [Sic!]" ("Lord

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audience, Arthurian romance transforms rape into a romantic adventure: the heroine who is subjected to the threat of assault both enjoys the great compliment of her beauty and basks in the reflected glory of the triumphant king who protects her." (Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens*, 67).

[295] Enite is repeatedly prone to be victimized, even by her husband. Scholarship discusses at length whether Hartman thereby utters criticism of the courtly society with regard to the treatment of women. See for example Dorothea Klein, "Geschlecht und Gewalt. Zur Konstitution von Männlichkeit im Erec Hartmanns von Aue," in *Literarische Leben*, ed. Matthias Meyer et al. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2002), 433-463; Heiko Wandhoff, "Gefährliche Blicke und rettende Stimmen. Eine audiovisuelle Choreographie von Minne und Ehe in Hartmanns Erec," in *"Aufführung" und "Schrift" in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit,* ed. Jan-Dirk Müller (Stuttgart: Metzler 1996), 170-189; and Albrecht Classen, "Schweigen und Reden in Hartmanns von Aue Erec," in *Erec, ou, L'ouverture du monde arthurien : actes du colloque du Centre d'études médiévales de l'Université de Picardie-Jules Verne, Amiens, 16-17 janvier 1993*, ed. Danielle Buschinger et al. (Greifswald: Reineke Verlag, 1993), 25-42.

[296] A special case represents Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Ring* (1408/10), which utilizes the repeated rape of Mätzli to illustrate a topsy-turvy world, although it is accompanied by general misogynist stereotypes, such as the idea of women's unsatisfiable sexual appetite (Classen, *Sexual Violence and Rape in the Middle Ages*, 154).

[297] Such tests of virtue, used to make invisible qualities and abilities visible, can be traced back to Celtic, antique, and oriental influences (Christine Kasper, *Von miesen Rittern und sündhaften Frauen und solchen die besser waren. Tugend- und Keuschheitsproben in der mittelalterlichen Literatur vornehmlich des deutschen Sprachraums.* [Göttingen: Kümmerle, 1995], 13, 41).

Gawein reached it with his hand but not more: Let me tell you how it came to be that he could

not come closer to the stone in the way that I have been told the story: He touched a girl of

beautiful stature against her will so that she cried and screamed." *Wigalois*, v. 1506-1513).[298]

The stone motif appears in other medieval German texts too; in *Lanzelet* Gawein does sit on the

stone (Lanzelet, v. 5177f).[299] Although in *Wigalois* the incident with the maiden keeps the

otherwise model knight from sitting on the stone, the narrator is anxious to immediately restore

Gawein's reputation: "deheiner slahte untugent mê / er von sîner kindheit nie / unz an sînen tôt

begie; / die selbe in zuo dem steine niht lie" ("He never displayed such a lack of virtue as the one

that kept him from the stone ever again, from his childhood to his death." *Wigalois*, v. 1514-

1517). Within the *Wigalois* narrative this is the only scene in which Gawein's conduct and

character are questioned.

While in German medieval tradition, Gawein is often referred to as a perfect knight, in

contemporaneous Post-Chrétien romances the reputation of Gawain deteriorates, especially in

the French prose texts such as the Queste del Saint Gral.[300] These texts "associate Gauvin with

overtly evil activities, […] the duality already inherent in the natural affinity to casual liaisons

with women attributed to him from early on in the tradition."[301] In contrast to the French

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[298] Scholars discussed the question whether the few words hint at a rape or not. Classen for example argues that Gawein raped a young girl: "weil er einmal in der Vergangenheit eine Jungfrau vergewaltigt hatte" (Classen, "Gewaltverbrechen als Thema des spätarturischen Romans," 452). Jaeger argues similarly (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 237). Eming, in contrast, refrains from calling it rape in *Wigalois* – except for her discussion of *Bel Inconnu* - but argues more diplomatically: "Es liegt nahe, die Erklärung, daß Gawein sich einer Frau gegen ihren Willen genähert habe, als Hinweis auf eine Vergewaltigung zu verstehen." (Eming, *Funktionswandel des Wunderbaren*, 163).

[299] Kasper, *Von miesen Rittern und sündhaften Frauen*, 256. Thomas points to a further subtextual dynamic in a wide variety of medieval texts such as *L'Atre Périlleix, Meraugis de Portlesguez, Gliglois* and *Sir Gawein and the Green Knight [...]."* (Thomas, *Intertextuality and Interpretation*, 79).

[300] Kasper, *Von miesen Rittern und sündhaften Frauen*, 257.

[301] Jessica Quinlan, "One of Us Is Lying. The Narrator, Gauvain and the Pucelle de Lis," in *Aktuelle Tendenzen der Artusforschung*, ed. Brigitte Burrichter et al. [Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2013], 39-53.

tradition, Chrétien's Gauvain supplies the wisdom and the strength, which the king frequently lacks, and Hartmann von Aue continues in this tradition.[302]

The *Wigalois* narrator places himself in the tradition of the "perfect Gawein"-narratives. Despite the stone of virtue episode, the *Wigalois* narrator attests that Gawein never did any "untugend" ("negative virtue," *Wigalois*, v. 1514). Gawein remains the perfect hero; not even a sexual offense can change this. Except for the stone of virtue episode, Gawein is portrayed in a favorable light.[303] Stephan Fuchs tries to explain that the misconduct of Gawein originates in the perfection of both Gawein and Wigalois, which presents a dilemma within the logic of the narrative: "Wirnt scheint an allem zugleich festhalten zu wollen: An der Makellosigkeit Gaweins als Vater, Vorbild und Artusritter und an der nicht hintergehbaren Perfektion seines Helden Gwigalois, die nicht ohne die Figur der Überbietung des Vaters zu haben ist."[304] Fuchs is only one example in scholarship of attempts to "save" Gawein's perfection. But if we focus on the treatment of the scene within the text, we learn much about female agency within *Wigalois*. The fact that Gawein is still the best knight although the lady screamed when he touched her shows how little the actual act against a woman matters within the logic of *Wigalois* as it was done by the otherwise perfect knight.[305]

The second time the topic of sexual violence appears in the narrative does not lead the

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[302] Thomas, *A German View Of Camelot*, 55-56.

[303] Thomas argues that Wirnt tries to rehabilitate Gawein in sight of *Parzival* and other literary texts (Thomas, *Intertextuality and Interpretation*, 84) and further points out the symbolic, final rehabilitation of Gawein through his son's invitation to the wedding festivities (Neil Thomas, "Wigalois and Parzival. Father and Son Roles in the German Romance of Gawain's Son," in *Arthurian Studies in Honor of P. J. C. Field*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer 2004), 101-116, here 108).

[304] Fuchs, *Hybride Helden*, 122. Eming argues similarly that the scene is not at all about Gawein, but used to underscore Wigalois' virtue (Eming, *Funktionswandel des Wunderbaren*, 165).

[305] Kasper addresses the main problem: "Da damit ausgedrückt wird, daß Gaweins Schuld relativ gering ist, und Gawein obendrein noch immer der tugendhafteste Ritter ist, läßt sich an diesen Versen eine erschreckende Geringschätzung der Frau ablesen." (Kasper, *Von miesen Rittern und sündhaften Frauen*, 257).

narrator to an explicit condemnation of such an act either. Riding through the woods on their

way to the bewitched kingdom of Korntin, Wigalois, the messenger maiden Neraja, and her

dwarf hear a "stimme / klägelîch und grimme" ("[a] voice, miserable and wrathful," *Wigalois*, v.

2041f). Wigalois seeks to help immediately and by the end of this incident will have completed

his first true knightly task.[306] Two giants have abducted a maiden and are about to rape her:

> "sitzen zwêne starke risen / bî einem viure ûf den wisen […] / einer juncvrouwen si dâ
> pflâgen / leider über ir willen. / sine mohten si niht gestillen / mit deheiner slahte bet: /
> daz trûten ir unsanfte tet, / wan sie was in gar ze kranc. / sus wolden si über ir danc /
> ir willen mit ir gehabet hân; […]/ si hêt mit beiden armen / der eine an sich gedrücket"

> ("Two tall giants were sitting next to a fire in the meadow […]. They attended to a virgin
> – unfortunately, against her will. They were not able to comfort her in any possible way.
> This "care" did not do her well as she was too fragile. Thus, they wanted to have their
> will with her against her consent. […] One pressed her to his body with both arms."
> *Wigalois*, v. 2065-2066; v. 2068-2075; v. 2079-2078)

Within the moral logic of the text, this situation is easier to judge as it is marked by a

transgression: un-courtly creatures molesting a courtly lady.[307]

But instead of condemning the violence itself, Wirnt uses the scene to include two longer

reflections: one on women being the cause of men's true happiness (*Wigalois,* v. 2091-2108),

one on a glorified past, when breaking an oath was still a despicable crime in contrast to the

narrator's present times (*Wigalois*, v. 2146-2158). Thus this scene functions as a vehicle for the

narrator to praise and at the same moment objectify women and to render a eulogy of the past.[308]

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[306] It seems strange that only Wigalois, but not the messenger maiden Neraja, cares about violence against the virgin. Classen argues that her mind is set on that greater violence in Korntin (Classen, "Gewaltverbrechen als Thema des spätarturischen Romans," 438).

[307] Eming points out the wild quality of the giants: "Wie im *Bel Inconnu* stellen die Riesen auch im *Wigalois* ein Beispiel für das Wunderbare des 'klassischen' Artusromans dar; ihre Gewalttätigkeit und Triebhaftigkeit ist in der *âventiure*-Struktur gleichsam 'gebändigt' und bar jeder unheimlichen oder phantastischen Wirkung." (Eming, *Funktionswandel des Wunderbaren*, 169-179).

[308] Despite some scholars discussing another excurse on the safety and reputation of women travelling alone in connection to this scene, it follows a few verses later and is already part of the next episode: the fight with the red knight. If seen in connection to the giants' attempted rape, the excurse clearly shifts the problem from male violence to a woman's reputation. Busch argues that the excurse is not evoking a great past, but merely calling for ethical

The giants' attempted rape is played down by the two excurses. Further, the incident turns into a moment that showcases Wigalois' knightly skills. It becomes a test before his main adventure in Korntin, which he passes with flying colors, and establishes the overarching scheme: Women have to be saved by a knight. The fact that the perfect knight Wigalois can only be saved by God (as seen in the previous chapter) shows the underlying hierarchy. The giants' attempted rape is merely an opportunity to show the knight's skills in fighting with giants foreshadowing the success in the central fight with the dwarfish Roaz.

The third episode that features the motif of sexual violence nuances the topic in several ways, but at the same time connects it to the overarching theme of *triuwe*. On his way to fight his main opponent Roaz, Wigalois encounters the wild woman Ruel with whom he refuses to fight, as she is a woman. Ruel on the other hand enters into a fight with Wigalois without hesitation, which the narrator describes with sexual connotations. Scholars discuss this scene often in the context of religion, referencing Ruel as a demonic figure in an alliance with all the other "dark" or "evil" creatures in the text, thereby refusing to ascribe importance to the drollery in this scene.[309] Yet in the context of the conception of female figures in *Wigalois*, the scene displays a

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behavior, how a man should behave rather than an actual critique of Wirnt's present: "Der Stoff zeigt sich hier als ideales Spielfeld, auf dem der Adel ein neues Selbsbewusstsein demonstrieren kann. Er schafft sich eine eindeutige, kohärente Vergangenheit, die als illusionäre Lösung gegenwärtiger Konflikte erscheint." (Nathanael Busch, "'bî den selben zîten / was daz gewonlîch.' Stellen allein reisende Frauen ein Problem dar?," in *Artusroman und Mythos*, ed. Friedrich Wolfzettel et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 127-144, here 137-138). Thomas argues similarly, interpreting the excurse as a comment on Wirnt's own time and call for a good relationship between the sexes (Thomas, *Intertextuality and Interpretation*, 82).

[309] Since both Ruel and Brünhild are particularly strong and share a non-Christian background, Böcking argues: "In beiden Fällen spielt der Vorwurf der Gottlosigkeit auf die vom Teufel verführte Eva an, die auf Anraten der Schlange von der Vorgabe, Gott zu gehorchen, abweicht und sich dazu über den Mann stellt, indem sie letzteren zum Ungehorsam anstiftet." Böcking expounds Ruel's supposed connection to the devil further: "In Ruels Fall ist die Zugehörigkeit zum Bereich des Teufels besonders offensichtlich, da durch ihre äußere Übereinstimmung mit dem Drachen (der zugleich ihr Erzfeind ist) ikonographisch vorbereitet." (Böcking, "'daz wær ouch noch guot wîbes sit," 370). Häberlein points to Ruel's demonic traits and sees her in the context of Luzifer, arguing further: "Das religiöse und literarische Motiv des riesenhaften Waldweibs wird durch die als gottergeben gezeichnete Figur des Wigalois in einen religiösen Rahmen versetzt. Im *Widuwilt* wird ruel, diesen Rahmen akzentuierend, sogar zur Teufelsmutter des Riesen Lucifer transformiert." (Häberlein, "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive," 81-82).

certain comic quality.[310]

Firstly, describing Ruel, the narrator draws on Hartmann von Aue's Arthurian romances and Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* but not to compare her to the Holy Grail's messenger maiden Cundrie – which would seem to be the obvious choice – but rather to use the courtly ladies Enite and Jeschute as models for an illustration of Ruel (*Wigalois*, v. 6287-6349). By creating such a contrast the narrator evokes humor. Further, the narrator makes ironic references to courtly love: "ein kurziu naht diu machet in alt / swer bî ir solde sîn gelegen; / so <u>süezer</u> minne kunde si pflegen" ("A brief night together would made him age, who shared the bed with her – so sweet was her love." Wigalois, v. 6350-6352).[311] The monstrous features that are repeatedly correlated to the ideal of the courtly lady as well of sweet courtly love ["süezer minne"] as a basis of comparison result in comic relief.

Further humor results from "misunderstanding" and a clash of codes, when Wigalois adheres to the knightly code of honor, refusing to draw a sword against a woman: "si endûhte in des niht wert / daz er gegen ir sîn swert / immer gevuorte, / wan grôziu tugent ruorte /sîn herze zallen stunden." ("He did not consider her to be worthy to draw his sword against her, because

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[310] Although in general it is difficult to uncover humor in texts from the past, there are certain criteria as Klaus Schwind explains: "Im Komischen werden für die Wahrnehmung inkongruente Kontexte über zwei- oder mehrwertige Bezüge auf eine ungewohnte Weise überraschend miteinander kombiniert, so daß plötzlich eine Durchlässigkeit zwischen diesen Kontexten aufscheint." (Klaus Schwind, "Komisch," in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, vol. 3, ed. Karlheinz Barck et al. (Stuttgart: Metzler 2001, 332-384, here 333). The same measurements help us to see the comic connotations within the scene. Velten explains the problem: "Um die Komik einer histroischen Gemeinschaft zu verstehen, muss man berücksichtigen, dass uns fast alle kulturellen und sozialen Bedingungen und die intrinsischen Mechanismen einer sozialen Gruppe fremd sind und wir diese Kontexte der Komik mühsam rekonstruieren müssen. Die Mechanismen einer Guppe von Menschen, die miteinander lachen und scherzen, beziehen sich deutlich auf den sozialen und kulturellen Habitus dieser Gruppe und sind hoch variabel: So haben sich die Parameter der Komik und des Lachens seit der Antike immer wieder verändert […]." (Hans Rudolf Velten, "Text und Lachgemeinschaft. Zur Funktion des Gruppenlachens bei Hofe in der Schwankliteratur," in *Lachgemeinschaften. Kulturelle Inszenierungen und soziale Wirkungen von Gelächter im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Werner Röcke et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 125-144, here 131).

[311] "Somit bietet die Figur der Ruel ein schauerlich-humoristisches Gegenbild zu der mit physischen Idealmerkmalen versehenen höfischen Dame. Während jene eine lebensspendende Funktion innehat, verkürzt Ruels Nähe hypothetisch das Leben eines potentiellen Geliebten." (Böcking, "'daz wær ouch noch guot wîbes sit," 369).

great virtue ruled over his heart at any time." *Wigalois*, v. 6373-6377).[312] This misinterpretation

of the scene at hand by Wigalois renders the heroic knight powerless since Ruel by no means

abstains from a fight. But the scene is not simply portrayed as a fight between two opponents but

rife with sexual metaphors, turning it into an incident in which Ruel tries to accomplish her will

with Wigalois within a sexual framework. The scene's emphasis on a fight begins to shift to a

sexual encounter when Ruel takes possession of Wigalois' sword: "si zôch im ûz sîn eigen

swert" ("She took from him his own sword." *Wigalois*, v. 6417) indicating an effemination of the

hero as knight in two ways.[313] First, she deprives Wigalois of an object that is essential to his

identity as male knight. Secondly, the object sword in this context bares traces of a phallic

object. The scene evokes no male-female dichotomy, but rather that of a knight and a (wild)

woman. In her essay on the "feisty" ["streitbare"] women of *Wiglois*, Cordula Böcking

emphasizes the seriousness of the scene, discussing the "Tabubruch" that is caused by Ruel

overrunning the unarmed knight.[314] The previous description of the wild woman, however,

provides for a comical framework. Further, having fettered Wigalois, she drags him away like a

sack: "diu selbe vrouwe ungemeit truoc in hin als einen sac" ("The very woman carried him

away like a sack in an un-maidenly fashion." *Wigalois*, v. 6384-6385).[315] In contrast to the giant-

maiden scene discussed earlier in this chapter, here sexual transgression and attempted rape

cause comic relief.

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[312] In the context of Japhite's ladies who intent to revenge the death of their lady as well as their lord, the motif of knightly shame reappears. This time, the narrator explains that it is shameful for a hero to be killed by a woman (*Wigalois*, v. 7951-7956).

[313] Böcking argues similarly: "Das Szenario des hilflos am Boden ('unten') liegenden Mannes, welcher der das Schwert schwingenden Frau ausgeliefert ist, deutet auf eine Umkehrung der konventionell akzeptierten Rollen auch in sexuellem Kontext hin." (Böcking, "'daz wær ouch noch guot wîbes sit," 373).

[314] Ibid., 371.

[315] Notice also the wordplay "ungemeit."

One reason lies in the fact that the scene addresses a topic that did not really exist in the Middle Ages: the rape of a man.[316] It is the inversion of the motif established as trope in the Arthurian romances, which causes the humor.[317] After having established the motif in a more traditional way within the giant-maiden scene, Wirnt turns the motif into its opposite with the attempted rape of a man to evoke humor.[318] Despite the lack of a concept, there is a long tradition of narrating the rape of men within a comical framework (often in connection to sexual positions or male pregnancy). The Middle High German short story *Des Mönches Not* (early 13th ct.) for example includes the rape of a man in a "humoresque" way since the young man whose complete education comes from books is taught about sex through a woman's (in that case a prostitute's) force. In the aftermath, he believes that he conceived a child during the act.[319]

Further comedy originates in the figure of a fighting woman, who is particularly strong. In contrast to the *Nibelungenlied* within which the fighting women Brünhild and Kriemhild are far from causing comic relief, Ruel exerts an active position within a scene that builds on reversed order: the man refuses to take the sword, the wild woman reminds the knight of the perfect courtly lady, the fight is described in the terms of an intercourse in which the woman is "leading." All of which indicate absent order, especially the fact that the women attempts to

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[316] Classen, *Sexual Violence and Rape in the Middle Ages*, for example 6.

[317] As Gravdal points out, Chrétien offers twists on the rape narrative in his romances too: "The poet presents sexual violence in ways that make it complicated to interpret, both giving the audience a pleasurable cerebral challenge and avoiding any break with romance decorum. Well-known as an ironist, Chrétien sometimes uses humorous twists or ironic reversals, as in scenes of mock rape, inadvertent violation, or imaginary rape, to handle this controversial subject." (Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens*, 45).

[318] Böcking sees parallels to the giant scene, as an inverted giant scene, but refers to it as "hier weitgehende symbolische Vergewaltigung." (Böcking, "'daz wær ouch noch guot wîbes sit," 374).

[319] The connection of humor and violence, as Röcke and Velten point out, can function as tool to discuss violence in the feudal society of the Middle Ages (Werner Röcke and Hans Rudolf Velten, "Einleitung. Eine Lachgemeinschaft der Götter," in *Lachgemeinschaften. Kulturelle Inszenierungen und soziale Wirkungen von Gelächter im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Werner Röcke et al. [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005], ix-xxxi, here xvii).

sexually force the man.

Nevertheless, Ruel is connected to all other female figures in *Wigalois*, including such courtly and appraised ladies as Beleare, Japhite, Liamere, and Florie, through the motif of *triuwe*. Ruel's acts and aggressiveness towards Wigalois are motivated by revenge for the murder of her husband: "Ferôz geheizen was ir man. / den sluoc Flojîr von Belamunt. / […] sus verlôs si ir lieben man; / des wolde si in engelten lân" ("Her husband was called Feroz. He was slain by Floir von Belamunt. […] That way she lost her husband; for this she indented to recompense him." *Wigalois*, v. 6356-6357; 6361-6362). Yet, in contrast to the other women who trust in courtly knights to revenge them, Ruel acts on her own behalf and therefore eventually fails.[320] It is possible to read this scene as a critique of female agency[321] as the active woman, who illustrates an inverted order in multiple ways, is used to evoke laughter. It is the female agency that is portrayed as funny, especially if seized by a woman who is not supposed to possess any agency according to the logic of the text. The fact that Wirnt turns the active woman who aims to avenge her husband without knightly support, into a comic scene, shows that there is no place for an active woman in *Wigalois.*

A look at the second female figure in *Wigalois* attempting to seize agency and marked by transgression, the Amazon Marine, supports such a claim. Both Ruel and Marine are portrayed not only as active figures but also as agency-seizing women. The central difference lies in their sexuality: where Ruel is defined as overly sexually active, Marine becomes the head of a

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[320] I disagree with Hahn, who argues "Das Motiv erfährt auf der Ebene des Unhöfischen seine spezifische, seine komische Brechung" (Hahn, "Gott und Minne," 52). It rather supports the topic's overarching claim that includes courtly as well as non-courtly women. The comic in the Ruel scene derives from her description as we will discuss later, but not from the fact that she mourns her death husband.

[321] Eming argues similarly: "Aggressives oder auch nur aktives Verhalten wird im *Wigalois* zwar positiv gedacht, jedoch ausschließlich in Bezug auf männliche Figuren. Das Beispiel von Ruel lehrt deshalb, daß eine Frau, die entsprechend agiert, häßlich, grotesk und auch komisch ist." (Eming, *Funktionswandel des Wunderbaren*, 200).

celibate, eventually converted Christian group of 12 (*Wigalois*, v. 9135).[322] Marine like all other

figures shows traits of *triuwe* as she chooses to be a virgin fighter after her grandfather Adan had

been abducted by Roaz (*Wigalois*, v. 9150-9164).

Amazons are prominently featured in the *Matière de Rome*,[323] especially

Heinrich von Veldeke's *Eneas* (around 1170) and the romances about Alexander the Great.[324]

The "problem" with Amazons for the medieval text in contrast to the idealized courtly lady lies

in their activity.[325] Amazons cannot be integrated into the courtly-dominated world of the

narrative. The texts attempt to reconcile with theses figures in two possible ways, as Maria E.

Müller points out in her monograph on virginity in 12th and 13th century vernacular epics: either

the woman loses her virginity or she loses her identity, that is, she dies.[326] The most-prominent

representative from Middle High German literature, the Amazon queen Camilla from Veldecke's

Eneas has to die: "Mit dem Tod Camillas ist die Geschlechterordnung restituiert. […] Der tote

Leib Camillas ist für Veldecke sakrosankt."[327] Marine suffers a similar fate, falling in the Namur

battle. With Marine's death on the battlefield, the second active figure is removed from the

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[322] Müller explains the fascination of medieval Literature with fighting virgins and points towards the important correlation of virginity and reputation, arguing that a "Relation zwischen Jungfräulichkeit und positiver Bewertung, Verlust der Jungfräulichkeit und negativer Bewertung besteht." (Maria E. Müller, *Jungfräulichkeit in Versepen des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts* [München: Fink, 1995], 265). She writes further: "Die höfische Epik teilt mit der Legendenepik die Auffassung, Virginität sei ein außeralltägliches Phänomen, welches übermenschliche Kräfte zu entbinden vermag. Aus der antiken Literatur übernimmt die die Typen der virgo-prophetissa und der jungfräulichen Kriegerin und schreibt ihnen herausragende Fähigkeiten […] zu." (Müller, *Jungfräulichkeit in Versepen,* 17).

[323] See second chapter of this dissertation.

[324] Müller, *Jungfräulichkeit in Versepen*, 229.

[325] Müller explains: "Dagegen kündigen die jungfräulichen Figuren diese als Geschlechterbalance idealisierte Figuration auf. Sie stehen für sich alleine, sei ihr Status frei gewählt oder nicht, sei er Desitnation oder Fatum. Ihre Integraton in männliche dominierte Erzählmodelle bereitet Schwierigkeiten." (Müller, *Jungfräulichkeit in Versepen*, 346).

[326] (Ibid., 229). An exception is Herbort von Firzlars *Liet von Troye* (1190/1200).

[327] Müller, *Jungfräulichkeit in Versepen*, 242.

narrative. As Böcking summarizes: "Die Utopie, die es im *Wigalois* zu affirmieren gilt, bietet Raum weder für eine Ruel noch für eine Marine."[328] But like Japhite's, Marine's death is remembered as well as her *triuwe*. Hence, in one of the last scenes the narrator reinforces the impression that Wirnt's *Wigalois* adaptation offers no integration of active women that exceeds their supposed agency in weaving and mourning. But instead of problematizing Marine's activeness, the attention shifts to *triuwe* once more, immortalizing yet another constant and faithful woman.

Thus the figure and death of Marine reinforce the passivity of the ideal women within the logic of Wirnt's Wigalois. Transgression leads either to ridicule, as seen in the case of Ruel, or to death, as in Marine's case. Wigalois' adventures are accompanied with women who lack agency and become merely pawns in the knight's success. The lack of female agency is underscored by the violence against women, which is utilized as a negative example of female transgression, to showcase the knight's abilities, or to glorify a long lost idealized past. None of the female figures in Wigalois gains true agency.

3.2 *Wigoleis vom Rade*: Mother Mary's Maidens

Written more then 200 years later, *Wigoleis vom Rade* continues the narrative lacking female agency as a tale of female passivity. Completed in 1483, *Wigoleis vom Rade* was first printed by Schönsperger in Augsburg in 1493, although the second edition from Strasbourg by Johann Knoblauch from 1519 became the more popular version.[329] Scholars have not yet been able to

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[328] Böcking, "'daz wær ouch noch guot wîbes sit'," 379.

[329] One reason for the 10 years that passed between the writing and the first print edition was that Knoblauch strongly reworked the first version and included wordy descriptions. Yet, he completed this task only for the first sections, not the complete text. Flood speculates that perhaps Knobloch wanted to rework the model, but then he did not have time or it was too boring for him (John L. Flood, "Die schwere Geburt des Herrn Wigoleis vom Rade. Zur Entstehung und Formfindung eines frühneuzeitlichen Prosaromans," in *Scrinium Berolinense: Tilo Brandis zum 65.*

discover the author of the adaption. Likewise, because of the supra-regional language, it is unclear where it was written down.[330] Nevertheless, the text itself became the template for another adaptation, the retelling within *Buch der Liebe* (1587), Sigmund Feyerabend's collection of retellings of popular stories.[331] Drawing on Mother Mary as the female role model, *Wigoleis* confronts the readers with a retelling of the adventures that immobilizes female figures and reduces their agency even more. The female figures in *Wigoleis* resemble the women in *Wigalois*, but constructed as the ideal immovable Lady of Middle High German courtly love poetry (Minnesang) that is somewhat out of reach for her knight, their passivity is even more idealized and aestheticized.

Similar to *Viduvilt*, scholars have perceived the adaptation as deficient in comparison to Wirnt's *Wigalois* and little research has been done on the text. Helmut Melzer includes a discussion of the text in his comparative investigation of early modern prose novels (in older scholarship referred to as "Volksbücher"). Melzer's assessment, however, illustrates very well how the adaptations are seen solely as copies, as re-workings that are always compared with Wirnt's text, which they view as the ideal, "original" version of the narrative. He points towards the supposed deficiency of the *Wigoleis* with regard to the lack of a complex morality discourse in comparison to *Wigalois*: "Im Volksbuch [*Wigoleis*] dagagen ist der umfassende Tugendbegriff auf eine einseitig moralisierende Bewertung reduziert."[332] Melzer further ascribes changed

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Geburtstag, ed. Peter Jörg Becker et al. [Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2000], 768-778, here 775-776). In the second printed version this task is further pursued, as we will see in the next chapter.

[330] Flood, "Die schwere Geburt des Herrn Wigoleis vom Rade," 773.

[331] On the question of the direct source and model see further: Weidenmüller, "Das Volksbuch von Wigoleis vom Rade," 2; Flood, "Die schwere Geburt des Herrn Wigoleis vom Rade," 769.

[332] Helmut Melzer, *Trivialisierungstendenzen im Volksbuch. Ein Vergleich der Volksbücher Tristrant und Isalde, Wigoleis und Wilhelm von Österreich mit den mittelhochdeutschen Epen* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1972), 51.

aesthetics and the omission of all the rhetorical versatile plays from *Wigalois* to a potential target

audience that was rhetorically and aesthetically not well educated – a similar argument has been

made about *Viduvilt* as well as we have seen in the previous chapter.[333] Where Wigalois

supposedly offered a complex take on knightly honor, in Wigoleis, according to Melzer, figures

are only morally good or bad. Only one monograph that exclusively examines *Wigoleis* exists,

written in 1910 by Otto Wiedenmüller as his dissertation. However, Weidenmüller refers to

Wigoleis as a chaotic adaptation, a burlesque[334] and perceives the text in a dismissive manner

within the discourse of the German "Volksbuch," idealizing the fictional literature of the High

Middle Ages in contrast to early modern prose literature.[335] In a second monograph, Jutta Eming

examines *Wigoleis* as an adaptation together with *Le Bel Inconnu* with an eye to the concept of

the "Marvelous."

A closer look at this under-researched text with regard to the construction of female

figures unveils once more a retelling with a very distinct agenda.[336] The construction of women

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[333] Melzer, *Trivialisierungstendenzen im Volksbuch*, 85-86.

[334] Weidenmüller, *Das Volksbuch Wigoleis,* 23;

[335] For decades the non-religious novels from between the 15th to the 17th have been referred to with the term "Volksbücher" ("people's books"). Yet this term has been criticized for its romantic implications and focus on the audience. The term also tends to include actual fictional novels as well as recipes, presenting a rather heterogeneous assembly of texts. In recent decades the term "early modern prose novels" has been established to refer to the non-religious, fictional novels from this time, composed in prose, and often-subtitled "histori." Jan-Dirk Müller makes a case for the term "prose novel" as a category that is both, precise and flexible, and does not focus on the audience but on the texts themselves (Jan-Dirk Müller, "Volksbuch/Prosaroman im 15./16. Jahrhundert. Perspektiven der Forschung," *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 1. Sonderheft [1985]: 1-128, here 1-3). However, André Schnyder criticizes his lack of focus on reception, for he sees these novels as objects that have do be understood with regards to both reception and production (André Schnyder, "Der deutsche Prosaroman des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts. Ein Problemfeld, eine Tagung und der Versuch einer Bilanz," in *Eulenspiegel trifft Melusine. Der frühneuhochdeutsche Prosaroman im Licht neuer Forschungen und Methoden*, ed. Catherine Drittenbass et al. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), 11-39, here 21).

[336] Eming already points towards one significant change within the text as adaption part of the 16th century turn against magic, all magical elements of the texts are now considered evil, even the magic belt: "Die fast paranoid anmutende Weise, in der im *Wigoleis vom Rade* im Mensch, im Ding und in fast jedem nicht-rationalen Geschehen das böse Prinzip Zauberei vermutete und schließlich, durch die Zerschlagung des Rades, bis auf den letzten Rest symbolisch beseitigt wird, scheint mir dabei kaum anders erklärlich denn als Ausdruck der im Spätmittelalter

against the backdrop of Mary as the ideal reveals a cultural and religious emphasis at the beginning divide of the church into the two main denominations in the Holy Roman Empire and therefore conveys an important extra-literary discourse and epitomizes – in regard to the second reworked edition – the cross-denominational fascination with Mary in the early 16th century.

The text begins with the narrator expressing his gratitude to men and women, who encouraged him to rework the narrative: "durch etlich edel vnd auch ander personen / man und frawen gebeten worden" ("Asked by many noble and other people, men and women." *Wigoleis*, Aiir). Evoking female support as well as stating encouragement by women is a classical topic, already used in the first German vernacular text, Otfrid von Weißenburg's *Gospel Harmony* (9th ct).[337] Thereby the reference anchors the adaptation within a tradition that goes back even to the Early Middle Ages and includes Arthurian Romances too. The narrator continues using traditional medieval topoi when he asks for God's support in his endeavor: "Gott wöll das die [arbeit] sälligklichen volpracht werde / als ich in hoffnung seinen götlichen genaden / und seiner lieben muoter getrawe sie helfen mir dies wreck zuo einem guotem ende bringen dann ye niemant on ir hilff nichtzen volbringen mag" ("God may grant the work's successful conclusion. I set my hope on his divine grace and his kind mother that they will help me to bring this work to a good end as nobody is capable of achieving anything without their help." *Wigoleis,* Aiiv). Connecting his text to the medieval tradition on one hand, the narrator adheres to contemporaneous aesthetics of early modern prose novels in regard to its strengthened

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grassierenden kollektiven Angst vor Zauber, Teufelswerk und Hexerei." (Eming, *Funktionswandel des Wunderbaren*, 267).

[337] In his Latin preface to the otherwise Old-High-German Gospel Harmony, written around 870, Otfrid 'uses' a lady named Judith as reason for his translation. Arguing that otherwise vernacular texts are only concerned with bad and secular topics, she asks him to provide a text in a vernacular language that is concerned with a topic of spiritual value (Otfrid von Weißenburg, *Evangelienbuch. Auswahl. Althochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch*, trans. and ed. Gisela Vollmann-Profe [Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987], v. 5-10).

dichotomic telling of a tale and the reduction of more extensive descriptive passages on the other. *Wigoleis* therefore represents an adaption that displays a conscious reflection on the history of the narrative as well as its compatibility with regard to contemporaneous fashion, an adaptation's threefold identity in accordance with Hutcheon as a formal, singular unit, as an act of (re)creation, and as an act of reception.

Although many early modern authors were concerned with the topic of marriage and matrimonial relationships between men and women (including leading a pious household) and contemporaneous literature displayed an increase in heroines, especially biblical ones, the adaptor of *Wigoleis* takes a different path.[338] In contrast to other prose novels of the time, the concept of women in regard to love and partnership plays a less important role than in *Wigalois*. The adaptation, as Eming points out, displays a "mangelndes Interesse an der Liebesthematik."[339] Rather *Wigoleis*, as Dreeßen remarks, continues in the tradition of a "problem-free" relationship between the knight and women.[340] The role that women in *Wigoleis* actually play is that of an immobile and consistent Lady of Love which resembles the

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[338] Even before the birth of the so-called *Hausväterliteratur* in the 16th century, Humanist marriage treatises were a popular genre.

[339] "Der Prosabearbeiter entwickelt keine eigene Liebeskonzeption und kann die Liebe nur mehr andeuten, um sich dann wieder seinem eigentlichen Gegenstand zu widmen: dem Kampf des Helden gegen den Zauber von Korotin." (Eming, *Funktionswandel des Wunderbaren*, 253). She further contrasts the concept of love in *Wigoleis* with that of the Love and Adventure Novels of the time: "Das Heldenideal der Prosaauflösung konstituiert sich nicht über die Liebe. Dies ist vor dem Hintergrund der anderen Wege, welche die Romanliteratur des Spätmittelalters beschreitet, durchaus von Interesse. Denn bekanntlich rückt etwa der Liebes- und Reiseroman, der sich him Spätmittelalter besonderer Beliebtheit erfreut, das sich gegen sämtliche weltlichen und göttlichen Widerstände gemeinsam zur Wehr setzende Paar in den Mittelpunkt. Angesicht der sentimentalen oder melancholischen Liebeskonzeption, die dort entfaltet wird, scheint es ebenfalls nicht gerechtfertigt, von einer Sentimentalisierung der Liebe im *Wigoleis* zu sprechen; dort liegen allenfals Ansätze einer solchen Liebesauffasung vor, ansonsten ist die Liebesbeziehung so marginalisiert, daß sich gar nicht von einer eigenen Konzeption sprechen läßt." (Eming, *Funktionswandel des Wunderbaren*, 269-270).

[340] Dreeßen writes further: "Von der Minnethematik bleiben hier wie dort also nur Reste. Im Prosa-'Wigoleis' erscheinen sie sentimentalisiert, behalten aber etwas von ihrer Funktion als motivierender Faktor für das Handeln des Helden." (Dreeßen, "Wigalois – Widuwilt," 92). Melzer remarks: "Nicht mehr die Liebe ist treibende Kraft zu Kampf und Bewährung, sondern die tugendhafte Gesinnung des Helden in der Bekämpfung von Unrecht und Laster." (Melzer, *Trivialisierungstendenzen,* 102).

Minnedame from German love poetry. Not only are they depicted similarly, but the text also evokes the religious model for the *Minnedame*, the Virgin Mary, repeatedly. Although once the model was established, many variations occurred, the "classical" German *Minnesang* (approx. Middle 13th ct. - Middle 14th ct.) voices the admiration and longing of a male narrator for an ideal courtly and unattainable lady, who in her refusal to answer his wishes becomes even more ideal.[341] *Minnesang* uses this initial situation to develop aesthetically complex poems with the main focus not on an individual lady but on the art of poetry. Further, the lady often represents a generic woman with stereotypical beauty.[342] Mary represents the idealized, artificialized, aestheticized model for women in Middle High German courtly love songs as well as in *Wigoleis*.

But the Virgin Mary not only functions as a role model; Wigoleis and the narrator turn to her as addressee of their prayers. In his prayers Wigoleis repeatedly asks for the aid of both God (sometimes in the form of Jesus) and the Virgin Mary, for example : "Herr almechtiger gott / ich bevilhe mich dir und deiner lieben muoter" (Lord, almighty God, I commend myself to you and your kind mother." *Wigoleis,* Evr); "Herre Wigoleis[343] […] dancket dem almaechtigen gott vnnd seiner werden muotter Marie mit gantzem hertzen" ("Lord Wigoleis thanked the almighty God and his mother with all his heart." *Wigoleis*, Hvr). Similarly, the author expresses his beliefs and hope for help by both God and Mary in his prologue: "als ich in der hoffnung seinen goetlichen genaden / vnd seiner lieben muoter getrawe" ("I put my trust in his divine grace and his kind

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[341] In general the concept of the unattainable, generic lady differed from that of the Northern French trouvères and that of the Old-Occitan troubadours.

[342] See for example Günther Schweikle, *Minnesang* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1989), 74-75.

[343] The spelling of the name alternates throughout the text between Wigoleis and Wigoleis.

mother." *Wigoleis*, Aiiv).[344] Mary is as important and as frequently approached in prayer as God himself throughout the text.

But more important than her role as patron is Mary's function as role model. *Wigoleis* features devoted, pious women that can be seen in comparison to the Virgin Mary as the most ideal, the *summum bonum*. Thereby the text draws closer to the classical *Minnesang*-tradition, presenting idealized women who are defined via their constancy (in Middle High German not just *triuwe,* but also *stæte*). The model of Mary already informs the depiction of Wigoleis' mother and begins with the image of the breastfeeding mother. Although this motif can be found in other medieval texts such as Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, Wigalois only emphasizes that the hero's mother Florie herself takes care of her son: "sîn reiniu muoter woldez nie / von ir gelâzen einen tac; / vor liebe si sîn selbe pflac" ("His immaculate mother would not abandon him, not even for one day; out of love she cared for him by herself." *Wigalois,* v. 1222-1225). The author of *Wigoleis* expands these few verses by the motif of breastfeeding: "Die kunigin aber durch der grossen liebe willen so sie zuo irem sun hete / wolt sie den kainer ammen bevelhen / sunder den selbs ziehen / vnd mit iren brüstlin erneren / als sie dann mit hoechstem fleiß vnd grossem ernst volbracht." ("Because of the great love she felt for her son, she would not entrust him to a nurse, but rather raise him by herself and feed him with her breast as she did deliberately and wholeheartedly." *Wigoleis*, Aviiiv). Although the text lacks the explicit parallelization of the hero's mother Florie to Mary nurturing her son, the recurrent references to Mary nevertheless place the hero's mother's breastfeeding in a mariological framework.

The topos of *Maria lactans* as nurturing mother was well established in Europe already at the beginning of the 12th century and through the broad popularization in images should have

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[344] According to Weidenmüller, in later editions the references to Marry are reduced (Weidenmüller, *Das Volksbuch Wigoleis,* 9).

been still well known to an audience around 1500.[345] But not just the image of *Maria lactans*, Mary was everywhere: "In 1500 a visitor to any German town or city would […] have encountered numerous manifestations of Marian piety."[346] Further, as Bridget Heal points out, by 1500 most churches had at least one altar dedicated to Mary – if not more.[347] Despite polemics on the protestant sides about the cult of Mary,

> Luther's writings provide the clearest evidence of Mary's abiding importance. […] For Zwingli, as for Luther, Mary was a model of grace and faith, as well as a witness who taught Christians how to follow God. Calvins' visceral hatred of idolatry caused him to be much harsher in his condemnation of all remnants of medieval Marian devotion, but even he invoked Mary as a model of faith, and argued that because God had granted her honor we should do the same.[348]

Heal argues that despite the reformers' repulsion for pilgrimages to Marian shrines and Marian idolatry, the threat of radical reformers led them to defend some of the Marian teachings despite the non-scriptural origins.[349] Thus, the extensive reworking of *Wigoleis* in 1519 required no changes in regard to the depiction of women resembling Mary in order to appeal to a protestant audience as well as to a catholic. Miri Rubin even argues that the Protestant incorporation lead to

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[345] Horst Wenzel, "Herzeloyde und Sigune – Mutter und Geliebte. Zur Ikonographie der Liebe im Überschneidungsfeld von Text und Bild," in *Eros – Macht – Askese. Geschlechterspannungen als Dialogstruktur in Kunst und Literatur*, ed. Helga Sciurie and Hans-Jürgen Bachorski, (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 1996), 211-234, here 222.

[346] Bridget Heal, *The Cult of Virgin Mary in Early Modern Germany. Protestant and Catholic Piety, 1500-1648* (Cambridge: Cambridge Universtiy Press, 2007), 2.

[347] Ibid., 1.

[348] Ibid., 4-5.

[349] (Ibid., 5). Rubin discusses some of the differences: "Mary emerged afresh in Protestant spheres: Martin Luther's (1483-1564) Mary was no longer a queenly advocate, but a woman full of faith and scriptural certitude. In response, a new, triumphant Mary was born from the efforts of Catholics to counter that challenge." (Miri Rubin, *Mother of God. A History of the Virgin Mary* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009], 255). Georg Söll emphasizes that the early reformers were much closer to the catholic Mariology than later generations, although with a stronger focus on the biblical accounts of Mary more biblical focus: "Mit diesem Festhalten an der altchristlichen Marienlehre sicherten die Refomatoren die wichtigste Voraussetzung für ein echtes Marienlob und für die Anerkennung der Sonderstellung der Gottesmutter gegenüber allen anderen Heiligen." (Georg Söll, "Maria in der Geschichte von Theologie und Frömmigkeit," in *Handbuch der Marienkunde*, ed. Wolfgang Beinert and Heinrich Petri [Regensburg: Pustet, 1984], 193-194).

an increase of Mariology in Catholicism: "Over the long sixteenth century Mary was imagined through many shapes and sounds in homes, in parishes, in vernacular preaching throughout the busy calendar year."[350] Therefore,

> Mary was a familiar companion to sixteenth-century Europeans in an age of great strife and of unparalleled opportunity. In these decades Mary achieved the highest levels of visibility and availability, her images not only sculptured and painted and carved, bit also reproduced in prints, engravings and woodcuts that were cheap and soon ubiquitous too. […] There was an abundance of opportunities to craft and shape, to consume and access experiences and knowledge about Mary.[351]

The text emphasizes the almost divine and ideal features of Wigoleis' mother Florie even more since her looks are described as angelic: "Herr Gabon ward da gar schoene empfangen mit freüntlichem umbfahen von der schoenen florye des künigs schwester / als er die ansahe beducht in nit einen menschen / besunder einen engel gesehen" ("Lord Gawein was welcomed well and received amicably by beautiful Florie, the sister of the king. When he looked upon her, she appeared him an angel rather than a human." *Wigoleis*, Aviiiv). This angelic mother of Wigoleis does not resemble the more active heroines from other contemporaneous prose novels such as Magelone. Florie, who is now the sister of the knight that won against Gabon in a fight, has little say and is more objectified than even in *Wigalois*. But like the mother in Wirnt's text, she is not allowed to disclose his son's heritage. Before the main adventure, after having passed a set of initial tests, Wigoleis is told about his paternal heritage, is given his full identity by the bewitched king as in *Wigalois* (*Wigoleis,* Eiiv). The focus of the patriarchal transmitted heritage lies once more on Gabon (*Wigalois*: Gabein) and his ancestors and not equally on both Wigoleis' parents, as we will find in the contemporaneous *Viduvilt* adaptation. Finally, like the mother in

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[350] Rubin, *Mother of God*, 255.

[351] (Ibid., 355-356). Heal argues that this, however, changes dramatically in the period from the reformation to 1648, the end of the 30 years war, at least in regard to non-catholic regions.

Wigalois, Florie lacks agency and dies of a broken heart upon the loss of her husband and son, which is only briefly told to Gabon by a messenger at the end of the narrative: "der bot erseüfftzet vnd ward seer zaehren vnd sprach. Herr wie gott will die ist leyder todt vor groser klag nach eüch vnnd eüren ameys." ("The messenger sighed and displayed grief and said: Lord, unfortunately, longing for you and your friend she died in accordance to God's will." *Wigoleis*, Kiir). Her briefly mentioned death concludes her fate that was primarily to give birth to the hero Wigoleis.

Part of the (re-)idealization of women in the tradition of the *summum bonum* of *Minnesang* and putting them once more in passive positions, is the fact that as such they depend on knightly protection. Within this logic the stone-of-virtue-scene is expanded. In contrast to *Viduvilt*, Gabon's behavior against a woman is mentioned once more and even discussed:

> Der selbe stein was einer solicher art / das den niemant dorffte berueren / dann die volkommenlich all tugent an in hetten. Vnd wie vil tugentlicher hochberuempter ritter by der tafelrunde waren / so mocht doch keiner naeher / dann einer klaffter weite zuo im gnahen / on allein künig Artus saß darauff. Herr gabon reichet mit der handt dar / vnn nit naeher. Das der sitzes auff dem stein entberen muoste / verworcht er / das er eines mals ein iunckfrauwen über iren willen umbfieng / darumb muost er von einer vnvernünfftigen creatnr [sic!] / als von dem stein florant genant / gestrafft […] werden.

> ("The very stone's nature was such that nobody who was not utterly virtuous was able to touch it. And although there were many famous and virtuous knights at the Round Table, none of them was able to come closer than six feet. King Arthur alone sat on it. Lord Gabon could reach it with his hand but no further. He missed his opportunity to sit on the stone when he embraced a virgin against her will. For this he had to be punished by a rational creature such as the stone named Florant." *Wigoleis,* Biv)

"[U]mbfieng" has been interpreted in the past as a mere "Verstoß gegen die höfisch-verfeinerten Umgangsformen."[352] The misconduct of Gawein becomes worse in light of the co-concept that woman represent wards to the knighthood. The long excurse following this episode emphasizes Gabon's guilt, although it also implies that Gabein did at least not rape the girl:

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[352] Melzer, *Trivialisierungstendenzen,* 50.

"O solten jetz die freflen oeden toerper / die iunckfrauwen über iren willen / nicht allein umbfahen / sundern auch freuelichen vergeweltigen gestrafft werden nach groesse der schuld / ich gelaub ir wurden on zat die haeupter verlieren. Aber es ist leider alle straff auß / wann die soliches solten straffen / die verschulden selbs aller meist."

("O, if these wicked, stupid idiots, who not only embrace virgins against their will but also rape them, would now be punished according the severeness of their crime – I believe, they all would loose their heads! But the punishment remains absent, because those who should issue a judgment are the very ones who would deserve it." *Wigoleis*, Biir).

The narrator laments that men are not persecuted for misconduct against women due to the corruptness of the authorities.

The second case of sexual violence remains in this adaptation as well. As in *Wigalois*, two giants are about to rape a lady: "do sahe er [Wigoleis] ein iunckfrawen sitzen anff [Sic!] einer wisen / klaeglichen gebaeren vnd sich starck weren. Bey ir sassen zwen starck risen / die wolten sie maegtlicher keüsch enteret haben." ("Then he [Wigoleis] saw a virgin sitting in the meadow gesturing heartrendingly and defending herself. Next to here were two strong giants, who wanted to taker her virginity by force." *Wigoleis*, Bvir) Wigoleis rescues her immediately as in *Wigalois*. The difference in this scene compared to *Wigalois* lies in the fact that the dwarf secretly witnesses this scene and reports it to the messenger maiden. The witness within the narrative ensures the impression from *Wigalois* that this scene is merely used to establish the hero as a capable knight. The fate of the lady remains unimportant because she fulfilled her function. Her passivity and lack of agency ensured the presentation of Wigoleis as the ideal knight.

In contrast to a victimized lady saved by a knight, women seizing justice and agency pose a problem for the text. When the messenger maiden addresses Wigoleis angrily over the delay of saving her home country, the dwarf corrects her, showing that within the text-internal hierarchy, even the dwarf is higher than a courtly woman, albeit only the messenger maiden: "Dem

zwerglin mißviel solich stoltze antwurt gar sere." ("The dwarf was very displeased with her proud answer." *Wigoleis*, Bvr). The dwarf then appeals to her conscience. Other women, such as the Amazons, are so reduced in number that their leader Marine appears as a singular figure. Her figure is described only in regard to the fantastical nature of her deeds, but not her *triuwe*: "yedoch sollen wir auch in besunder nit vergessen der manlichen gethatt der küniglichen magt genent Marene die vachte mitt streyt soelliche wünder das es vngeüblich ist." ("But we should not forget the manly deed of the royal virgin Marine, who achieved unheard-of marvels." *Wigoleis*, Kivf). Immediately after introducing her to the audience, the narrator has her killed by a Turkish fighter (*Wigoleis*, Kiir).

The second fighting woman we encountered in *Wigalois*, the wild woman from the woods, is kept in the text solely as representation of the transgression female agency implies. The fact that she is stripped of any comical elements (such as the intertextual comparison to fine courtly ladies and sexual connotation) portrays her more as a bad example than before and makes condemnation easier. What remains in the depiction of this scene is Wigoleis' conflict of whether or not to draw a sword against a woman and the motivation for her violence ("Es was ein künig mit namen geheisen Floyr von belandt der selbig künig erschluog on schuld iren lieben man geheissen Feros vnd wardd den also toden in den see / das doch vast unritterliche gethan was" ["There once was a king named Floyr of Belandt. This very king slayed her beloved innocent husband named Feros and threw his corpse into the lake, which was a very un-knightly deed. "*Wigoleis*, Fiiv]). Yet, the justice of her actions is diminished as the narrator points out that she mistakes Wigoleis for the king who killed her husband: "Nun vermeinte sy es wer der selb Floyr / [...] iren lieben man rechen griff sy in unroedlichen und ungewarnet an" ("She assumed he was this very Floyr himself [...]. In order to revenge her beloved husband she attacked him

disingenuously and without any warning." *Wigoleis*, Fiiv). Not only does she attack Wigoleis erroneously, but the narrator also describes her actions as dishonorable. The case of the wild women underscores how the narrator creates a black and white narrative regarding female agency, condemning active women as transgressing and acting based on flawed reasoning, and idealizing and admiring the passive woman.

Not only are the ideal women in *Wigoleis* passive, they are also emphasized as objects of trade. Larie is an example. She is clearly defined as a prize for the knight who delivers Korntin from the usurper: "das er mit der hilff gottes zwei künigreich vnd die schoenen Larie erfochten hett, darumb ward im wol zuo muote" ("He was very happy becauee he gained with God's support two kingdoms and the beautiful Larie." *Wigoleis,* Hvr). Other women remain completely in obscurity, such as the queen mother of the besieged kingdom, who is barely even mentioned anymore. Further, Roaz' wife now openly prays to the heathen gods. Thereby the text makes clear that despite her *triuwe*, she cannot be saved, a fact supported by an explicit statement form the narrator (*Wigoleis,* Hiir). The reduction of her ambiguous position is part of the increased and clearly drawn distinction between Christians and Heathens (see for example *Wigoleis*, Jiv). Roaz is represented as an evil magician. The evil opponent of the main hero fits perfectly into the *Wigoleis* tendency to emphasize a black and white narrative, which omits a potential former ambiguity within the description of figures or scenes entirely.

Whereas Roaz has become an evil magician, the majority of women in *Wigoleis* are modeled after Mary. Women have to be adored as a passive ideal with even less agency than in *Wigalois.* Although in regard to the depiction of women *Wigoleis* seems to continue in the paths of *Wigalois*, it is important to understand this as a choice of the adaptor, who decided to incorporate the fascination with Mary. As we will see in the final text of this chapter, this was by

no means a necessity of the zeitgeist, but a choice, for another more or less contemporaneous adaptation offers a very different take on female agency. This shows, how these adaptations do not simply illustrate reality, but also process historic circumstances, affirm old concepts, transform or even ridicule them.[353] Love, marriage, and family are three central topics in early modern literature, which are reflected in the literature of the time in very distinct ways.[354] Further, the Protestants made marriage and family two of their core topics. Although the Reformation emphasized gender, it restricted women's spheres even more than before. During the Middle Ages women were still accepted into some guilds and worked for example as breweresses. Merry E. Wiesner sees a deterioration in regard to women's standing in the early modern period: "In terms of both theory and reality, women's legal position clearly deteriorated in the sixteenth century. [W]omen who had often slipped through the cracks of the older, looser codes, or whose infractions where simply ignored."[355] Further, the separation between men's and women's work increased towards the early modern period.[356] "In sum, a new division between personal and public life made itself felt as the state came to organize Renaissance society, and with that division the modern relation of the sexes made its appearance, even among the Renaissance nobility." The women in *Wigoleis* appear to be even more immobilized than previously in *Wigalois*. Although Kelly-Gadol's work focuses on Italy, *Wigoleis* reflects her conclusion too, when she claims that in Renaissance Italy the noblewomen were worked into an aesthetic object: decorous, chaste, and doubly dependent – on her husband as well as the

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[353] Hans-Jürgen Bachorski and Helga Sciurie, "Einleitung," in *Eros – Macht – Askese. Geschlechterspannungen als Dialogstruktur in Kunst und Literatur*, ed. Helga Sciurie and Hans-Jürgen Bachorski (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 1996), 9-22, here 11.

[354] Ibid.

[355] Merry E. Wiesner, *Gender, Church, and State in Early Modern Germany* (London: Longman, 1998), 92.

[356] Ibid., 106-107.

prince.[357] Yet, we will see how the contemporaneous *Viduvilt* nevertheless completely turns the game of power within the narrative.

3.3   *Viduvilt*: Mothers Seizing Empowerment

Written a hundred years before or after *Wigoleis,* the first of the Yiddish adaptations presents the audience with a completely inverted depiction of female figures. Hence, the final analysis of this chapter will show that changes in the Wigalois adaptations cannot simply be reduced to diachronic processes or zeitgeist. Changes are not accidental, not errors in translation, but conscious changes as the coherency of the changes in *Viduvilt* will illustrate. The author of the text did not so much lack awareness of an overarching framework, but drew on a tradition of adapting Arthurian Romances, thereby using the narrative model and structure of these texts in a very new and different way. Nevertheless, in the past, the first Yiddish adaptation of the Wigalois narrative has been regarded by scholars, most notably Wulf Otto Dreeßen, as outdated and deficient compared to Wirnt's *Wigalois*.[358] Yet, with respect to the depiction of women the focus on the construction of female agency shows that *Viduvilt* presents a very different approach to the Arthurian material that cannot be judged "deficient." As *Wigalois* illustrates, Wirnt's *Wigalois* as a representative and its narratological structure was so well established by the time *Viduvilt* was conceived, that the author could use it as a model in a different framework to make unorthodox claims, which at first seem contrary to the material and its background. *Viduvilt* presents an Arthurian romance centered on women, especially mothers, as a result of its productive approach to established models of medieval concepts of gender and marriage. Since

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[357] Joan Kelly-Gadol, "Did Women have a Renaissance?" in *Becoming Visible. Women in European History,* ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 174-201, here 197.

[358] Dreeßen, "Wigalois – Widuwilt," 87.

Viduvilt in contrast to *Wigalois* omits the Namur-battle and instead ends with the wedding, it seems at first glance to end with the classical climax of an Arthurian hero's career. Nevertheless, the Yiddish adaptation is far from traditional in its depiction of female figures and gender politics and allows for a strong increase in female agency.[359]

      This different construction of women's roles first becomes visible in the change of the overarching theme of the hero's search for his father. In *Wigalois* – and following in that tradition, in *Wigoleis* too –, Gawein's son learns about his heritage by the bewitched king of Korntin (*Wigalois*, v. 4791-4813) and is reunited with his father at the end of the romance. In contrast, in *Viduvilt* the hero's genealogy is matriarchally conveyed as he learns about his heritage by his mother. After overhearing two men talking about Gabein as his father ("zayn foter er nit glaykhn keyn […] riter gabeyn iz er genent" ["He is not his father's equal, whose name is Gabein." *Viduvilt*, 6r]), Viduvilt confronts his mother who then discloses his heritage (*Viduvilt*, 6v). Further, Lorel's mother, the queen of the bewitched land of Korntin, asks Viduvilt, the prospective son-in-law, for an extensive account of his lineage, which he willingly gives (*Viduvilt*, 34v-r).[360] Within that account, Viduvilt includes his maternal as well as his paternal heritage, talking about both parents being the children of kings. Although Jaeger sees in this inquiry a reference to *Yikhes*[361] and therefore an emphasis on a prestigious heritage acquired

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[359] The tendency to ascribe greater agency to female figures continues in the later edition of *Viduvilt* by Josl of Witzenhausen, which Wagenseil chooses as the basis of his edition in *Belehrung der Jüdisch-Teutschen Red- und Schreibart* (1699). In Witzenhausen's edition even more female figures receive names.

[360] Wigalois' genealogy is a more mythical one within the Arthurian realms; Viduvilt is more realistic in regard to its geopolitical reality. Melzer argues that *Viduvilt* is more about his heritage than his identity, which explains the long inquiry of the queen (Melzer, *Trivialisierungstendenzen im Volksbuch*, 92).

[361] Yikhes is the Yiddish pronunciation of the Hebrew term Yikhus (יִחוּס, biblical Heb. יִחוּשׂ, meaning "genealogy") and is a common term for family records of much importance in the bible, derived from the root יחס ("relationship"). "In later Jewish tradition considerable importance was attached to *yiḥus* in the matter of arranging marriages […]. Lists of genealogical records were even printed with the express purpose of tracing the *yiḥus* of particular families." ("Yiḥus." *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* 2nd ed., s.v. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. Website.

through marriage politics in a Jewish tradition, I suggest that the inquiry is part of the general matriarchal theme in *Viduvilt*.[362] Especially the genealogy supports the claim that female figures are constructed differently and gain greater agency. Dreeßen acknowledges this chance – "Genealogie statt Identität ist also jetzt das Thema" – without a closer look at the implications for women within the narrative and the revaluation of the matriarchal genealogy.[363]

But not just genealogy in the sense of heritage, family is of even more importance in *Viduvilt* than in *Wigalois* and *Wigoleis*, where family plays mainly a role in the father-son, father-daughter relationship.[364] Already in the prequel to the hero's own story, the narrator of *Viduvilt* emphasizes a second connected, relevant topic for the Yiddish text in contrast to the previously discussed adaptations: marriage politics. Although the set up is similar to the other two adaptations, the relationship is intensified since Gabein does not marry the niece of the knight who beat him, but the actual daughter, which puts a stronger emphasis on marriage politics. Correspondingly, the final crisis in *Viduvilt* consists of two potential brides competing with each other in order to secure the main hero as their future husband. In addition to the daughter of the bewitched and now freed land of Korntin, two other ladies that received support from the hero offer a bride to Viduvilt over the course of the narrative (one herself, another one a daughter). One persistent lady rides to the court to challenge Lorel's claim. Not Viduvilt but

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http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX2587521271&v=2.1&u=duke_perkins&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=f1bcb248a4b293be50f1aad93a93e360 [accessed February 8, 2015]).

[362] Schüler, "Der 'Artushof'," 147. Further, the genealogy in Vivudvilt's account includes places such as Milan, kingdoms of France, and Frisia and therefore allows the narrator to refer to real outer-literary places known to the audience.

[363] Dreeßen, "Wigalois – Widuwilt," 92.

[364] Jaeger already points out: "Es lassen sich im *Widuwilt* bestimmte Handlungsstränge punktuell an der Familienthematik festmachen: Werden zu Beginn der Geschichte Familien auseinandergersissen, so finden sich – anders als im *Wigalois* – am Ende alle Mitglieder der entsprechenden Familien wieder glücklich zusammen. Neue potentielle Familien werden zudem durch Hochzeiten begründet." (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 238).

King Arthur solves the problem by marrying this bride to the reputable lord of the Tuscany. Although she does not achieve exactly what she came for – being Viduvilt's bride – the lady gains the prospect of an influential and wealthy matrimony. This episode – initially caused by Viduvilt's success – marks the last obstacle on the way to the wedding with Lorel, which concludes the Yiddish adaptation. The motif of the multiple brides competing for one man has been most prominently featured in Wolfram's *Parzival*, but *Viduvilt* introduces it to the Wigalois narrative. *Viduvilt* is the first adaptation to draw on that reference, which underscores that at least the author was well educated in Middle High German courtly romance. In *Viduvilt* this motif underscores the topic of marriage politics as well as female agency. Marriage politics is one area in *Viduvilt* in which women are able to claim power and responsibility.

The Yiddish adaptation further increases the number of mothers featured in the text in comparison to *Wigalois* and *Wigoleis* and strengthens their positions. This increase is achieved by transforming women, who in the previous texts have been "only" lovers or wives characterized by *triuwe*, into mothers, such as the mourning lady in the woods. In *Wigalois* the dragon Phetan took away her beloved companion ("friunt", "beloved," *Wigalois*, for example v. 4952). In *Viduvilt I,* the lady is robbed of her husband and son (*Viduvilt,* 44r).[365] Thus, the romantic relationship turned into a family. After their reunion, upon their leave, the family theme is emphasized even more: "oyf dos pferd zasn zi ale dray / ven es vos gros un shtark un fray" ("All three mounted the horse because it was tall strong and free." *Viduvilt*, 47v). In unity they leave the scene and foreshadow the reunion of Viduvilt with his parents at the very end of this adaptation.

This final reunion is the result of Viduvilt's mother's actions. She leads the stand of more

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[365] This also enhances the topic of genealogy since the heritage and continuation of the noble house are endangered.

active women in the Yiddish adaptation. Her gaining of importance happens at the expense of

Gawein and God. Already in *Wigalois* the hero's family plays a crucial role and the search for

his father drives the whole plot. Yet, the hero's mother in the Middle-High-German text exerts a

merely passive role within the relationship, being only truly relevant as educator of her son. Even

though his father, the "perfect knight," is already not entirely perfect as the audience is told at the

throne of virtue, Gabein becomes an even less perfect hero in *Viduvilt* even though no attempted

rape is mentioned, but because he leaves his wife knowing that she is expecting his child.[366]

Before he leaves, his wife asks Gabein what to name the son, to which he answers: "Heys es vi

du vilt" ("Name it as you wish," *Viduvilt*, 4v).[367] The majority of scholars interpret these words

as Gabein giving his wife the choice of what to name their child. This means that the knight's

name is based on a misunderstanding, for Gabein's wife mistakes his answer literally for a

suggested name and calls her son accordingly Viduvilt.[368] And even though the text includes the

naming and the corresponding misunderstanding, Viduvilt's name caries a trace of arbitrariness

and is juxtaposed with the idea of the important messianic-like Arthurian hero. It seems to be a

strange and comic name for a person that depends on so many others to survive the adventures

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[366] Thomas understands it as a *topos* that lovers who are abducted to the otherworld eventually get homesick and want to return to the courtly and therefore knightly realm (Thomas, *A German View of Camelot*, 34). The problem of Gawein leaving is not discussed in depth in *Wigalois*, as Thomas writes: "Wirnt effectively suppresses the problematical issue inherent in his material by treating the subject of the parents' separation lightly. He excuses Gawein's forsaking the supernatural realm […] not by availing himself to the supernatural exculpation of a Gawein buffeted by irreconcilable forces, but restores instead to 'rationalization' and to obvious euphemisms intended as an extenuation of Gawein's behaviors […]."(Thomas, *A German View of Camelot*, 39-40).

[367] Apparently confused by the wordplay, the scribe of the Hamburg manuscript actually writes: "Heys es vi vi du vilt."

[368] Jaeger writes: "Der Name Wid(u)wilt erklärt sich demzufolge – ganz im Unterschied zum *Wigalois* – offensichtlich aus einem Mißverständnis.[…] Das Kind wird hier nur scheinbar 'beim rechten Namen genannt'. Der intendierte komische Effekt, der durch das Prinzip des mißverstandenen Wörtlichnehmens ("Nenn ihn: Wid(u)wilt") erzielt wird, ist unübersehbar. Die Absurdität des vermeintlichen Vorschlages wird mit einem Augenzwinkern deutlich gemacht, die Unaufmerksamkeit, ja Gleichgültigkeit Gaweins in familiären Angelegenheiten implizit kritisiert." (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 247).

on his way to knighthood and kingdom. Furthermore, Viduvilt's mother urges Gabein to take the

belt with her in order to return to her after his adventures at the Arthurian court, which he

refuses. Not only the story, which points out that due to the lack of the belt, Gabein was not able

to return to his wife and son, the narrator himself supports the mother, remarking how Gabein

will regret this shortcoming later: "un dos er ir rot nit beyt / doz wurd im nokh leyd" ("And he

later regretted, that he did not take her advice." *Viduvilt*, 4v). In contrast to the narrator of

Wigalois who ridicules the mother's advice, the *Viduvilt* narrator's statement reinforces the

impression of a problematic communication between Gabein and his wife, indicated already by

the naming of *Viduvilt*.

Having fulfilled the duty of raising her son until he leaves for the Arthurian court,

Wigalois' mother in both previously discussed adaptations dies of a broken heart, grieving the

loss of her husband and son – a death not uncommon to mothers in Arthurian romances as

discussed earlier in this chapter.[369] Viduvilt's mother, however, does not die this death of so

many courtly ladies who raise their fatherless sons away from the court until the sons leave.

Rather, she reappears at the end of the text, having received news about her son's wedding plans

(*Viduvilt Cambridge,* 81r).[370] It is the mother who takes the initiative and rides to King Arthur's

court where the family is finally reunited. This significant change in contrast to the two other

adaptations displays an enormous increase in agency. Not only is Viduvilt's mother still alive by

the end of her son's adventures, but she also invites herself to the wedding and thus reunites the

family – something of which neither Gabein nor Viduvilt seemed capable.

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[369] In that tradition: "Mütter […] sterben an ihrem 'gebrochenen' Herzen entweder sofort nach der Geburt des Sohnes oder wenn nach dem Verlust des Mannes auch noch der Sohn wegzieht. […] Dieser Lebensregel haben sich die Frauen zu unterwerfen." (Claudia Brinker-von der Heyde, *Geliebte Mütter, mütterliche Geliebte. Rolleninszenierung in höfischen Romanen* [Bonn: Bouvier, 1996], 263).

[370] Since the end is missing in the Hamburg manuscripts, I am using the Cambridge manuscript for this reference.

146

In addition to Viduvilt's mother, the Yiddish adaptation turns other female figures into mothers as we have already seen in the case of the lamenting lady in the woods. Similarly, the former wild woman Ruel becomes a mother. In *Viduvilt* she is a nameless figure, the mother of the hero's main opponent, a strong giant. The sexual connotations in *Wigalois* and *Wigoleis* are completely eliminated from the text – as are the two other scenes of sexual violence. Thus, the wild woman is neither ridiculed for transgression nor for her attempt to seize agency. Although the narrator refers to the giant's mother as she-devil ("toyflin," ["deviless," *Viduvilt*, 13r] or "on gihoyer veyp" ["monstrous woman," *Viduvilt*, 57r]), she is both courtly and un-courtly, living in a castle with an entourage of four hundred women carrying fire bowls on their heads. When sharing the prehistory of Korntin's current occupation with the hero and the entire court, the messenger maiden explains: "un zeyn muter eyn rekhte toyflin iz, di meyn hern den shodn hot geton. Varum zi es geton hot, doz wil ikh oykh visn lon: meyn her eyn tokhter hot, daz iz var on ale spot, irn gleykhn men nirgenz finden ken." ("And his mother is a true deviless that caused my lord much harm. I will tell you why she did that: My lord has a beautiful daughter, truly, nowhere anything alike can be found." *Viduvilt*, 13r). The giant proposes, is refused, and in reaction to the refusal besieges Korntin. The description of the giant's mother who so eagerly searches for a good match for her son still includes a residue of some of the comical irony found in *Wigalois*: "un du kumst in dos hoys gegangen do verstu erst gar liplikh enfangen fun der grosn toyflin." ("When you enter the house, you will be received most cordially by the great deviless." *Viduvilt*, 41r). Yet, in *Viduvilt* the former comical figure becomes a powerful person initially responsible for all the sorrow – not Roaz and not her son.

Opposing the marriage plans of the giant's mother for her son is the mother of Lorel (*Wigalois*: Larie), the queen of the now besieged kingdom. The maiden who acquires help at

King Arthur's court asks for help on the orders of her queen and their daughter. Since the mother refuses the giant's request for her daughter's hand in marriage, the giant besieges her castle and land. It is the refusal to promise Lorel's hand in marriage that triggers the conflict. Yet, the events focus not on the princess and the giant, but on their mother. Lorel's mother is the one sending for help and instructing the messenger maiden, willing to promise her daughter as wage to the liberator in order to protect her kingdom as the messenger maiden points out: "velkher iz der zelbig her der sikh des shtreytn vil an nemen […] un den shtarkn rizn nemen zeyn leben den vil im meyn herin ire libste tokhter gebn mit irm shtolzn layp tsu aynem elikhen veyp." ("My lady will betroth her beloved daughter with her beautiful body to him, a man who is willing to enter the fight […] and to kill the strong giant." *Viudvilt,* 14r). The children merely become tokens in their mothers' politics.

Although the maiden and Lorel's mother refer to the wild woman as *she-devil*, the narrator seems to justify her behavior in some regard, arguing that from her perspective Viduvilt is a stranger intruding on politics and threatening the life of her son. Her maternal qualities therefore seem to make her at most ambivalent, but not demonic, as for example Joachim Jaeger and Neil Thomas called her.[371] In contrast to *Wigalois'* Ruel, the wild woman in *Viduvilt* is given even further motivation in her aggression against the knight: "Nu zog mir du yunger boys vikht vi halstu mikh azo gor for nihkt un doz du azo gor hofertig reydest un du wilst mit meynem zun her shtreytn un du host mir der tsu meyne meyd geslagn tsvar es vert dir nimer ver tragn" ("Now tell me, you young and evil wight, you think so little of me and you talk so proudly and you want to enter combat with my lord? And you shall regret that you slew my maiden." *Viduvilt,* 57r). Viduvilt threatened the life of her son and killed some of her servants.

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[371] (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 286; Thomas, *Intertextuality and Interpretation*, 61) See the discussion on Luzifer's mother in chapter 2.

Not only is her behavior made plausible, the giant's mother even helps the hero, both intentionally and unintentionally. First of all, she hears Viduvilt's horse neigh and runs away, mistaking the sound for the dragon's scream. While fleeing she accidentally destroys the deadly mechanism that made it impossible to enter the castle. In *Wigalois*, God's intervention destroys the mechanism upon Wigalois' prayer for support. This seemingly minor change has an incredible impact on how the depiction of the wild woman shifts from a burlesque figure to an important person that inadvertently supports the main hero. Secondly, entering the castle, it comes to a showdown with the giant's mother, who nearly kills Viduvilt by injuring him with a pole in his armpit, which will remain there until the count's daughter pulls it out. Before the giant's mother is able to kill her opponent, however, her wild women enter the scene, telling her that Viduvilt killed the dragon. When their leader receives the news, she shows mercy and grants Viduvilt his life on one condition: he has to be silent until his wife-to-be Lorel addresses him three days in a row asking him to speak. Thereby, she represents a woman determining the condition to which Viduvilt has to agree and even swears an oath to uphold.

On the way to Lorel's castle, however, Viduvilt meets the giant himself and kills him. Even if Viduvilt is incapable of defeating the mother, he kills the son and therefore gains victory. This victory seems fraudulent and morally problematic in light of the mother's mercy, even if Lorel's mother demanded the sleighing of the giant in the beginning. The giant's mother herself worked within the courtly system in that she was capable of showing mercy and obligation when appropriate, whereas Viduvilt had to choose between two obligations and decided in favor of Lorel's mother and thus in favor of a promising marriage. Jaeger interprets the scene with the giant's mother as follows: "Die Szene erhöht die Spannung auf den Schlußkampf angesichts des

nun verwundeten und nachweislich nicht unbesiegbaren Helden."[372] But not only that, I argue

that the fight with the giant mother replaces the battle of Korntin, the central adventure. *Viduvilt*

kills the actual usurper giant in passing. The giant's mother is the new main enemy and a very

morally ambiguous one for that, since she is partially justified via her "motherly qualities." From

the ridiculed Ruel in *Wigalois*, she has become Viduvilt's dangerous, yet, merciful main

adversary.

Scholars have pointed out the significance of the changed depiction of the wild women,

albeit often only to emphasize the adaptation's "Jewishness."[373] Where scholars have drawn

parallels to Lilith as the mother of demons, her maternity connects her with other mother figures

in the text and replaces *triuwe* as the new overarching theme.[374] The fact that the wild woman is

referred to as a demonic figure does not necessarily hint at a Jewish framework of the

narrative[375] since the Christian world knows demon narratives too.[376] A few demons are

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[372] Warnock, "Wirkungsabsicht und Bearbeitungstechnik im Altjiddischen 'Artushof'," 101.

[373] See for example Jaeger: "In der Hervorhebung der Riesenmutter ist wohl eine der bemerkenswertesten Umakzentuierungen des jüdisch-deutschen Textes zu sehen." (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 286.). Jaeger refers to her as "Herrin über viele Dämoninnen" in the context of Lilith: "Sie trägt somit Züge des Nachtgespenstes Lilith, das auch in den Sagen der Juden immer wieder sein Unwesen treibt." (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, p. 286). Thomas elaborates on the giant's mother's connections to Lilith and other Jewish female demonic figures as well, interpreting her in the light of the demonic "otherworld dimension": "Something of the logic of matriarchal evil reappears in the Jewish versions where the mother of "Luzifer" [i.e. Wirnt's Roaz] is depicted as being an even more devilish figure than her son." (Thomas, *Intertextuality and Interpretation*, 61) Jaeger referred to the giant's mother as an icon for the temptress of men in general. He ignores that the sexual aspect within this scene has been reduced in the Yiddish adaptation in contrast to the Middle High German *Wigalois* (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 286).

[374] According to rabbi Elias, Lilith is the one of the four demons that together with Adam mothered many other or all demons (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, p. 288). Warnock emphasizes the transformation into a mother too: "Der Redaktor [...] flicht das Waldweib Ruel als Zauberin und den starken Riesen beschützende Mutter in die Szene ein." (Warnock, "Wirkungsabsicht und Bearbeitungstechnik im Altjiddischen 'Artushof'," 101).

[375] In contrast to this see for example Häberlein: "Der Konflikt zwischen Roaz und Wigalois wird von dem zwischen der Mutter des Riesen und Widwilt abgelöst. So hat sich die Komik, die bereits der Darstellung des Waldweibs Ruel im *Wigalois* zum Vorschein kommt – etwa durch die Andeutung einer Liebesnacht mit Ruel –, in eine Begegnung mit der Teufelsmutter verwandelt, die entfernt an die mythologische Figur Lilith erinnert. [...] Ihr teuflischer Hintergrund rührt aus ihrem verwandtschaftlichen Verhältnis zu Lucifer und aus dem Beschützerinstinkt für ihre Kinder, insbesondere für ihren Sohn." (Häberlein, "Transformationen religiöser und profaner Motive," 83).

mentioned in the books of the bible, such as Lilith (Isa. 34:14) and Azazel (Lev. 16:8).[377] The

main difference between a Christian and a Jewish interpretation lies in the fact that the Jewish

tradition allows for more ambiguous and "human" demons: "Dämonen und Menschen müssen

einander also nicht grundsätzlich als unversöhnliche Feinde begegnen. In mancher Hinsicht sind

sie sich sogar ähnlich."[378] In her book on stories about human-demon relationships in Jewish

literature Astrid Lembke argues that demons even have a moral code and care for the obedience

of rules: "Häufig orientieren sich die Dämoninnen gar stärker an ethischen Maßstäben oder

normativen Ansprüchen als ihre menschlichen Partner. In solchen Fällen kann man sie kaum als

den Menschen moralisch unterlegen bezeichnen."[379] The wild woman feels obliged to spare

Viduvilt's life out of gratitude, but imposes a condition, trusting in Viduvilt's honor not to break

the agreement.[380] It is Viduvilt who kills the son, despite having been shown mercy himself.

Nevertheless, the giant's mother does not bear enough traces to mark her as an explicitly

"Jewish" demon, especially since the Christian and Jewish concepts in the Middle Ages are

intertwined.[381] Further, the female devilish servants with the fire could indicate the *Viduvilt*'s

author's familiarity with the Jewish tradition, but also with Middle High German literature, since

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[376] Yet, these demons often come – in contrast to the Jewish tradition – alone or, if at all, with one or two companions or sisters (Astrid Lembke, *Dämonische Allianzen, Jüdische Martenehenerzählungen der Europäischen Vormoderne* [Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag, 2013], 39-40).

[377] Ibid., 47.

[378] (Ibid.) The Talmud even says that demons eat like men and die like men and have sexual encounters too.

[379] Lembke, *Dämonische Allianzen*, 48.

[380] This agreement, however, does not seem to be different from the custom within Arthurian romances of enemies defeated by an Arthurian knight being sent to the Arthurian court in order to submit themselves to the king or the queen.

[381] "Im Verlauf des Mittelalters vermischen sich antike jüdische Vorstellungen mit populären christlichen Auffassungen." (Lembke, *Dämonische Allianzen*, 49). This is also visible in terminology as in Witzenhausen's edition the words "tiufel" or "Luzifer" reappear regularly and interchangeably.

151

the women with fire could be taken from Heinrich von Neustadt's *Appolonius von Tyrland* as well. They do not necessarily represent a Jewish influence. It shows once more that the texts are not just Jewish retellings, but that they themselves compile different non-Jewish traditions.

Another moment in which gender roles are reversed compared to *Wigalois* is the scene in which the unconscious Viduvilt is exposed to the power and decisions of the fisher and his wife. The constellation of the figures has entirely changed, even though both remain markers of the un-courtly sphere. First of all, the text points out that the fisherman decides to go fishing without his queen's orders. As in *Wigalois*, the fisher and his wife undress Viduvilt, whose features, which are described by the fisher wife as angelic, fascinate both: "do ligt ayn engel der iz kumen oys dem himel tsvar es ken keyn mensh nit gezeyn es gibt azo mineklikhen sheyn" ("An angel is lying there; he came from heaven. Indeed, being so beautiful he cannot be human." *Viduvilt*, 49r). Upon a closer look, the fisherman suggests giving Viduvilt's belt to their son. This minor change also refers to the fisher's wife as a mother. When she alludes to the fact that Viduvilt is not dead yet, the fisherman decides to kill him. He is only prevented from doing so by his wife's praise of the stranger's beauty: "akh vi kanstu in deynem herzen hoben dos du vilest der shlogen den yungen man zeyns gleykhens zakh ikh ni oyf der erden." ("How can you find it in your heart to kill that beautiful boy?" *Viduvilt,* 49v). In *Wigalois*, as Jaeger points out, the fisher's wife is depicted as a second Eve. She is thus depicted misogynistically as the one who introduces sin into the world.[382] Her role changes entirely in *Viduvilt* to the extent that she saves the hero's life.[383] Therefore the wife in *Viduvilt* becomes one of the women who saves the hero and

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[382] Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 277.

[383] "Während in den jüdisch-deutschen Texten also der Fischer als die verwerfliche Figur vorgeführt wird, operiert der *Wigalois* genau umgekehrt." (Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 280).

prevents him from failing. That he even owes his life to her can be seen as a drastic change in

relation to the women in *Wigalois*.[384]

But men are not abolished in *Viduvilt*. For example, the father of one of the brides plays

an important role by suggesting that his daughter takes out the lance from Viduvilt's injury. Yet,

the women gain more agency than in prior texts and later adaptations. Especially the return of his

mother reinforces the impression that within the Yiddish Wigalois adaptation there is a tendency

to reduce male influence. Viduvilt's destiny crucially depends on the women along his path, in

particular mothers. One could argue that this increased agency of female figures could indicate a

Jewish background, drawing on strong mothers and women in the Jewish Bible, such as

Deborah, who fights a war and leads the troops, or Esther, who prevents genocide. As

counterparts to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Judaism promotes the matriarchs

Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, which also play an important role in liturgy. Viduvilt's

naming works within the Jewish tradition, in which it was the mother's right to choose the

child's name. Arguing from the historical and cultural background of the text, one could point

towards the situation of Jewish women in the Middle Ages and early modern period.[385] Despite

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[384] The story continues as in *Wigalois*, where the maiden sees and recognizes him and the queen saves the naked hero (v. 247, 1-16). But Widuwilt has neither a huge crisis nor doubts his own identity and memories as he does in Wirnt's romance. The queen hands a fur to the fisher to cover Widuwilt's nakedness and welcomes him to stay with her for 30 days.

[385] The economic sphere represents the most obvious difference between the Christian and Jewish society with regard to women's agency. As Baskin writes: "A necessary criterion for measuring a woman's place and worth in any society is an evaluation of her economic roles. While rabbinic Judaism was determined that the private domain of the domestic be woman's primary place, participation in the family economic was not seen to contradict this imperative. Economic transactions, including marriage, were perceived not as public activities but as private proceedings between individuals." (Judith R. Baskin, "Introduction," in *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, ed. Judith R. Baskin, [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998], 15-24, here 19). Grossmann too points out the crucial factor of economics: "The important role played by women in supporting the family had decisive impact upon the improvement of her status in a number of areas […]. [N]o other factor exerted such a decisive influence upon the status of the woman during the period in question as this one. It brought with it great equality, not only in privilege, but also in obligations." (Avraham Grossman, *Pious and Rebellious. Jewish Women in Medieval Europe* [Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2004], 122). The changes for Jewish women within the economic arena and other parts of life were the result of the crusades. (Simha Goldin, *Jewish Women in Europe in the Middle Ages* [Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2011], 236; Dean Phillip Bell, *Jews in the Early Modern*

the fact that in medieval and early modern Jewish society "[w]omen had many roles, and motherhood was a central one,"[386] different, conflicting paradigms existed.[387] Women within the Jewish communities during the medieval and early modern period often had greater agency – in contrast to the surrounding Christian society – but still lived in a patriarchal society.[388] The fact that women were actively involved within a male dominated framework led to a constant struggle.[389] Thus, the *Viduvilt* adaptor does not portray an outer-literary history, but creates a utopia for maternal agency by firstly, partially inverting gender roles, secondly, revaluating women – especially mothers – at the expense of God and men, and thirdly granting women authority over the hero and his fate. The significance of female agency turns this text into nothing less than an Arthurian romance about women.

World [Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008], 122; Grossmann, Pious and Rebellious, 121). By the end of the Middle Ages, Jewish women were active participants in the family economy and enjoyed huge responsibility regarding religious rites in the home (Baskin, "Jewish Women in the Middle Ages," 102).

[386] Elisheva Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children. Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe* [Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004], 186.

[387] Rashi for example perceived women as the pillar of the household, but warned against women straying from that. The negative male paradigm, promoted especially by Rabbi Asher ben Yehiel, on the other hand, was critical of the growing power of women and saw that as a constant threat (Goldin, *Jewish Women in Europe in the Middle Ages*, 62-63; 68, 74).

[388] "One could invoke many other examples of things said in praise of women, in particular *Sefer Hasidim*, which presents a positive image of women and of the attitude which she deserves. But it is difficult to assume that the numerous, detailed descriptions of 'evil women' and their negative qualities, as found in the exegetical, philosophical, and ethical literature, did not leave an impression upon the consciousness of people and did not hurt the image of women. But, in my opinion, it would be an error to describe the concrete status of the woman in her home and the complex of relations between herself and her husband on the basis of the theory mentioned, as is done extensively in research literature. One must not blindly accept the negative image of women as reflecting the actual attitude toward women in society and in the family. There is a profound gap between this image, which originates in the words of sages and poets and reality. It is highly doubtful whether the husband and the members of the family generally saw their wife and mother in light of the description of Eve, who was later created from Adam's rib and who stumbled in the Garden of Eden." Further, as Grossmann explains, there is a profound gap between theological literature and reality (Grossman, Pious and Rebellious, 2).

[389] Goldin, *Jewish Women in Europe in the Middle Ages*, 2.

Conclusion

Although seemingly the same story, the focus on women and female agency helps us to take a closer look at the Wigalois adaptations and uncover significant differences. *Wigoleis* and *Wigalois* depict women in the tradition of Middle High German love poetry, often adored and idealized, but at the same time immobilized and objectified. The ideal passive woman is defined in her relation to the man. Active women are represented as transgressive and as a threat to the social order. The role women play in these two adaptations is to sustain the needs of a hero, ideally a knightly partner. *Wigoleis* even goes a step further as it promotes an ideal within the framework of Marianology, with Mary being the ideal for every woman. From faithful wives in *Wigalois* and passive figures in *Wigoleis*, the women of the narrative turn into active mothers in *Viduvilt.* Motherhood and the power over heritage and genealogy in the form of marriage politics entrusts the women of *Viduvilt* with considerable agency and helps to construct a counter model to both *Wigalois* and *Wigoleis.* Significantly, the Yiddish adaptation omits the problematic relationship between the sexes as portrayed in the scenes of sexual violence in *Wigalois* and *Wigoleis* entirely. The text does not mention Gawein's behavior towards a maiden in connection to the stone of virtue, nor does it include the attempted rape of the lady by two giants, nor does the Ruel scene incorporate sexual connotation.[390] With the lack of agency of one of the sexes in *Wigalois* and *Wigoleis* comes sexual violence not only against women but also against men. A change in the depiction of female agency thus affects both gender and leads eventually to a completely different re-telling. Thus, this analysis could and should be enlarged to include the other adaptations as well to continue a fruitful examination of these adaptations as, respectively,

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[390] The throne of virtue has turned into a large marble stone in *Viduvilt;* whoever wants to become a king has to sit on it (*Viduvilt*, 9r/v)– and whoever is free of sin achieves it. Yet, no king is explicitly mentioned, neither Arthur nor Gawein are mentioned.

155

acts of reception, as distinct (re)creations, and as formal units that offer their very own take on

the story of an Arthurian knight.[391]

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[391] Roth's *Ammenmährchen*, for example, a very ironic take on the narrative, opens with the dedication to his former governess, whom he depicts as an old and infirm spinster. Subdivided in chapters called "Abendstündchen" for each day and week, this adaptation becomes a tale supposedly told by a nurse to her wards.

4. Image and Illustration:
Pictorial Appropriations of Wigalois

Introduction

"Then he [Lancelot] began to paint first how his Lady of the Lake sent him to court to become a knight, and how he came to Camelot and was overwhelmed by the great beauty of his lady, when first he saw here […]. In the morning, after he had risten and opened the window onto the garden, he came into the painted room. When he saw the image of his lady, he bowed in front of it, saluted it, came over and kissed it on the mouth […]. Next, he painted his story day by day, not only his own, but that of the others as well, as the tale has related."

(*Lancelot*, Part V)[392]

In the French prose romance *Le Livre de Lancelot du Lac* (1215/30), Lancelot draws the story of

his love to Guinivere and her marriage to king Arthur onto the walls of his prison at queen

Morgane's castle.[393] These murals unfold their full meaning in correspondence with the

accompanying descriptions, and fulfill both the function of coming to terms with the hero's story

as a means of remembrance as well as an actualization of the previous events. This

transformation from an experienced history into a pictorial story allows Lanzelot not only to

participate in the past events once more, but also to construct his own identity in retrospect, as

Horst Wenzel summarizes this scene: "Bild und Schrift, Hören und Sehen schaffen im

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[392] "Lancelot, Part V," trans. William W. Kibler, in *The Lancelot-Grail Reader. Selections from the Medieval French Arthurian Cycle*, ed. Norris J. Lacy (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 2000), 234-263.

[393] For an extensive discussion of this scene in connection to a discourse of verbal and visual art, see Michael Curschmann, "Vom Wandel im bildlichen Umgang mit literarischen Gegenständen. Rodenegg, Wildesntein und das Flaarsche Haus in Stein am Rhein," in *Wort – Bild – Text. Studien zur Medialität des Literarischen in Hochmittelalter und früher Neuzeit,* volume 2, (Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 2007), 559-636, here 562-563; Dennis Howard Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading. The Primary Reception of German Literature, 800-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 126, and Horst Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen, Schrift und Bild. Kultur und Gedächtnis im Mittelalter* (München, C.H. Beck, 1995), 304-306.

Zusammenspiel von Wahrnehmung und Erinnerung eine erfüllte Gegenwart […]."[394] In

Lancelot's case, he is both, creator of the illustrated narrative and its audience.

The authors of the Wigalois adaptations fulfill both of these roles as well, albeit in an

inverted order: they are audience of prior adaptations and creators of new ways to narrate

Wigalois' story. In an intermediate function, they interact with the text as interpreters. The

pictorial adaptations of Wigalois that I will discuss in this chapter offer important transition

points, as they are examples of reception and recreation.[395] I believe that these adaptations offer a

window into how audiences, at least one artist, understood Wirnt's text or another adaptation,

and how an artist attempts to recreate a pictorial narrative with a different audience in mind. In

addition to the verbal retellings, the pictorial adaptations shift their foci in order to emphasize

different aspects and thus enable the telling of a different story with a different agenda by

utilizing the changed conditions of narrating the story in images. Their task is to recreate a

narrative, whose "native" background is the word, albeit oral, in a pictorial world.

In the previous chapters of this dissertation, I have analyzed the Wigalois material on a

text-based level, using religion and gender as *tertia comparationis*. In examining *Wigalois*,

Wigoleis vom Rade, *Viduvilt*, and *Gabejn*, I have argued that the material presents us with a

shared tradition that cannot easily be divided into a Christian-German and Jewish-Yiddish

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[394] Ibid., 306.

[395] Saurma-Jeltsch claims that images are not only to be seen as a service in relation to text, but rather that they participate in the discourse between individuals and groups and scribality. Further, together with a text, the illustrations reflect changes in reception, both epochal and social (Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch, "Textaneignung in der Bildersprache. Zum Verhältnis von Bild und Text am Beispiel spätmittelalterlicher Buchillustration," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 41 (1988): 41-59, here 44). Rushing, however, questions the idea of art works as reception of the text because it reduces these works to a simple reaction to a particular text. Yet, he works mainly against simplified and reductive interpretations of an art work as reading of an established model: "It can be assumed neither that an artist's response to a given story was that of the typical contemporary, nor that an artist's goal was the slavish 'translation' of a text into another medium." (James A. Rushing, "The Medieval German Pictorial Evidence," in *The Arthur of the Germans. The Arthurian Legend in Medieval German and Dutch*, ed. William Henry Jackson and Silvia Ranawake (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 257-279, here 257).

material but that potential categories can be constructed differently and that grouping the

material changes with every topic. As a consequence, these distinct retellings of each text far

outpace a mere copy of the Yiddish *Viduvilt* or the Middle-High-German *Wigalois*. Further, I

have shown that an adjusted theory of adaptation offers a beneficial framework for the analysis

of the diverse material. However, the Wigalois narrative tradition by no means includes only

verbal retellings but also presents a rich pictorial thread of artifacts. How do these pictorial

entries correspond with the previous findings of a shared tradition consisting of adaptations in an

ongoing dialogic process?

The Wigalois narrative has proven to fascinate different audiences and inspire

adaptations in a variety of media over a long time until now. In the past, especially the two

illustrated *Wigalois* manuscripts, the earliest, Leiden Codex LTK 537, dating from 1372, and the

second, Donaueschingen Ms. 71 from [ca. 1416-1421],[396] gained scholarly attention and to some

extent the incunabula in the second edition of Wigoleis vom Rade (1519). Other works have

been neglected. The majority of research regarding the pictorial Wigalois tradition breaks down

into two main sections: images and illustrations within the narrative (ekphrasis) and as physically

visible images outside of the narrative. Triggered by the fundamental studies by Peter Wagner on

ekphrasis and ikonotext[397] and on word and image in medieval literature by Horst Wenzel,[398]

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[396] Brown brought forth arguments in his dissertation as to why there are just so few illustrated manuscripts. He argues that one reason lies in the comprehensive ekphrases of Wirnt's text which were difficult to "translate" into drawn images. Brown sees a second reason in the rich written imagery that made illustrations unnecessary (James Hamilton Brown, "Imagining the Text. Ekphrasis and Envisioning Courtly Identity in Wirnt von Gravenberg's Wigalois." [PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006]). However, the majority of manuscripts in vernacular literature was not illustrated (Michael Curschmann, "Wort – Schrift – Bild. Zum Verhältnis von volkssprachigem Schrifttum und bildender Kunst vom 12. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert," in *Runkelstein. Die Wandmalereien des Sommerhauses*, ed. Walter Haug [Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1982], 661-753, here 661).

[397] Especially in Peter Wagner's essay collection *Icons, Texts, Iconotexts. Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1996).

[398] Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen, Schrift und Bild.*

specific case studies and applications on more specific material soon followed, such as Heiko

Wandhoff's *Ekphrasis. Kunstbeschreibungen und virtuelle Räume in der Literatur des

Mittelalters*[399] or Kathryn Starkey's *Reading the Medieval Book. Word, Image, and Performance

in Wolfram von Eschenbach's "Willehalm."*

In his dissertation *Ekphrasis and envisioning courtly identity in Wirnt von Gravenberg's

Wigalois* (2006) and a number of essays, James H. Brown proves that an analysis of *Wigalois*

within the theoretical framework of ekphrasis can be very fruitful. Central to his research is the

definition of ekphrasis as not only verbal representations of objects, but as "highly descriptive

writing," a definition drawing on notions from antiquity.[400] According to Brown, it is crucial for

Wirnt to place objects before the reader's eyes. Wirnt uses ekphrasis as a device to move the text

forward.[1] Further, Brown points out, ekphrasis is used as an integrative device that also helps to

integrate the religious elements into the text, draws attention to potently conflicting ideas, and

finally helps to integrate them into the narrative, in a more balanced relationship.[401]

However, in the second part of his dissertation, Brown moves beyond textual ekphrases

as he includes an analysis of Wigalois images outside the verbal text, using the illustrations in

the Wigalois codices from Leiden and Donaueschingen and the early printed *Wigalois von dem

Rade* (1519).[402] Similar to Brown, Andrea Grafetstätter combines the analysis of the verbal as

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[399] Heiko Wandhoff, *Ekphrasis. Kunstbeschreibungen und virtuelle Räume in der Literatur des Mittelalters* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003).

[400] Brown, *Imagining the Text*, 6.

[401] (Ibid.). At the same time, Brown argues that the complex and lengthy exphrases made it a difficult text for illustrators. However, these two arguments indicate that images are a faithful "translation" of the text. Yet, as we will see in the following, the pictorial adaptations comment on the text, complement it or connect it to contemporaneous ideas of knighthood.

[402] Bringing together both the verbal as well as the actual physically visible image, Brown writes in the tradition of the work of scholars such as Horst Wenzel and Kathryn Starkey.

well as the visible image in her research of the two illustrated *Wigalois* manuscripts and the incunabula from 1519. Grafetstätter looks at the construction of gender and space regarding the media specific reception interests and comes to the conclusion that women are only represented in special "safe" spaces and as static icons.[403] Using both verbal as well as visible image, Brown and Grafetstätter prove in their analyses that each of the pictorial adaptation offers a specific agenda and has to be understood both as reception and recreation.

The research of Brown and Grafetstätter includes medieval and early modern examples. Scholars have not yet attempted to investigate these early examples in connection to modern illustrations, such as woodcuts by Ludwig Richter's or the Wigalois comic. This chapter seeks to extend the scope of research onto these later pictorial adaptations and to analyze them according to the triple identity as suggested by Linda Hutcheon, as unique entities, as acts of (re)creation, and as acts of reception.[404] Using not only the codices and the early woodcuts, but also murals and a comic, we encounter not only images that illustrate a text, but also adaptations that are comprised primarily of images. This chapter will treat the pictorial appropriations as equal to adaptations with a stronger focus on the verbal.[405] Thus, this chapter offers no text-image debate

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[403] "Selbst wenn man in Handschriften und Drucken von einer gewissen Stereotypie ausgehen kann, die auch die Präsentation von männlichen Personen vor Architektur umfasst, ist doch die Häufigkeit der Zuordnung von Frau zu Gebäuden und ihre Visualisierung als statische 'Ikonen' im Raum in den Bildprogrammen zum *Wigalois* bemerkenswert." (Andrea Grafetstätter, "'Nur was du nie gesehen wird ewig dauern:' weiblich besetzte Bildprogramme im *Wigalois*," in *Aktuelle Tendenzen der Artusforschung*, ed. Brigitte Burrichter [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013], 381-402, here 383). Women are mostly placed in architectural (and therefore safe) spaces or in the company of other women, including death or dying female figures. Even the wild woman Ruel in the Augsburg Print of 1519 is shown as wild women in either a save space that is architecturally framed or surrounded by other women. In all three sample-texts, women are reduced in their movements and are only shown within a limited space.

[404] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 6, 111; Böhme, "Vorwort," vii.

[405] In their essay collection *Writing and Seeing,* Rui Manuel G. de Carvalho Homem and Maria de Fátima Lambert question the stable and fixed notions of "verbal" and "visual" (Rui Manuel G. de Carvalho Homem and Maria de Fátima Lambert, *Writing and Seeing. Essays on Word and Image* [Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006]). Further, Curschmann has long worked in his research against a dichotomy between images and word (for example Michael Curschmann, "Epistemologisches am Schnittpunkt von Wort und Bild," in *Wort – Bild – Text. Studien zur Medialität des Literarischen in Hochmittelalter und früher Neuzeit,* volume 1, [Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 2007], 21-67, here 21). For Curschmann, the concept of image includes material representation as well as category

in the sense of an intermedial or iconotextual[406] discussion, but mainly an analysis as a dialogue

with other pictorial adaptations, and abolishes notions of textual autonomy. I use the term

"pictorial adaptation" to refer to Wigalois adaptations in which drawn or printed visual images

are present, thereby excluding material with only verbal images, such as ekphrases.

A focus on the pictorial adaptations as significant contribution to the Wigalois tradition –

by their own means and not just mere illustrations – foregrounds the strength and specifics of

images with regard to their narrativity.[407] The overarching question is how the pictorial tradition

offers different access to the narrative, available to the illustrations, but by no means better or

worse than the verbal approach. Bringing these adaptations into a dialogue uncovers shared

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imagery ["Bildlichkeit"] (Ibid.). But he also maintains that it is not necessarily useful to dispose of all borders completely. After all the Middle Ages often used analogue forms of communication; visible images and written/ spoken words often complemented each other. Curschmann argues that one should not forget the individual character of the respective medium (Ibid., 22). At the same time, no medium existed in the pure form: "Dabei wissen mittelalterliche Denker genauso wie postmoderne Theoretiker z. B. auch, daß keines der Medien je in ganz reiner Form existierte." (Ibid., 23).

[406] In the sense of iconotext as: "the use of (by way of reference or allusion, in an explicit or implicit way) an image in a text or vice versa." (Peter Wagner, "Introduction. Ekphrases, Iconotexts, and Intermediality. The State(s) of the Art(s),"in *Icons – Texts – Iconotext. Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996], 1-40, here 15). With this definition Wagner draws on Michael Nerlich, who uses the term iconotext to describe an artifact in which "text and image form a whole (or union) that cannot be dissolved." (Ibid.). Yet, the concept of Iconotext "can apply to pictures showing words or writing, but also to texts that work with images."(Wagner, "Introduction," 15). The term iconotext was first conceived by Michael Nerlich to describe the fusion of Evelyne Sinnassamy's work *La Femme se découvre*. Peter Wagner and Liliane Louvel have reworked and theorized the term (Sonia Lagerwall, "A Reading of Michel Butor's *La Modification* as an Emblematic Iconotext," in *Writing and Seeing. Essays on Word and Image*, ed. Rui Manuel G. Carvalho de Homem and Maria de Fatima Lambert [Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006], 119-129, here: 119). In his study on word and image in the Middle Ages, Wenzel points out: "In der Manuskriptkultur des 13. und 14. Jahrhundersts tendiert die Schrift zum Bild, das Bild zur Schrift." (Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen*, 299).

[407] Curschmann emphasizes the importance of the text, but describes a disengagement and emancipation process of the images: "Be it in manuscripts and thus in close proximity of the text (a text) or through largely isolated, floating images, in the dimension of pictorial representation the literary subject leads a separate, basically autonomous kind of life, a life that is different from that which it leads in the texts, although there may be a high degree of interdependence in individual instances. The text is the ultimate authority in the sense that it fashions the minimal consensus necessary to establish an iconographic tradition at all. But that tradition touches on other such traditions, reaches into other corners of literary and social consciousness, and in that way it helps shape the broader and consensus that determines the meaning of the story. It is a dimension of literature which we as literary historians ignore at our peril." (Michael Curschmann, "Images of Tristan," in *Wort – Bild – Text. Studien zur Medialität des Literarischen in Hochmittelalter und früher Neuzeit,* volume 1, [Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 2007], 227-251, here 250-251).

tendencies in representing the narrative. Firstly, in all examples discussed in this chapter, there is a reduction of accompanying stories (for example the epic Namur battle) and motifs (for example religion). The pictorial adaptations offer mainly a Wigalois-focused story as the tale of one heroic knight at the expense of accompanying discourses and sidelines. Secondly, the pictorial adaptations utilize their respective conditions to re-narrate the story differently than the verbal adaptations drawing on the space and its respective specific characteristics. Finally, it will become clear that the Wigalois story becomes a means to an end and serves as vehicle to discuss representation and courtly identity for the earlier and re-envisioning the Middle Ages for the modern adaptations. As we will see, the narrative proved easily adaptable for the different aims of the Romantics and post-modern audiences in regard to representation, regional pride, and modern medievalism.

This chapter's analyses commence with a brief discussion of the most famous illustrations of *Wigalois*, present in the Leiden Codex (1372), and the woodcuts in *Wigoleis vom Rade* (1483/93; 2nd edition 1519) as they offer a significant point of comparison. I will then discuss in depth the illustration cycle in Castel Runkelstein, Southern Tyrol, as a first solely pictorial adaptation. Commissioned around 1390 by the influential Bozen townsman Niklaus Vintler the murals of Wigalois decorated parts of the walls of the so-called summerhouse. The next example *Wigolais vom Rade* (1841) will bring us to the rebirth of the woodcut in Romanticism and Biedermeyer and the Romantic implications of depicting a medieval knight's tale. With the comic *Die phantastischen Abenteuer des Glücksritters Wigalois*, commissioned by the Kulturverein Wirnt von Gräfenberg e.V. in 2011, illustrations by Isidre Monés, colored by Jordi Bartoll, and a text paraphrasing Wirnt von Grafenberg's *Wigalois* by Manfred Schwab, I will discuss a contemporary example. The initial chronological – but by no means teleological –

structure will be interrupted by the final example of the sketch in the Yiddish Cod. Hebr. 255 as

it offers a recast of the tendencies within the pictorial adaptations in a nutshell. Not only is there

a connection in these pictorial adaptations, but the latest entry in the pictorial tradition, a

Wigalois comic from 2011, even emphasizes its identity as retelling and not only identifies its

models but also recommends them to its audience, thereby connecting 700 years of material. The

pictorial adaptations form their own tradition over time and respectively construct the Middle

Ages and knighthood distinctly from the verbal material. The motifs that prevail in the early

material supported the development of a tradition. The themes, essential parts of construction of

the Middle Ages and medieval courtly life and knighthood, were easily applicable and adaptable

to their respective times. It is thus possible that adaptors were aware of pictorial predecessors

within the Wigalois tradition and consciously draw on the material.

> Norbert Ott points out:
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> [C]omprehensive overviews of the complementary and complex relationship between literature and art in their respective manifestations and in the respective situation of their usage, whether these overviews are about the illustration of vernacular manuscripts or about the pictorial representations or whether they are more general in nature (and this should actually be the goal), are only truly useful and promising when they are based on a broad range of material.[408]

Thus, this chapter offers an analysis with a cross-temporal as well as a cross-lingual angle. Ott

asks further for methodological transformations, which

> […] can, however, in conjunction with the occasionally deprived, unspectacular, yet directly necessary 'positivist' preparation of materials, only come into being through interdisciplinary work in art history and literary tides, through the mutual and patient listening and the integrated cooperation of scholars in both, as well as other, disciplines.[409]

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[408] Norbert H. Ott, "Word and Image as a Field of Research. Sound Methodologies or just a fashionable Trend? A polemic from a European perspective," in *Visual Culture and the German Middle Ages*, ed. Kathryn Starkey and Horst Wenzel (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 15-32, here 26.

[409] Ibid.

Adaptation Studies offers such a methodological transformation, and with its interdisciplinary orientation allows for a fruitful analysis of such intermedial material, which includes medieval and modern pictorial artifacts, too.

Images are an essential part of the Wigalois tradition, which includes pictorial material from the 14th to the 21st century and highlights significant changes in media. Adaptation Studies supports an analysis beyond intertextual and paratextual relations, because it acknowledges an equality of text and image, regarding both as significant retellings. Thus, within an analysis of adaptation, including pictorial material deconstructs the supremacy of the word or *Logocentrism* as pressed for by the scholars Irina O. Rajewsky and Alfred Messerli.[410] Similarly, Ott voices his criticism of interdisciplinary research that implicitly continues to promote *logocentrism*:

> Transposing their own methodological discourse onto other disciplines without having been invited to do so, scholars of texts tend to claim interpretative supremacy for themselves: the text is seen as that which precedes the image, as that which exists prior to the images, and the image is presumed to accompany the text only as a secondary element.[411]

Therefore, Ott calls for a sound methodology and structure. An important aspect one should consider presents "the changes in the structure of the pictorial artifacts and in the situation in which they were used in their historical context, which allows drawing conclusions about the lives of texts themselves."[412]

Material with an origin in the medieval culture lends itself perfectly to calling this *Logocentrism* into question and revaluating the pictorial adaptations. The Middle Ages saw the increasing privileging of the image as immediate representation.[413] The essays in the collection

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[410] See Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

[411] Ott, "Word and Image as a Field of Research," 16.

[412] Ibid., 23.

[413] Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen*, 298.

Visual Culture and the German Middle Ages "challenge the idea the notion that visual culture is a modern paradigm:"[414]

> In fact, the visual culture paradigm is highly pertinent to premodern culture, which not only privileged sight and visual perception over other forms of reception and cognition but also gave rise to the numerous discourses on visuality that may be found in works of medieval secular poets, theologians, and scholastics alike.[415]

Further, image and text went hand in hand in the 13th and 14th century as Horst Wenzel points out: "In der Manuskriptkultur des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts tendiert die Schrift zum Bild, das Bild zur Schrift."[416] Writing not only references the image, but becomes image itself.[417] "Schreiben und Malen sind zwei Weisen des 'Sprechens', der künsterlischen Abbildung ein und derselben Welt."[418] Wenzel's term "Sprechen" does not imply a privileging of the word, but rather refers to communication in general, which becomes clear taking into account the density of linguistic fields and the relationship of words that describe writing, drawing, painting in Middle High German.[419]

Bringing together medieval and modern pictorial adaptations allows us to revaluate the images as this method uncovers a distinct medial tradition, a tradition early one detached from the written Wigalois versions. The modern material, especially the comic, cannot be fully comprehended without the connection to the older material. The modern adaptations themselves emphasize this connection, as we will see later. Medievalists are currently analyzing the modern

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[414] Kathryn Starkey, "Visual Culture and the German Middle Ages," in *Visual Culture and the German Middle Ages*, ed. Kathryn Starkey and Horst Wenzel (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 1-12, here 2.

[415] Ibid.

[416] As example he references the illustrated initials in manuscripts or banners in illustrations (Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen*, 298).

[417] Ibid., 300.

[418] Ibid., 301.

[419] Ibid.

notions and use of images in a close relation to the medieval pictorial culture. Bettina Bildhauer points out how by drawing on film and photography media scholars already in the first half of the 20th century diagnosed a return to a pictorial society. In her monograph on "medieval film," she takes this argument further to include modern media.[420] The recent success of social media platforms such as instagram, tumblr, and vine, where communication happens primarily by the use of images, supports such a claim. For the Wigalois tradition images are equally relevant in medieval as in modern adaptations. I do not argue that the pictorial cultures of the medieval and pre-modern culture are the same, which would be an oversimplification, ignoring such significant differences as matters of accessibility and the distribution. Visuality had a stronger impact and was clearly different in the Middle Ages than in our modern world. However, scholars have pointed towards a current return to visual culture.

4.1   Leiden Codex: Establishing a Pictorial Tradition

Already the first example, the earliest fully illustrated *Wigalois* manuscript, provides audiences with a distinct recast of the narrative, emphasizing knighthood and two-on-two combat. The Leiden Codex[421] was produced around 1372 for the Duke of Brunswick-Grubenhagen and features Wirnt von Grafenberg's text together with 47 full- and half-page-illustrations, which are

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[420] "Media theory continues to diagnose the departure from a modern culture dominated by print, linear time and individualism into a new Middle Ages, this time not only through film but through new media more generally." (Bettina Bildhauer, *Filming the Middle Ages* [London: Reaktion Books, 2011], 218). Although Bildhauer agrees with the notion of a return to the Middle Ages in regard to the use and utilization of images, she disagrees with the stereotypical portrayal of the Middle Ages by these scholars in regard to media, time, and individualism.

[421] The second known illustrated *Wigalois* codex, produced in the famous workshop of Diebold Lauber, formerly known as (Fürstlich Fürstenbergische Hofbibliothek) Donaueschingen Ms. 71, is no longer accessible to public as it is owned by the antiquarian book seller Heribert Tenschert since 2009 ("Wigalois," *Handschriftencensus* accessed February 15, 2016, http://www.handschriftencensus.de/7305.

not evenly distributed across the manuscript.[422] Images in the Leiden Codex often follow right after the very scene they depict and mostly correspond with the previous passages, reiterating their content or emphasizing a different aspect of the scene at hand. Most of the pictures are divided in a 50:50 ratio by an element of architecture or nature. The atmosphere – an important theme in Wirnt's text as discussed already in the second chapter – is further enhanced by the intense background colors of the illustrations, especially a dark red.

One group of images focuses on marvelous or enchanted creatures: the enchanted king as panther-like black animal (46v, 47v), the enchanted, fighting knights in flames (47r), the dragon (53r, 53v), and finally, Ruel (68v, 69r). The codex already opens with a title picture showing marvelous animals (1v). Another accumulation of images accompanies the story of the fisherman and his wife (56r, 56v, 57v, 58r). A special focus within the depictions lies on Wigalois' identity; the "loss" and reconstruction of it play another central role within the illustrations. The stone of virtue, underscoring Wigalois' identity as perfect knight, is depicted in an exposed position, in the middle of an image that also includes the wheel as coat of arms (15r). Further, the dialogue between Lar and Wigalois (49v) is given a full page, emphasizing the moment in which the king discloses Wigalois' heritage with the focus on the patriarchal line. The illustrations even mark the changes in status and identity. As long as Wigalois' role is primarily that of a knight errant, all pictures showing Wigalois include a horse, even if it is just standing on one of the sides as in 51v. After the final quest, the status of Wigalois changes to

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[422] The masterfully illustrated codex gained a lot of scholarly attention with a variety of research foci. Becker, for example, analyzes the images of dialogical scenes and claims that the emphasis of the codex illustrations lies on the spoken word in form of verbal interactions (Becker, "Dialogszenen in Text und Bild," 21). Grafetstätter places her argument in the traditional scholarly debate as to whether or not illustrations in medieval codices were meant for an illiterate audience. She comes to the conclusion that in some cases the illustrations indeed enabled a retelling of the story (Grafetstätter, "'Nur was du nie gesehen wird ewig dauern'," 385).

that of a king. Starting with 95v Wigalois is depicted as a king with a crown and a beard,

without even his former code of arms depicting the Wheel of Fortune (esp. 96r, 97r).

Interestingly, the Namur battle – more than two thousand verses of about twelve thousand of

Wigalois – is not depicted at all. The images omit the depiction of this epic battle in favor of

more intimate scenes of knightly combat.[423] Some scenes – especially encounters of knights on

horses – even seem repetitive as they look very similar in regard to their illustrative presentation.

Many illustrations show two knights on horses facing each other and fighting with lances, mainly

depicted from the side. Despite looking similar, the knights are always differentiable and

identifiable by their respective coat of arms (22r, 24r, 31v, 40 v, 71v).

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[423] In his dissertation, James Brown argues that there is an emphasis on heraldry and courtly topics as well as religious motifs (Brown, *Imagining the Text*, 198). Although Henderson points out the special emphasis on courtly ceremonies and combat scenes (Ingeborg Henderson, "Manuscript Illustrations as Generic Determinants in Wirnt von Gravenberg's *Wigalois*," in *Genres in Medieval German Literature*, ed. Hubert Heinen and Ingeborg Henderson [Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1986], 59-73, here 63), she argues that the Leiden Codex, written by a Cistercian monk, displays primarily a strong interest in dark forces and heathens and with its "increased significance to the hero's description as a Christian warrior and to his quest as a religious cause" offered an opportunity for the monk to combat the infidels through pen and paper (Ibid., 65, 69,70).

Figure 2: Wigalois in knightly combat

Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, LTK 537, fol. 40v (ca. 1372).

This illustration from folio 40v captures the knightly combat scenes and is thus at the beginning of a pictorial tradition. Considering that the illustrations already present a form of reception, such scenes underscore the reception's interest in two-on-two combat as "classic," strictly knightly scenes par excellence and on Wigalois as single hero. Despite rendering illustrations to Wirnt's text, Leiden Codex marks the beginning of a tendency that will continue within later pictorial adaptations: the focus on the personal combat scenes in contrast to large campaigns, such as the battle of Narmur.

Nine verses about the history of Leiden Codex end the manuscript. They include the mentioning of Jan von Brunswick as a writer in Amelungsborn, who (presumably) inserts a "self-portrait" on the last page of the *Wigalois* manuscript that he copied (and?) illustrated.[424]

Figure 3: The scribe at the desk
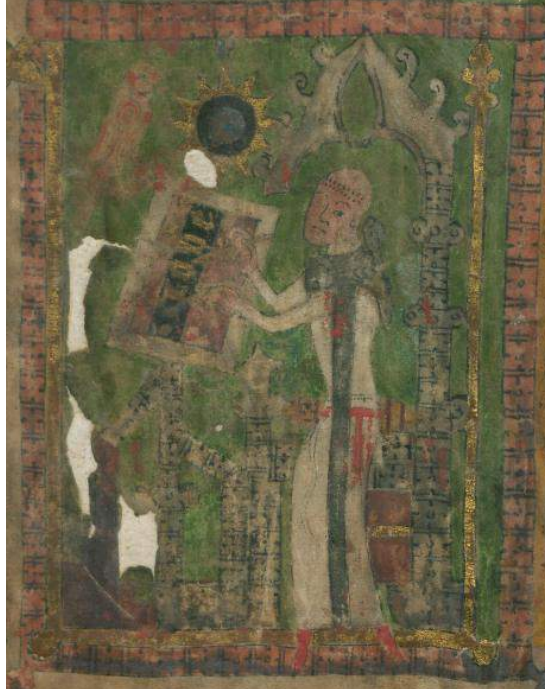
Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, LTK 537, fol. 118r (ca. 1372).

Almost like a *mise en abyme,* the codex includes the image of the scribe writing the codex. This final image emphasizes the interaction of written text and illustration. It is possible to interpret this mirroring of one form of adaptation within the other as one of the markers Thomas Leitch has developed for adaptations. His list of potential elements indicating an artifacts adaptation identity includes the fetishizing of the written word.[425] However, the scribe, medium of and lord over the written words, succumbs to the power of the pictorial. Despite the manuscript's combination of a verbal and a pictorial retelling the Wigalois narrative, in its last illustration, the

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[424] Muriel A. Whitaker, *The Legends of King Arthur in Art* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 1990), 21.

[425] Leitch, "Adaptation, the Genre," 111-113.

Leiden Codex spearheads a pictorial tradition that develops its own take on the narrative and enable a more unbound retelling allowing for the possibilities of illustrations to unfold.[426]

4.2   *Wigoleis*: **Zooming in on the Main Hero**

Much alike the manuscript illustrations, the pictorial material in early printed books offers an important insight into the reception of a respective text. The illustrations in incunabula were primarily indented for stipulating the selling of the books.[427] A printed book needed to be financially successful, and hope for this rested on the images to increase turnover. Early on, the Wigalois adaptations presented texts that appealed to printers as potential strong-selling items. I am using the first edition of the first printed adaptation, *Wigoleis vom Rade*, printed first in 1493 in Augsburg,[428] for my comparison to other illustrated adaptations. Since the first few pages are missing, scholars often have used the second edition of 1519 from Strasbourg, for which Johann Knoblauch reworked the text extensively.[429] The complete incunabulum included 35 black-and-

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[426] Similarly, the Vienna Codex at Österreichische Nationalbibliothek depicts Wolfram on folio 313r as scribe in front of a desk, an open book before him. (The codex contains the contemporaneous adaptations of the Willehalm material, including Ulrich von Türheim's *Rennewart*) ,Ernst argues, this image underscores how writing – by depicting different media such as letters and techniques of writing books – constitutes a significant theme in illustrations of vernacular epics and romances (Ulrich Ernst, "Written Communication in the Illustrated Epic Poem," in *Visual Culture and the German Middle Ages*, ed. Kathryn Starkey and Horst Wenzel [New York: Palgrave, 2005], 73-95, here 80).

[427] As Ader points out: "Der Inkunabelbestand des 15. und die Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts, die Epentexte enthalten, bilden ein eigenständiges Korpus, das mittelalterliche Erzähltraditionen umformt und neue Typen ästhetischer Erfahrung voraussetzt und bildet. Es handelt sich um eine produktive Rezeptionsgeschichte, bei der Neues aus Altem entsteht." (Dorothee Ader, *Prosaversionen höfischer Epen in Text und Bild. Zur Rezeption des 'Tristrant' im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* [Heidelberg: Winter, 2010], 8, 17). The number of illustrated texts increased dramatically in the 15th ct., especially since there was a demand for the "classics" (Cruschmann, "Wort – Schrift – Bild," Schrift-Bild," 719).

[428] The importance of the Augsburg workshop increased in the 15th ct. when it became one of the leading institutions (Ader, "Prosaversionen höfischer Epen in Text und Bild," 20).

[429] Within these ten years, Knoblauch began to rework the first part of the edition thoroughly, a task which he eventually completed for the second edition of 1519.

white woodcuts, each preceded by a titulus, representing an early form of chapter titles.[430] The

evenly distributed woodcuts (one every two to three pages) help to structure the narrative for

readers, although not all illustrations do correspond with the text.[431]

> Brown uses *Wigoleis* as an example of a successful combination of word and image:

> In this new narrative, word and image truly work together. Where descriptions demarcate
> important junctures and transitions in the thirteenth-century poem, this structural function
> has been taken over in the sixteenth-century version by the woodcut illustrations. The
> description in the verse romance operate on a meta-textual level that allows the hearers
> and readers to impress the tale's important ideas into the mind's eye as mental images.[432]

Indeed, corresponding with the changes within the verbal retelling of the story (see the second

chapter of this dissertation), "marvelous" elements in the accompanying woodcuts are

emphasized and portrayed in a stronger black-and-white framework. Several tendencies in

illustrating the text are not only caused by the changes in the narrative itself, but also react

directly to a change in contemporaneous aesthetics. The new attitude towards experience and

witnessing culture ["Erfahrung" / "Augenschein"][433] is "translated" into the illustrations by

including additional figures, witnesses in contrast to the illustrations of Leiden Codex. Often

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[430] Once the printing of wood block and letterpress type in one single frame was technically mastered, the woodcut
became the leading medium for illustrations (Daniela Laube, "The Stylistic Development of German Book
Illustrations, 1460- 1511," in *A Heavenly Craft. The Woodcut in Early Printed Books*, ed. Daniel De Simone [New
York: George Braziller, 2004], 47-71, here 47). Classen's claim that the incunabula illustrations were included for a
potentially less skilled readership follows up on the general debate that started with pope Gregory's statement. Pope
Gregory argued that the images are meant to convey respective stories for the illiterate (Albrecht Classen, *The
German Volksbuch. A Critical History of a Late-Medieval Genre* [Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995], 66).

[431] A seemingly unfitting illustration for example is supposed to depict how Roaz attacks the king, although it shows
two figures in bed. Yet, it could be interpreted as underscoring the treachery of Roaz (Biiir).

[432] Brown, *Imagining the Text*, 260.

[433] James Hamilton Brown, "Poetry as Source for Illustrated Prose. The 1519 Strassburg 'Wigoleis vom Rade',"
Fifteenth Century Studies 34 (2009): 24-47, here 28.

additional witnesses next to walls, above walls, in windows in a variety of scenes, such as in scenes of knightly combat or in the stone-of-virtue scene (Biir) are included:[434]

Figure 4: Wigalois on the Stone of Virtue

Wigoleis vom Rade, fol. Biir (Straßburg, 1519).

The pictorial part of the adaption thus incorporates contemporary discourses that are not visible in the written part.

A few additional – and seemingly minor – details show that the pictorial part of the adaptation displays a shift within the focus of the retelling. Despite these additional "witness-figures," the pictorial narrative continues to focus on knighthood as seen in the Leiden Codex. Yet, in contrast to the codex, only the hero's coat of arms, the Wheel of Fortune, is depicted throughout the incunabulum, not that of any opponent knight, indicating a shifting focus from knighthood and knightly culture to one main hero. Already the title page of the second edition from 1519 includes a picture that displays a riding knight, holding a banner that shows the Wheel of Fortune as code of arms. It is repeated on the following page with the titulus: "Herr Wigoleis vom Rade der hochberiempt vnd edel Ritter von der tafel runde." (Aiir). The next illustration

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[434] According to the *titulus*, Avr depicts a knight sitting on the stone, when on the picture, he is in fact standing next to it (Avr). This depiction, however, corresponds with the one from Leiden Codex.

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presenting the wheel as code of arms shows Gawein and Joram in front of a wheel structure at Joram's place (Aiiiir). But similarly to the Leiden manuscript, the shift in identity brings the temporal loss of Wigalois' code of arms. During the wedding (Jiiv) or as king receiving a messenger (Jiiiv) Wigalois is depicted without the Wheel of Fortune, his usual code of arms, as his role is not that of a knight in this scene. Returning from the battlefield of Namur in the company of many other armored knights (Kiiv), Wigalois depiction includes the wheel again, making him stand out from the otherwise not further identified crowd.

Figure 5: Wigalois leading the Namur campaign

Wigoleis vom Rade, fol. Kiiv (Straßburg, 1519).

Wigalois stands out, especially in company of other knights. In a woodcut depicting the return of the army from the Namur campaign, the viewer is presented with a large group of knights in armor, but only one is individualized in this woodcut by his crest, a wheel. It is Wigalois. This is the only illustration of the Namur battle within *Wigoleis* and thus an episode that includes many formidable fighters, men and women, among them. The leveling of the participants in order to make Wigalois stand out underscores the illustrations' tendency to focus only on the main hero. All that is left from the epic Namur battle is Wigalois' participation in the campaign. The omission of other figures, such as the giants and the wild woman, parallels the

drastic reduction in the Namur episode. Diverting subplots and other knights are omitted in order to present a stringent and very focused narrative of one single knight and the construction of his knightly identity. *Wigoleis* continues the reductionist retelling of the narrative, much like Leiden Codex, by focusing on a main hero and thus consolidates the image of a representative knight on his own.

Significantly, illustrations that feature motifs special to the Wigalois narratives, such as the Wheel of Fortune and the stone of virtue, indicate that at least some of the woodcuts have been produced exclusively for the *Wigoleis* edition.[435] Cain van d'Eiden differentiates between generic and specific illustrations of manuscripts and early prints, where 'generic' ones could appear in any "epic," and "specific" ones only in connection to the respective narrative, such as the Wheel of Fortune in combat or the stone of virtue scene. Further, the illustrations all seem to adhere to the same style. To make incunabula profitable, printing blocks were often reused for other book projects.[436] In order to make the woodcuts easily adaptable, illustrations often consisted of two halves that could be paired with others. The fact that neither of the woodcuts in *Wigoleis* comprises of two separate halves indicates that either all woodcuts have been made exclusively for the *Wigoleis* edition, or at least that the specific images were created for that edition and filled up with other woodcuts of the same style from other projects. Either way, the woodcuts signify a strong emphasis on and value of illustrations. Since projects had to be

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[435] "Generic scenes, in contrast to specific ones, cannot be identified without some sort of inscription, rubric, identifier, or chronological position in the story. They may serve as filler, they may serve to organize or outline the text, or they may simply decorate. They interrupt the writing on the manuscript page and give the reader's eyes a rest." (Cain van D'Elden, "Specific and Generic Scenes in Verse *Tristan* Illustrations," in *Visuality and Materiality in the Story of Tristan and Isolde*, ed. Jutta Eming, Ann Marie Rasmussen, and Kathryn Starkey [Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012], 269-298, here 282). According to van D'Elden in non-specific scenes, a knight would never be identified as Tristan; only the context enables such as an understanding (Ibid., 269. 270, 263, 282)

[436] On that topic, see for example: Paul Kristeller, *Die Strassburger Bücher-Illustration im 15. und im Anfange des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Seemann, 1888), 1.

economically valuable, this displays a trust in a successful selling of the book. And it seems that *Wigoleis* indeed proofed a financial success as the second edition was commissioned about 20 years later. *Wigoleis* initiates a *narrowing* of text and image, underscoring the significance of a pictorial retelling of the narrative.

4.3   Runkelstein: Retelling and Representation

Almost 100 years before *Wigoleis vom Rade* and about contemporary with the Leiden Codex, the Vintler brothers, social climbers, decided that the Wigalois narrative would fit perfectly in the decorative program of their recently acquired castle Runkelstein in Bolzano (South Tyrol).[437] As a stand alone without accompanying text (except for some inscriptions), the Wigalois murals represent a very unique take on the narrative and the only known exclusively pictorial adaptation.[438] In contrast to the manuscript and book illustrations, the murals perform their task within a three-dimensional space that includes walls and the layout of the room, which the images incorporate into the retelling of the narrative. Despite the completely different form of presenting the narrative, the changes within the pictorial tradition that emphasizes the knight of the wheel as the hero, who proves himself mainly in combat with a respective other, be it dragon,

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[437] Runkelstein was by no means the only castle with extensive illustrations based on Arthurian material. Castle Rodenegg, located about 58 km north of Runkelstein, for example is famous for its well-preserved cycle of Iwein murals. As Curschmann writes: "[W]all-paintings in various forms had been a truly major industry in the South Tyrol since the Carolingian period." (Michael Curschmann, "*Der aventure bilde nemen.* The Intellectual and Social Environment of the Iwein Murals at Rodenegg Castle," in *Wort – Bild – Text. Studien zur Medialität des Literarischen in Hochmittelalter und früher Neuzeit,* volume 1, [Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 2007]).

447-455, here 454). David von Schönherr introduces the castle, set on a small hill on the outskirt of the small Italian city, to the readers of his monograph from 1874: "Doch setzen wir uns noch einen Augenblick auf die Felsenbank vor das Schloßthor und blättern wir hier ein wenig in der alten Chronik von Runkelstein. Hier an der alten, stolzen Pforte, durch die viel Freude und Herzeleid, viel edle Männer und holde Frauen, auch 'der letzte Ritter,' Kaiser Maximilian, gezogen, ist der rechte Platz zur historischen Erinnerung." (David von Schönherr, *Das Schloss Runkelstein bei Bozen. Mit einem Inventar des Schlosses von 1493* [Inssbruck: Wagner, 1874], 25).

[438] Decorative paintings inside of castle walls became popular in the 13th ct. The main sources for such murals were illustrated manuscripts (Whitaker, *The Legends of King Arthur in Art*, 121).

wild woman, or an opponent knight, are present as well. Even the best of all knights, Wigalois'

father Gawein, is no longer necessary to underscore his son's perfection and loses his

importance. Further, in addition to offering the retelling of a narrative, the murals in Runkelstein

fulfill a second large function as they support the castle owners' construction of identity –

especially in the light of their newly gained social position.[439]

The castle was built between 1237 and 1242, but its real heyday did not begin until 1317

when the brothers Franz and Niklaus Vintler received it as fief by the Bishop of Trent.[440] They

rebuilt the castle and gave it its modern form, reconstructing the interior as well as the exterior

with the aims to establish and strengthen its representative function.[441] The building of the so-

called Sommerhaus, in which the Wigalois murals are to be found, was part of their rebuilding

strategies. The castle's inside and outside illustrate an ongoing dialogue between the respective

owners and the building; each new lord applied his aesthetics, respectively. Emperor

Maximilian, for example, was so intrigued by the murals of Runkelstein that he commissioned

their "restoration," which included adding new colors, inscriptions, and motifs, such as his coat

of arms; adding another layer of meaning and representation.[442]

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[439] Early on, Arthurian material provided motifs for murals. Iwein in Rodenegg, South Tyrol, represents the oldest extant series of Arthurian murals. Painted around 1200, the murals are presumably based of Hartmann's *Iwein* (Whitaker, *The Legends of King Arthur in Art*, 125).

[440] Josef Riedmann, "Die Anfänge von Runkelstein. Im Kontext der Auseinandersetzung zwischen den Herren von Wangen, den Bischöfen von Trient, Kaiser Friedrich II. und den Grafen von Tirol," in *Schloß Runkelstein – die Bilderburg*, ed. André Bechtold and Maria Maddalena Rudari (Bozen: Athesia, 2000), 15-29, here 23, 28; Joachim Zeune, "Burg Runkelstein durch die Jahrhunderte. Burgenkundliche und baugeschichtliche Marginalien," in *Schloß Runkelstein – die Bilderburg*, ed. André Bechtold and Maria Maddalena Rudari (Bozen: Athesia, 2000), 31-47, here 39; Kristina Domanski and Margit Krenn, "Die profanen Wandmalereien im Westpalas," in *Schloß Runkelstein – die Bilderburg*, ed. André Bechtold and Maria Maddalena Rudari (Bozen: Athesia, 2000), 51.98, here 51; Armin Torggler, "Anmerkungen zur Baugeschichte von Schloss Runkelstein," in *Burgenbau im späten Mittelalter* volume 2, ed. Ulrich Grossmann and Hartmut Hofrichter (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1996), 149-162, here 148-149.

[441] Zeune, "Burg Runkelstein durch die Jahrhunderte," 39, 41.

[442] Anja Grebe, "Die Burg Runkelstein. Kunstgeschichte als Restaurierungsgeschichte. Bau und Ausstattung zwischen Tradition und Innovation,", *Burgenbau im späten Mittelalter*, volume 2, ed. Ulrich Grossmann and

An explosion of the gunpowder supplies in 1520 caused the first significant damage to the castle and initiated its centuries of decay.[443] The Romantics rediscovered the castle around 1800, bringing it to the attention of Ludwig I of Bavaria, who sent an expert to study and evaluate the murals.[444] In 1881, Archduke Johann Salvator of Austria bought the castle and gave it as a gift to Emperor Franz Joseph I.[445] The emperor quickly cast off the derelict castle in urgent need of renovation and in 1893 donated it to the city of Bozen, requesting them to undertake extensive preservation work.[446] In 1853, during work on the street below the hill on which the castle is situated, an explosion caused an immediate rock fall and more slides in the long haul, which caused the loss of many murals at Runkelstein.[447]

The Runkelstein murals draw extensively on historical, fictional, and intellectual-philosophical contemporaneous discourses. But the murals also display their commissioners' sense of humor, emphasized by droll depictions of animals and a (presumable) "mock code of arms" on the first floor.[448] The Westpalas' and Sommerhaus' (the two main sections of the castle) illustrations differ crucially.[449] Whereas the murals in the Westpalas focus on knightly

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Hartmut Hofrichter (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1996), 163-174, here 168; "Kaiser Maximilian war selbst auf dem Runkelstein, dessen 'gute alten Istori' (Historien), wie er die Bilder in seinem Memoirenbuch nennt, sein ritterlich Herz baß erfreuten. Da die Bilder im Verlaufe der Zeit gelitten hatten, beschloß er sie restaurieren zu lassen […]." (Schönherr, *Das Schloss Runkelstein bei Bozen*, 30).

[443] Schönherr, *Das Schloss Runkelstein bei Bozen*, 34.

[444] Ibid., 42.

[445] Walter Haug, "Einleitung," in *Runkelstein. Die Wandmalereien des Sommerhauses*, ed. Walter Haug (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1982), 9-14, here 11.

[446] Ibid.; Carl Höffinger, *Burg Runkelstein bei Bozen* (Wien: Holzhausen, 1889), 7.

[447] Zeune, "Burg Runkelstein durch die Jahrhunderte," 41.

[448] René Wetzel, "Konvention und Konversation. Die Wandbilder von Runkelstein und ihre Betrachter," in *Literatur und Wandmalerei 2. Konventionalität und Konversation*, ed. Eckart Conrad Lutz (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005), 521-537, here 524.

[449] Domanski / Krenn, "Die Profanen Wandmalereien im Westpalas," 51.

and courtly life in general, evoking a court's atmosphere with paintings of balconies from which figures are watching the actual people in the respective room,[450] the Sommerhaus represents a much stronger focus on literature.[451] Four triads along the balcony of the Sommerhaus introduce the depiction of entire narratives representing historical and fictional heroes: Hector, Caesar, and Alexander; David, Joshua, and Judas Maccabaeus; Charlemagne, Arthur, and Gottfried von Bouillon; Parzival, Gawein, and Iwein; Tristan and Isolde, Wilhelm von Österreich and Aglie, and Willhelm von Orleans and Amlis. Another row of figures shows male and female giants and dwarves, among them Wigalois' Ruel dressed in chain mail, holding a sword.[452]

Ruel connects the balcony to the three main cycles of literary illustrations inside the Sommerhaus: Wigalois, Garel, and Tristan.[453] Although the castle is heavily illustrated and features many topics, the stories of Wigalois, Garel, and Tristan, receive the most attention as the only literature programs consisting of a larger sequence of murals.[454] All three, the Garel, the Tristan, and the Wigalois cycle include illustrations of marvelous creatures, especially dragons.

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[450] It also features many different local and exotic animals. In the so-called Tournament hall, we find both illustrations of spectacles as well as spectators, including Jewish spectators.

[451] Although the seven liberal arts are depicted in an arcade.

[452] The accompanying inscription reads: "under allen ungehevren w(eibern) (mag) man si fvr die freidigsten schreiben" and the name "Ruel."

[453] Whitaker points out that the depiction of the three great Christian worthies, Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Boulogne, is a popular theme in early castle murals (Whitaker, *The Legends of King Arthur in Art*, 122).

[454] The combination of these novels posed a riddle to many scholars and has to be interpreted within the framework of reception. *Tristan* was a story used extensively for decorating a huge variety of objects. Yet, the same cannot be said about *Garel* or *Wigalois*. Haug tries to explain the choices: "Verglichen mit der Literatursituation im 13. Jarhrhundert bedeutet dies: der Roman tritt nicht mehr an den Hörer heran, um ihm im Mittvollzug einen Erfahrungsprozeß abzuverlangen, er präsentiert sich aber auch nicht mehr als ein Sprachkunstwerk, das über seine Faszination seine Unverbindlichkeit zu durchstoßen und sein Wertkonzept über die Rampe zu bringen sucht, sondern die Literatur erscheint nun als Horziont formvoller Gestaltung, auf die man die chaotisch-verzeweiflungsvolle Wirklichkeit bezieht, um sie von ihm her entweder zu überspielen oder umzuprägen." (Walter Haug, "Das Bildprogramm im Sommerhaus von Runkelstein," in *Runkelstein. Die Wandmalereien des Sommerhauses*, ed. Walter Haug et al. (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1982), 15-62, here 59). About *Garel* in particular, he writes further: "Der 'Garel' schließlich gilt für uns geradezu als der Inbergiff dessen. Was man als epigonenhaft zu bezeichnen pflegt." (Ibid., 35).

The focus in the Garel cycle lies on fighting scenes and battles, within the framework of the Round Table.[455] The Tristan cycle focuses on the travel to Ireland, the meeting between Tristan and Isolde, and emphasizes in particular fealty, with a special attention on Brangäne. Only a few fights are included, among them the combat between Tristan and the dragon.[456]

The Wigalois murals are located in the so-called Bogenhalle on the ground floor of the Sommerhaus. In my analysis, I primarily draw on the sketches of count Ernst Karl von Waldstein, first published in 1892, as the larger part of the murals is lost today and the remaining images are difficult to make out.[457] Waldstein preserved thirteen[458] images that remained after 1868 (even though mostly in poor condition) in sketches.[459] Today, some of the remaining murals are still accessible in Runkelstein, although it is almost impossible to make out the remaining images, which were exposed to heavy weather and have not (yet?) been restored.

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[455] "Der gesamte Bildzyklus präsentieret den Titelhelden Garel als einen Ritter, der durch seine Aventiurefahrt im Dienste des Königs Artus' zu einem vorbildlichen Mitglied der Tafelrunde avanciert und Herrschertugenden wie Milde und Stärke vereind. Das Element der Minne, welches zur Erzähltradition vieler mittelhochdeutscher Ritterromane zählt, tritt ganz in den Hintergrund." (Domanski / Krenn, „Die Profanen Wandmalereien im Sommerhaus," 133). See further Huschenbett, who argues that the focus in *Garel* lies primarily in clothing, armor, code of arms, and the courtly wedding (Dietrich Huschenbett, "Des Pleiers 'Garel' und sein Bildzyklus auf Runkelstein," in *Runkelstein. Die Wandmalereien des Sommerhauses*, ed. Walter Haug et al. [Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1982], 100-128, here 100-101).

[456] The Tristan cycle partially consisted of terraverde murals with over-paintings dating from around 1500 – some display "improvements" of the 19th century – and partially of murals commissioned by emperor Maximilian I. Thus, the Tristan cycle developed in stages from the 15th to the 16th century and displays long working and reworking processes. (Grebe, "Die Burg Runkelstein," 168). Some of the Tristan illustrations are only preserved in sketches (Haug, "Das Bildprogramm im Sommerhaus von Runkelstein," 36).

[457] The original sketches by Waldstein are missing; only the prints in *Mittheilungen der K.K. Central-Comission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der kunst- und historischen Denkmale* survived (Haug, "Einleitung," 13).

[458] Different scholars count different images as one or two separate images.

[459] The scenes Waldstein counted as 19 to 22 were lost in the restoration of 1885/6.

Figure 6: Wigalois following the bewitched (animal) king (Runkelstein, Sommerhaus)

Photo provided by Daniel Pizzinini, Runkelstein. © Stiftung Bozner Schlösser.

Therefore, Waldstein's sketches represent the most important source in regard to the pictorial material; his accompanying interpretations, however, should be perceived with caution.[460] For eight of the illustrations, Waldstein only offers a vague interpretation, marked by question marks in his descriptions, but he does not attempt sketches.[461] Since so many murals disappeared, an analysis uncovers tendencies that hold true to the preserved images but cannot be tested with regard to the complete cycle as visible in 1390.

In an essay from 1892, Waldstein presents the audiences with the murals by placing his sketches within the Wiaglois narrative.[462] In order to place the images in the larger context of the

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[460] Although Waldstein's drawings are characterized by an attempt to copy the murals "faithfully," the sketches themselves represent adaptations and to some extent interpretations by Waldstein.

[461] Ernst Karl von Waldstein, "Die *Wigalois* Bilder im Sommerhause der Burg Runkelstein," *Mittheilungen der K.K. Central-Comission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der kunst- und historischen Denkmale* 13 (1887): clix-clxi, here clix.

[462] Ernst Karl von Waldstein, "Die Bilderreste des *Wigalois*-Cyclus zu Runkelstein," *Mittheilungen der K.K. Central-Comission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der kunst- und historischen Denkmale* 18 (1892): 34-38, 83-89, 129-132.

story, Waldstein provides the readers with the respective passage from Wirnt's adaptation (based on the 1926 edition of Kapteyn) and then matches the passage with the corresponding reference to the sketch. He thus makes two significant choices for the interpretation of the murals. First of all, Waldstein promotes the idea that Wirnt von Grafenberg's text served as model for the murals' creator(s). Yet it is difficult, judging from the preserved illustrations, to decide whether or not other (oral or written) adaptations were already available and could have been a source for the artist(s) of the murals.[463] Waldstein further implies a single model instead of allowing for the possibility of several influences. Taking into account the semi-oral culture of the Middle Ages and the early modern period, the distribution of these texts both orally and in written form offers a certain freedom in the illustrations and makes finding a model more difficult if not impossible. Finally, by presenting the images together with the respective text passages, Waldstein not only assumes implicitly that the murals are directly based on a text, but also turns the images into mere illustrations of a text again.

Composed in a terraverde (black/ white lines on a greenish ground with white lights spots and some red highlights),[464] the murals are comprised of over forty images.[465] Although more than half of the cycle is lost, the scope seems very extensive. Some of the scenes are accompanied by names or whole phrases. The Wigalois illustrations begin on the upper part of

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[463] Interestingly, Waldstein later changed the number of the illustrations as he revalued what to count as one image and when to speak of two independent ones, which made him decrease the number to 18 in his essay from 1892 (Waldstein, "Die Wigalois Bilder im Sommerhause der Burg Runkelstein," clix, footnote 2). For a further discussion of Waldstein's grouping and numbering of the images see (Dietrich Huschenbett, "Beschreibung der Bilder des 'Wigalois'-Zyklus," in *Runkelstein. Die Wandmalereien des Sommerhauses*, ed. Walter Haug et al. [Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1982],170-177, here 171).

[464] Waldstein was the first to argue that the repetition of some names and some lines of intense red, illustrating fire or blood, date from one of the conservatory processes and not form the initial project (Waldstein, "Die Wigalois Bilder im Sommerhause der Burg Runkelstein," clix).

[465] Rushing, "The Medieval German Pictorial Evidence," 271.

the western wall and probably consisted of over forty continuing scenes. The first surviving

sketch depicts the scene in which a knight on a horse (presumably Joram) hands a belt to a lady

looking out of a castle tower (presumably Guinivere), resembling a similar illustration in Leiden

Codex (4r). Following on this mural is a bipartite illustration, showing Gawein (inscription:

Gabein) fighting, and Gawein (inscription: Gabein) riding away, and another image, in which

Gawein arrives in the company of a second knight at a castle, welcomed by its inhabitants.[466]

Due to the missing wall and the loss of some of Waldstein's sketches, there is a larger gap

between the first three and the following illustration, which depicts courtly fighting scenes. The

next four scenes concern the encounter with the enchanted king and his men, including the king's

depiction as a panther with a crown. Following this group are three images concerned with the

topic of the dragon fight. The first shows the dragon Phetan abducting Count Moral (inscription

reads: "graf moral"), and Wigalois meeting Baleare (inscriptions read: "belehar" and "vigelas"),

who is mourning the loss of her husband, Count Moral. The next preserved image depicts the

fisherman and his wife, discovering Wigalois. While his wife is touching the knight lying on the

ground, the fisherman displays a warning hand gesture as he stands beside her.[467] This scene is

connected to the next, showing the searching Baleare (inscription) on the right, and the naked

and sequestered Wigalois on the left. Concluding the sketches, the final preserved scene shows a

castle and Wigalois (inscription) entering it without armor, led by other people on the left side of

the building, but secretly leaving it alone on a horse, now in armor, on the right side.

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[466] Waldstein, "Die Wigalois Bilder im Sommerhause der Burg Runkelstein," clix.

[467] Here, oral sphere is still visible in form of a raised finger as universal sign and attempt of the artists to evoke the sound of a voice (See further Michael Camille, "Seeing and Reading. Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Art History* 8, no. 1 [1985]: 26-49, here 28).

Marvelous creatures such as the dragon and the wild woman receive special attention within the cycle.[468] Additional illustrations, according to Waldstein, depicted Wigalois as prisoner of Ruel, the sword wheel (emphasized by the inscription: "daz mit kreften umbe gie, scharfe Schwertern und Kolben"), and Wigalois fighting with what Waldstein calls the "umgehtüm Marien" (inscription reads "maryen"). Ruel is already featured in the triads of marvelous creatures.[469] Despite these scenes only being reported by Waldstein, they emphasize the murals' artist's or the Vintler's interest in marvelous creatures. The dragon is depicted in much detail, including his teeth, ears, and the wings of a bat, displaying a strong interest in this figure. The coxcomb (esp. sketch 14), the sharp beak, the teeth, and the overall reptilian style mentioned for example in *Wigalois* and other verbal adaptations, is clearly visible. The four knights caught within his tail underscore his magnificence and strength.[470] A second emphasis within the depiction lies once again on fighting scenes depicting combat between Wigalois and the dragon and Wigalois and other knights.

But it seems that despite relevant motifs for the story, such as the sword wheel, the dragon fight, and Ruel, Wigalois was not necessarily familiar to all audiences. In all of the scenes showing Wigalois, he is marked by either wearing a helmet with a wheel at its top or by having it close by, which implies that there is some knowledge about the knight of the wheel in order to identify him. In some images, however, both Wigalois' name and the code of arms as identifier are included. It is likely that such inscriptions were added at a later stage, during one of

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[468] Within the *Garel* cycle too, the fight with marvelous creatures is clearly emphasized.

[469] Although the inscription below that mural reads "Ruel," Höffinger sees a possibility that the wild woman in one of the triads depicts Hilde (Höffinger, *Burg Runkelstein bei Bozen*, 18).

[470] Norbert Krines, "Ein Bild von einem Drachen. '*deheine crêâtiure ie gesaehe dehein man*'," in *Mythos Drache – Schwingen, Schuppen, Schwefeldämpfe*, ed. Andrea Grafetstätter (Bamberg: Historisches Museum, 2002), 108-111, here 109.

the later preservations, perhaps indicating a fading knowledge of the "knight of Fortune's wheel." Thus, in the state as preserved by Waldstein, Wigalois is to be identified by the means of word and image.

Despite being rich in detail, the murals do not seem to enable a viewer to reconstruct the Wigalois narrative from the images and only seem to offer highlights.[471] The murals do not simply "translate" a verbal text into images or even present a coherent narrative, but rather function as a system of references and codes.[472] A retelling of the story with the help of single scenes would have required an overall familiarity with the material, as events taking place between images had to been filled in.[473] Thereby they also allow do dwell upon one image longer. They could function as a reminder of the narrative and thus help to narrate the whole story with a focus on certain aspects. Since many murals also play with double and multiple meanings, the images, especially those with a courtly romantic context, René Wetzel argues, could have stirred conversations among couples and among and across the sexes.[474] Further, Wetzel suggests, the Wigalois and Garel scenes, with their focus on representation and ceremonial life, stimulated viewers' narration of their own stories at the court.[475] In connection to

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[471] Rushing argues similarly that the cycle does not appear to provide a structure for understanding the adventures (Rushing, "The Medieval German Pictorial Evidence," 271).

[472] Because of the different layers of the murals, it is difficult to deceiver all the elements of references and meanings. Krüger points towards some contradictions in the pictorial program in the Tristan cycle, caused by implementing messages about the owners' social status (Klaus Krüger, "Tristan Love. Elite Self-Fashioning in Italian Frescoes of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," in *Visuality and Materiality in the Story of Tristan and Isolde*, ed. Jutta Eming, Ann Marie Rasmussen, and Kathryn Starkey [Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012], 178-199, here 192).

[473] Brilliant argues similarly in the case of the Bayeux tapestry, claiming that parts of the narrative had to be known in order to enable a retelling of the story based on the images at hand (Richard Brilliant, "The Bayeux Tapestry. A Stripped Narrative for their Eyes and Ears," *Word and Image* 7 [1991]: 93-125, here 113).

[474] Wetzel, "Konvention und Konversation," 531.

[475] Ibid., 536.

other murals in the Westpalas, concerning for example contemporaneous discourses on ethics, philosophy, and religion, knowledge of the time, it is possible to imagine them as starting points for conversation both about the narrative and in general.

In the second half of the 12th century, the lay nobility found its own voice in literature as part of its emancipation process.[476] The murals bring this to mind visually and reflect the self-construction of identity of their patrons similarly to medieval literature.[477] Not just the content of the actual narrative, but the social and cultural status of the owners plays an important role and influences the depiction of the Wigalois narrative.[478] The Vintler brothers, social climbers, commissioned the mayor part of the murals in Runkelstein. They were devoted book collectors; Hans Vintler even composed his own work, the *Fiori di Virtù*, a heavily illustrated text about virtue, in Italian in 1411.[479] Wetzel argues that the images in Runkelstein, such as the hunting scenes, relate to a group identity insofar as they stipulate conversations and participate in certain

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[476] "Der Roman ist dabei die Gattung, der sich die monumentale bildende Kunst, wie gesagt, schon früh öffnet, und diese Versuche individueller Aneignung literarischer Stoffe in der bildlichen Ausgestaltung privater Räume signalisieren nachdrücklich die allseitige Anerkennung weltlicher Fiktion als Statussymbol: Mittel der Selbstdefinition und gesellschaftlicher Repräsentation." (Curschmann, "Vom Wandel im bildlichen Umgang mit literarischen Gegenständen," 561). Ott writes similarly "Die Literatur aber lieferte der Adelsgesellschaft Motive und Muster zur aristokratischen Selbstfindung und Selbstdefinition. Im höfischen Fest oder im Bildmedium verbinden sich Literatur, Kunst und Leben zu einem Idealmodell, mit dem die eigene gesellschaftliche Situation gedeutet und stilisierend überhöht wird." (Norbert H. Ott, "Höfische Literatur in Text und Bild. Der literartische Horizont der Vintler," in *Schloß Runkelstein – die Bilderburg*, ed. André Bechtold and Maria Maddalena Rudari [Bozen: Athesia, 2000], 311-330, here 311).

[477] Curschmann's study of the Iwein murals at castle Rodenegg shows comprehensively how that cycle based on a fictional romance was commissioned in order to strengthen and visualize the social status of the owning family (Curschmann, "*Der aventiure bilde nemen,*" 454).

[478] "The significance of the representation does not lie in its transparent legibility but rather in its opacity. Nevertheless, this system of representation acquires cultural distinctiveness by becoming the product of its elite patrons' self-fashioning. […] The opaque symbol system testifies to layers of reference upon reference extending far beyond the only apparently transparent or concrete narrativized scenes." (Krüger, "Tristan Love," 187, 190). "Literatur im Bildmedium fungierte nicht nur als bloß ästhetischer Schmuck, sondern als Repräsentations- und Identifikationsmoment adliger Lebensführung." Other examples include the Wienhauser Tristan tapestries, the Parzival Frescos in the Constance House *zu Kunkel*, and the Gawein tapestries (Ott, "Höfische Literatur in Text und Bild," 312).

[479] Ott, "Höfische Literatur in Text und Bild," 326.

discourses, but they also reflect the identity of the group they are commissioned by and meant for.[480] Similarly, Brown's analysis of the murals supports the argument by emphasizing that a particular focus in the murals lies on the hero's and his father's noble identities.[481]

The murals not only enable a freer contact with the narrative that not always has to lead to a coherent retelling, but they also allow for a very different presentation. The change in environment and material of the murals is visible in the way time and space are represented and intertwined within the images. In his groundbreaking study on reception and performance in the Middle Ages, *Hören und Sehen – Schrift und Bild*, Wenzel points out the use of the double formula of listening and seeing and[482] argues for a "legibility" of spaces.[483] The Runkelstein murals include a reflection on time and space by emphasizing diachronic and synchronic events. Scenes that follow directly after each other are in particular depicted in the arches of windows with one scene on the left side and the consecutive episode on the right side.
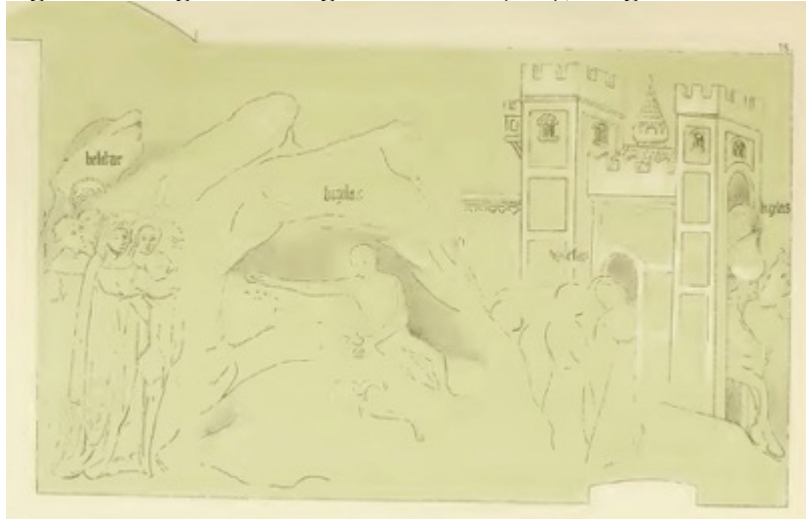
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[480] Wetzel, "Konvention und Konversation," 527-530.

[481] James Brown, *Imagining the Text. Ekphrasis and Envisioning Courtly Identity in Wirnt von Gravenberg's 'Wigalois'* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 223-225.

[482] Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen*, 56-58.

[483] Ibid., 131.

Figure 7: Wigalois being discovered (left); Wiglaois entering and leaving the castle (right)

Waldstein, "Die Bilderreste des *Wigalois*-Cyclus," plate 18 (1892).

These two images in which Wigalois is first being uncovered in the woods and then brought into a castle, which he enters on the left and leaves on the right, captures three diachronic episodes. The seemingly anachronism of Wigalois entering and leaving the same building in one image illustrates the transformation from the robbed knight to the reestablished hero and emphasizes as a special technique the transition. Architectural specificities are further employed to convey certain motifs of the story in a different way than possible in the manuscript. The depiction of the Wigalois lost and naked in the woods, for example, is depicted on the ceiling (Waldstein, "Die Bilderreste des *Wigalois*-Cyclus," plate 17), emphasizing a loss of orientation and security for the viewer.[484]

The murals enable a different discourse about the presented objects and themes from the narrative, as they have different ways of emphasizing and transporting a meaning than the illustrations in the manuscript or even the verbal (spoken or written) narrative. Firstly, even

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[484] In regard to Arthurian murals in Saint-Floret in Auvergne (14th ct), Luyster explains how the images are created taking into account architectural conditions, such as walls and pillars (Amanda Luyster, "Time, Space, and Mind. Tristan in Three Dimensions in Fourteenth-Century France," in *Visuality and Materiality in the Story of Tristan and Isolde*, ed. Jutta Eming, Ann Marie Rasmussen, and Kathryn Starkey [Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012], 148-177, here 148).

though they are "read" from the left to the right around the chamber, it is possible to break out of a diachronic reading and change the order. Secondly, the pace is up to the "reader" as they can dwell on one mural and/or move along others faster – something that neither reading nor oral presentation enable the audience to do. Thus, the temporal conditions have changed, as the chronological order of the events within the narrative is not as fixed. The murals' viewers decide themselves in which order and pace to view the murals and whether to look at the entire cycle or just at selected murals. Further, it is doubtful that they always pay attention to the murals with their narrative concentrated whenever they were in the room. The murals after all were also decoration. Although it is difficult to reconstruct the actual model of the respective illustrations, parallels to the manuscript and woodcuts exist as seen earlier.[485] Leiden Codex, *Wigoleis vom Rade*, and the murals at Runkelstein display an interest in the same motifs with a focus on marvelous creatures and knightly single combat, leaving out the final and epic Namur battle. It shows that the audiences and at least the artists shared an interest in the same scenes and equally disregarded other motifs or elements. The murals in Runkelstein, with regard to what is illustrated, resemble the choices made for the Leiden Codex and *Wigoleis*. However, what is visible in Runkelstein is a continued disengagement from the text in favor of a generic courtly narrative used to emphasize the wealth and respectability of the murals' commissioners. It shows how successful the Wigalois narrative was, as it had to have been established in order to utilize it in the framework of representation. Further, Runkelstein underscores the importance of images within the Wigalois adaptations and shows how a written narrative is not necessary. It is in the scholarly interpretation of the images – such as in Waldstein's case – that the Runkelstein murals

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[485] Curschmann, "Vom Wandel im bildlichen Umgang mit literarischen Gegenständen," 583.

are reduced to illustrations and devalued, despite their underscoring the significance of images for the Wigalois tradition.

4.4   *Wigolais vom Rade* (1841): *The Generic Knight*

Runkelstein's recovery was stimulated by rising Romantic nationalism in the late 18th ct, a movement that not only stirred a new interest in medieval cultural assets, such as the castle, but also in medieval narratives about a supposedly glorified and idealized past. The new interest prompted the edition of many Middle High German and (later) Early New High German texts, such as Georg Friedich Benecke's Wigalois edition from 1819.[486] Due to a lack of new editions, many of the late 18th century and early 19th century versions are still in use today. As popular as in the early modern period[487] for illustrating these publications was the woodcut, which – revived in 18th ct. England – saw its second heyday in the field of publishing in the late 18th / early 19th century.[488] The illustrators of the Romantic and the Biedermeier period admired and utilized the woodcut as well, preferably for objects with a connection to the topic of "folk," for example fairytales, or myths evoking a national identity. One of the most famous artists of that area, who is well known for his art of woodcut, is Ludwig Richter. Besides his landscape paintings, etches, and engravings, his woodcuts represent a significant part of his oeuvre with over 2500 objects,

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[486] The editors of these texts often adhered to a philological movement referred to as historical-critical editorial practice, established by Karl Lachmann and Georg Friedrich Benecke. This method was supposed to further reconstructing the respective original text, a notion that later scholarship questioned due to the semi-oral culture, which led to a number of different versions of a respective text of more or less similar significance.

[487] "The natural compatibility of wood blocks with movable types was the main attraction persuading printers to illustrate their texts with woodcuts" in the early modern period (Laube, "The Stylistic Development of German Book Illustrations," 47).

[488] Of special importance for this rebirth were the works of the English engraver and author Thomas Bewick (Hans Joachim Neidhardt, "Ludwig Richters Holzschnitte," in *Ludwig Richter und sein Kreis*, ed. Manfred Bachmann [Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1984], 35-40, here 36).

most of them text illustration.[489] Richter saw himself in the tradition of the early modern

woodcut art,[490] in particular the art of Albrecht Dürer: [491] "Da kam der Holzschnitt auf, der alte

Dürer winkte, und ich pflegte nun diesen Zweig".[492] Most famously, Richter contributed to the

influential collection of fairy tales by Johann Karl Musäus from 1842.[493]

Just one year before, in 1841, Gotthard Oswald Marbach published *Wigolais vom Rade* as

the 18th volume in his extensive anthology of German "Volksbücher." Together with Marbach,

the brothers Georg and Otto Wiegand engaged in this enormous endeavor, *Die Deutschen*

Volksbücher des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts, with the first 20 volumes already published within

five years. Richter, who had already contributed to prior installments, was again asked to provide

sketches for woodcuts accompanying the Wigalois story.[494] Richter was thus familiar with

similar material from the early modern period, albeit not necessarily with the Wigalois tradition.

Nevertheless, the images continue the reductionist reading of Wigalois in the tradition of earlier

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[489] Richter accepted many commissions such as this in order to finance his art and achieve more independence for other work (Hans Joachim Neidhardt, "Ludwig Richters Werk und Wirkung," in *Ludwig Richter und sein Kreis*, ed. Manfred Bachmann [Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1984], 11-20, here 12).

[490] The era of German book illustrations (including the illustrations of vernacular literature) began in Bamberg less than ten years after the publication of Gutenberg's Latin bible between 1460 and 1466. Strasbourg, Ulm, Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Basel soon developed to be the most important places for book illustrations. Where Basel had its long standing success with the illustrated edition of Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (printed by Johann Mentelin), Arthur Korberger in Nuremberg managed a very successful workshop by employing artists such as Wilhelm Pleydenwurff, Michael Wolgemut, and his godson Albrecht Dürer for his endeavors (among them the *Weltchronik* of Hartmann Schedel) (Laube, "The Stylistic Development of German Book Illustrations," 48, 58, 64f).

[491] Albrecht Dürer's influence on the Romantic and Biedermeier admiration for the woodcut cannot be overestimated. In his Apocalypse Cycle from 1493, the illustrations gain priority over the text. "Albrecht Dürer succeeded in unifying multiple textual sequences in a single pictorial composition." (Laube, "The Stylistic Development of German Book Illustrations," 68).

[492] Neidhardt, "Ludwig Richters Holzschnitte," 35.

[493] Johann Karl Musäus, *Volksmährchen der Deutschen. Mit Holzschnitten nach Originalzeichnungen* (Leipzig: Mayer und Wigand, 1842). Richter did not execute these woodcuts himself, but they were based on his sketches.

[494] Richter contributed to many installments of the anthology, such as *Melusina, Magelone, Eulenspiegel, Tristan und Isolde, Geschichte von Fortunat, Geschichte von Fortunats Söhnen,* and *Dr. Johann Faust.*

material. The images represent an idealized idyllic Middle Ages as typical for the time; this will heavily impact the depiction of Wigalois in the comic and thereby will be brought into dialogue with its pictorial Wigalois predecessors.

The woodcuts underscore the images' continued significance for the retelling of the narrative, and, as we will see, draw on established notions within the preceding pictorial adaptations. Of the seven illustrations (one repeated on the title) accompanying the text, three are attributed to Richter, albeit executed by a xylographer.[495] Although only three of the seven woodcuts are attributed to Richter, all seven adhere to the same style, presenting a more or less uniform cycle. All seven images are framed by a black line and are inserted into the passage they illustrate. The first woodcut (by Richter), which is also repeated on the title page of *Wigolais*, resembles a diptych with two arched halves of the picture. In the right half a young knight is visible, sitting on a stone and leaning on his shield, which is decorated with a wheel, in front of a browsing horse and a tree executed in much detail. Three ladies in rich dresses, who are leaning over a balcony, observe him. In their gazes admiration for the knight becomes apparent. This image represents the stone of virtue episode, the very scene that distinguishes Wigalois as the perfect knight, at eye level even with king Arthur. Further, the woodcut includes the significant detail, marking him as the knight of the wheel. Already the first image therefore displays a continuation of the Runkelstein murals in regard to the focus on one main – individualized – knight, the perfect hero.

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[495] Not uncommonly, the artist did not cut the woodblock himself, but only provided the sketches: "Die Zeichnungen hat der Künstler zum größten Theile gleich auf Holz ausgeführt und ich habe dann dieselben von den vorzüglichsten Xylographen schneiden lassen." (*202 Holzschnitte nach Zeichnungen von L. Richter*, ed. Otto Wiegand [Leipzig: Otto Wiegand, 1860], Vorwort). The woodcuts first needed a drawer ("Reisser"), who drew the image directly on the wood block or transferred it onto the wood block by the means of a transfer paper. Then the xylographer cut the block. If necessary, a third person, the illuminator of broadsheets ("Briefmaler") colored the prints with watercolor (Laube, "The Stylistic Development of German Book Illustrations," 47).

Figure 8: Wigalois on the Stone of Virtue;   Figure 9: Wigalois at the Stone of Virtue

Wigolais (1841), 13 (and title page).   Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, LTK 537, fol. 15r (ca. 1372).

Yet it is not his skills that are emphasized initially, but rather his looks. A perfect knight should be admired, this picture seems to suggest. The posture of the resting knight in front of the natural scene is contrasted with the architectural space of the ladies, including their rich clothing and the heavily decorated and detailed architecture. This juxtaposition of two very different spaces and representations emphasizes an ideal, drawing on a concept of harmony in a natural and "unspoiled" form common for the Romantic and Biedermeier era. Similarly to the Leiden Codex, the image is dipartite, the horse, however, replaced by witnesses. Further, Wigalois is sitting on the stone, which corresponds with the text in contrast to the tradition of depicting Wigalois standing, as seen in Leiden Codex and *Wigoleis*. Opening with the framed knight, resting on a stone, the woodcut includes an almost dreamlike quality, which seems to establish the setting for a tale without specific, verifiable space and time. The audience cannot expect a recounting of historic events after this initial scene and title woodcut.

The second picture displays the very opposite of the quiet, albeit momentous scene in the previous picture. It depicts two knights on horses, separated by a low wall, jousting in front of spectators, a man and three women, on a balcony. The woodcut gains dynamic from the portrayal

194

of the two horses in their strained postures, the feathers on the knights' helmets blown by the airflow, and finally the shivers of wood splintering from one of the lances. Both the armor and horse of each of the contenders are depicted in much detail with only very small emphasis on the background. However, the knights do not wear suits of armor from the 13th century, but rather late medieval, idealized panoplies. Together with the activity of jousting, this anachronism enables an iconic depiction of a knight for a 19th century audience.

Once more, the dynamic within this illustration is contrasted with the next woodcut, which depicts a much more tranquil scene despite an insinuated movement. The image shows a knight in armor on a horse, holding the reins of a second horse in his left hand, and accompanied by a lady on a horse next to him. Although the front of the shield is not visible, it has the same form of the one depicted on the title page, suggesting it is the same and therefore decorated with the Wheel of Fortune. The background consists of stones, mountains and some bushes. As the illustrator refrains from depicting the dwarf, mentioned in the text, the image continues the focus on one knight, as seen in other pictorial adaptations, accompanied only by a few other figures.

Contributed by Richter, the fourth woodcut depicts a mourning lady with long, floating hair in a loose dress in a kneeling/ sitting posture on the ground and a knight with his horse next to him standing in front of her, looking at her. The background includes once more detailed depictions of nature, including mountains, a tree, bushes, and pastures. Although missing the shield, the knight holds his sword's grip firmly with his right hand, indicating readiness to act. Since not only the code of arms is not visible as in the previous picture, but the entire shield is missing, this could be any knight ready to support a lady.

In the following illustration the shield is visible, yet not its front. The woodcut shows a fire-spitting dragon with horns, a knight standing with one foot on its back with the erected sword in his both hands, and his shield lying on the ground.[496]

Figure 10: Wigalois slaying the dragon

Wigolais (1841), 40.

In the background, many very stony mountains and high trees, mirroring in their harshness the tension of the depicted event, are visible. Thus, the illustration addresses the idea of a soul within the landscape that reflects the scenery. Both knight and dragon are depicted in much detail. Contrasting with earlier depictions of the dragon in Leiden Codex, the *Wigoleis* printed in 1493, and Runkelstein, the focus has shifted from the dragon to the dragon slayer. Defeating the dragon is depicted as yet another central skill of the knight.

The dragon reappears in the decoration of the second last image (Richter), which represents a scene within an arched frame, decorated in the left corner with a dragon and in the right with a similarly patterned dragon. The image shows mourning women, standing and kneeling, in loose clothes around a knight, who is lying on his back with closed eyes. These women are depicted in mourning gestures; some are folding their hands, and some are covering

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[496] Since, in contrast to common depictions of St. George, the knight is using a sword and not sitting on a horse, it is unclear whether or not he acted as model for this illustration.

eyes and faces with their hands; some figures are even dressed with shrouds or capes. Two symmetrically arranged pillars mark the background. The accompanying text indicates that it is the heathen opponent Roaz who is portrayed dying here, albeit not as oriental or "other," but in "traditional" armor. Yet the emphasis has shifted from his faithful wife Japhite, mourning the knight's death as narrated in the text accompanying the woodcut, to a whole group of mourning women. Thus, the "remaining" agency of the women in *Wigoleis*, as discussed in the previous chapter, has been taken from Japhite.

Finally, the closing illustration is arranged as a triptych, divided with the help of pillars, with a centerpiece showing two lovers on a bed, looking at each other and surrounded by birds and a multitude of flower garlands.

Figure 11: Wigalois and his wife / wedding celebrations

Wigolais (1841), 40.

The couple is set apart in their unified and celebrated personal love, but connected to courtly festivity scenes. On the part to the left, a seated harp player in front of courtly, richly dressed figures is displayed; a tree and the moon in the back complete this illustration. On the right,

young dancers in front of tents are shown. Their hair floating in the wind and their postures

emphasize their movements (with one of the dancers having his foot in the air). This final scene,

illustrating private and personal love, resists identifying the knight in the centerpiece once more.

Drawing on notions of private versus public space, the woodcut focuses on a happy couple,

without any geopolitical implications. Accompanying pictures on the left and right only

underscore their joy but do not indicate their political role. Their singular happiness and

withdrawal from the world, a typical notion of Late Romanticism and Biedermeier, receives full

attention.

Reviewing these seven illustrations in relation to each other, the theme that bears most

weight is chivalric love with its different implications and tasks. Within the retelling of a

knight's life, all images participate in an underlying discourse of private vs. public sphere,

observer vs. observed, and natural vs. artificial space. In coordination with the text and the focus

on one single knight, these images create an idealized past with an emphasis on the happy

ending marked by personal, private happiness. An interest in marvelous creatures is clearly

reduced in favor of the focus on the knight, especially in the depiction of the dragon fight scene

in which the attention is on the hero slaying the dragon, not on the marvelous creature itself. In

four out of the seven pictures, a male knight is placed in the center of the illustration. Even when

not placed in the middle, the attention is on the knight, as in the first picture, comprised of one

part with the knight and the second one of women admiring the resting hero.[497] The title hero's

conduct and character receive the most attention.

Yet, this main hero could be anyone, representing a generic, stereotypical figure, a knight

as envisioned by a 19th century audience: young and handsome with long hair, admired by

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[497] In regard to medieval illustrations, Wenzel emphasizes the legibility of space and where a figure is placed within a respective space (Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen*, 133).

courtly ladies, combating dragons and other knights. This hero is not even marked by his code of arms anymore, which has lost its importance entirely in contrast to earlier illustrations of the Wigalois narrative. Only the first woodcut suggests that the main hero is the knight of the wheel as displayed on his shield. In contrast to the 15th century woodcut illustrations of *Wigoleis*, the knight in the images is not identifiable as Wigalois – except for this one instance. Otherwise, the Wheel of Fortune is omitted entirely from the illustrations. Further, except for the first woodcut (with the code of arms), the depictions are much more generic, not indicating any direct connection to the Wigalois narrative. Neither the fisherman and his wife, nor the naked Wigalois lost in the woods, nor the giant woman Ruel gain any attention in the illustrations. It seems Wigalois is just one representative, a replaceable figure, whose function is to participate in iconic scenes of an envisioned chivalric Middle Ages. Admiration of the knight, as depicted in two scenes, becomes as essential as the completion of actual chivalric deeds. The aim of the early 19th-century artists thus seems to re-appropriate a generic Middle Ages. One reason could be the lack in reception in the German language due to the fact that Wigalois and his story were not popular, told between the 17th and 19th only within a Yiddish language framework, something already seen in the reconstruction of the Runkelstein Murals. Nevertheless, the *Wigalois vom Rade* images underscore the transition into the modern period and the continued significance of a pictorial tradition, relatively detached from the text, a phenomenon already seen in the earlier examples. In combination with Leiden Codex, the images from *Wigalois vom Rade* will heavily impact the contemporaneous Wigalois adaptation, a comic.

4.5   *Wigalois* (2011): The Adventures of a Franconian Knight

Like the 19th century, the 21st century displays a strong interest in medievalism and the reception

of medieval culture.[498] Movies set in a fictional Middle Ages and rich in fantastic elements fill

cinemas, and the interested audience can go to a Renaissance fair all year round; the website

Renfair shows more than 26 upcoming fairs throughout the US.[499] This is by no means an

American phenomenon; the German page *Marktkalendarium* announces even more entries than

its American pendent.[500] Unsurprisingly, German small towns with castles see these fairs as

welcome opportunities to advertise their historic sights and to invigorate the tourism industry.

Gräfenberg in Frankonia, the presumptive home to Wirnt von Grafenberg, hosts a large medieval

festival every five years. In reminiscence of the most famous citizen of their town, the

celebration always ends with a large procession, lead by one resident acting as Wirnt, and

culminating in the wedding festivities of Wigalois and Larie. Wirnt's text inspired not only this

spectacle but also a children's opera (2014), a theater play (2012), and a comic (2011).

Produced as German-Spanish collaboration between the author of concept and words,

Manfred Schwab, illustrator Iisdre Monés, and the colorist Jordi Bartoll, the comic *Die

phantastischen Abenteuer des Glücksritters Wigalois* was first published in 2011. Consisting of

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[498] Grisch von Ah points out that a contemporary interest in occultism and esoteric and the search in myths for relief is visible in the current turn to the Middle Ages. In some comics, Arthur even becomes the hero of current problems and issues such as the ecological crisis (*Camelot 3000*) (Barbara Grisch von Ah, "Artus im New Age. Artusrezeption in Science Fiction und Fantasy-Comics," in *Mittelalter-Rezeption V. Gesammelte Vorträge des V. Salzburger Symposions [Burg Kaprun, 1990]*, ed. Ulrich Müller [Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1996], 365-328, here 365, 370). Grisch von Ah further points out the underlying gender stereotypes in the constructed world by comics, set in the Middle Ages: "Die Welt, die so in diesen (und anderen) Comics entworfen wird, scheint mir keine Erstrebenswerte. Sie bleibt letztlich eine von Brutalität bestimmte Männerwelt. Weder Magierinnen noch Frauen, die mit gleichen Rechten und Pflichten wie Männer ausgestattet sind, können darüber hinwegtäuschen. Obwohl richtig darauf hingewiesen wird, dass Frauen und Männer nur gemeinsam einen Weg aus unserer Krise finden können, werden Siege nur mit typisch männlichen Mitteln errungen. Frauen bleiben Hilfspersonal." (Ibid., 371).

[499] *The Renlist*, accessed February 15, 2016, http://www.therenlist.com/all-fairs.

[500] "Termine 2016," *Marktkalendarium,* accessed February 15, 2016, http://www.marktkalendarium.de/maerkte2016.php.

66 pages, the adaptation retells the story of Wigalois from Joram's arrival at the court until

Wigalois' and Larie's wedding, framed by an episode focusing on Wirnt von Grafenberg himself

and the romancing of *Wigalois*. In their preface, Manfred Schwab and Isidre Monés place their

work in tradition of the codices Leiden and Donaueschingen, *Wigolais* with illustrations by

Ludwig Richter from 1839, as well as Hal Foster's *Prince Valiant* series: "Der fränkisch-blonde

Glücksritter hat sicher eine ähnlich weite Verbreitung verdient wie Hal Fosters Comic-Klassiker

'Prinz Eisenherz.' [Prince Valiant] Ganz besonders unter der fränkischen Jugend!" (*Die*

Phantastischen Abenteuer, 2).[501] This statement voices explicitly their aim at the regional

identity. By referencing only illustrated texts and comics, but no murals, the adaptors place the

comic in a word-text tradition. Throughout the text, written word is emphasized by drawing on

the materiality of a codex and by using longer written paragraphs to narrate complete scenes.

All pages are designed like parchment in a brownish pattern, thus reflecting the medieval

adaptations. Additionally, the first and the last page are framed with a decorative festoon and

flowers in the corners. Colors play a significant role. The colorist Jordi Bartoll uses lighter,

"softer" colors for the king's paradise (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 29), in contrast to the dark

and intense colors used for the panels depicting Korontin (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 31).

Further, the illustrations consider the importance and effect of natural light, such as light falling

through a window (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 56), moonlight (*Die Phantastischen*

Abenteuer, 45), or dark clouds (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 47), continuing the emphasis on

atmosphere that is already relevant in Wirnt's text (as seen in chapter two of this dissertation).

Although comic panels usually consist of a grid of three by three or four, top left to top right in

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[501] Isidra Monés and Manfred Schwab, *Die phantastischen Abenteuer des Glücksritters Wigalois,* Forchheim: Kulturamt des Landkreises Forchheim, 2011.

reading, repeated until the end of the page, the Wigalois comic displays a much freer form in regard to the *mise en page*, without a dominant scheme or structure.[502]

The title page reads in a seemingly antiquated type, evoking already a medieval world: "Wigalois," preceded by "Die phantastischen Abenteuer der Glücksritters." The title page – framed by a garland and flowers – shows a castle in the far background, two fighting knights in armor on horses, and a lady that looks out of the frame at a knight who is situated in front of the framed scene looking at the reader. The blue-eyed knight's blond open hair is moved by the wind and evokes almost movie quality. Thus, the title page emphasizes the essential attributes of a knight as expected by a contemporary audience: a castle, knightly combat, a fine lady, and a handsome-looking hero. Yet, the seemingly dull title page evokes a play with time and space. A wheel decorates the blond knights armor as well as that of one of the combating knights, indicating he is the same.[503]

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[502] In comic theory, the way the panels relate to each other and the way they are arranged is called *mise en page*. (Karin Kukkonen, *Studying Comics and Graphic Novels* [Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014], 19).

[503] The Wheel of Fortune and the accompanying interpretations have been simplified in the comic to a good luck charm and Wigalois' identity as "Glücksritter."

Figure 12: Title page of *Die phantastischen Abenteuer des Glücksritters Wigalois*
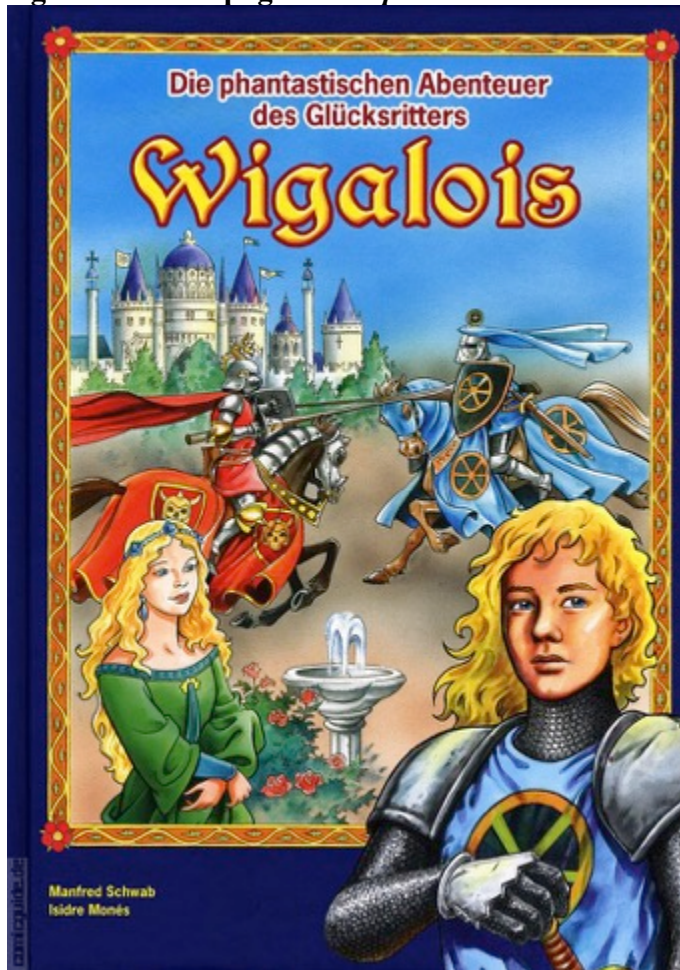
Die phantastischen Abenteuer des Glücksritters Wigalois (2011), title. © Landkreis Forchheim.

The background of the title image, the reader soon finds, depicts the combat with the red knight, with the illustration repeated on page 21. Albeit he is not Wigalois' most significant opponent, the artists have laid much emphasis on his portrayal, depicting him as a very devilish-looking knight (for example *Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 22). The lady is placed in front of a rose bush and a fountain, drawing on the tradition of *locus amoenus*, and thereby indicating a love relationship. Thus, we encounter two main themes: love and knighthood. Further, the title page introduces not only one but several figures that seem significant to the story. In contrast to the woodcuts from 1493, Wigalois' relation to other figures is emphasized, his fate interwoven with that of others.

The first images of the actual text shows a shepherd looking at a castle and a writing on a small piece of parchment: "Auf der Burg zu Gräfenberg um das Jahr 1200 n. Chr," emphasizing the regional relevance of this work. Placing Wirnt von Grafenberg in a real castle in Gräfenberg around 1200, speaking the local dialect, and creating Wigalois, the adaptors aim at grounding the author in the historic-medieval world. As in a movie, the perspective shifts, and the viewer look together with the shepherd onto one of the open windows in the castle. This gaze continues continue to the next image.[504] There, a man is sitting at a writing desk, a feather in his right hand, accompanied by a speech bubble containing the words "Punktum. Ende. Geschafft!" (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 5). In the back a helmet is visible, and crossed swords over a crest with a fish, Wirnt's supposed code of arms. In the next picture, this man is joined by a lady, addressing him with: "mei Dichter" and "Wirnt, mei Held der Gänsefeder." Their conversation is set in a Franconian dialect, once more evoking regional grounding and relevance. Through the following pictures the audience learns that the poet's lady is called Wildtraute[505] and introduced to the readers as the poet's sweetheart. Thus, for the second time the comic emphasizes the importance of love in the form of a heterosexual partnership, this time as part of the frame story. The first pages and therewith the frame story ends with Wirnt reading to Wildtraute from the parchment he has been writing on in previous images. The focus shifts to the front of the parchment, revealing a short text containing a free modern translation of the first lines of Wirnt's

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[504] Comics in the 20th century developed in reciprocity with film, influencing the readers' and viewers' habits (Dietrich Grünewald, *Comics* [Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000], 1).

[505] The creators of the comic bring this figure into the Wigalois material. Some irony could be found in this naming as it bears traces of a wild woman, although she is depicted as well-behaved courtly lady in contrast to Ruel.

Wigalois: "Welch kluger Mensch hat mich aufgeschlagen […] Er heißet Wirnt von Gräfenberg."
(*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 5).[506]

The introductory image on the first page of the actual retelling of the Wigalois narrative
shows again a castle and a boxed text "Burg Karidol, die Residenz des legendären König Artus,
irgendwo im Süden von Britannien." (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 6).[507] But this description
indicates the transition form the frame story to the fictional narrative, doubly marking the
following as fictional with the terms "legendären" and "irgendwo" in contrast to the prior scenes,
set in a historic castle in Franconia around 1200 (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 5). Although the
authors emphasize the far-removed space, they also repeatedly try to anchor the narrative in real
places, such as Wales, and by referring to Roimunt consistently in translation as Königsberg.
Bringing in historical facts while underscoring the fictionality of the text, the authors emphasize
the difference between medieval history and medievalism as a broader destination for
contemporary fantasy.

Despite the essential feature of comics being the integration and combination of image
and text,[508] the Wigalois comic regularly reverts to pure text in the sense of written words in the
curse of the narration.[509] The larger text paragraphs, that summarize larger events, seem to be

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[506] Despite being transmitted only in one manuscript, these first lines have gained an important status in Wigalois scholarschip and reception.

[507] The Wigalois narrative as presented in the Comic includes several different levels of time; the time of Wirnt in Gräfenberg; the narrated diachronic string of events from Gawein's fight with Joram to Wigalois' coronation and wedding and the events narrated by figures within this line.

[508] Different theories on the origin of comics exist, some tracing them back to cave paintings, others to early modern leaflets, while others see the origin in 19th century newspapers. Some scholars already speak about comics in the 1450s; others differentiate all sorts of narrations that narrate stories with the use of images, and between comics that started in the 1890s in the US (Grünewald, *Comics*, 3). To differentiate the late 19th century forms from older ones, scholars proposed the term "moderne Bildergeschichten." (Grünewald, *Comics*, 1).

[509] Early comics, such as the famous GDR *Digedags* (later *Mosaik*) series by Hannes Hegen, differed as they represented images with text mostly restricted to a box below the pictures. Further, although the speech bubble is the

loosely based on the Wirnt's text. The return of Wigalois, and everything including the letters of correspondence between Wigalois and Larie, for example, are shortened and summarized on one page with text paragraphs, accompanied by four small inserted images without clear frame lines (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 58). Already page 10/11 includes in its entirety mainly words and only small decorative images on the background of a manuscript page conveying the story of Joram. Sometimes small chapter titles (such as on page 18: "Die fünf Bewährungsabenteuer") precede longer text passages, but they are distributed inconsistently throughout the adaptation. Sometimes time is even doubly marked, e.g on page 27. An inscription accompanies the image depicting a rising sun, which reads "am nächsten Morgen."[510] On the one hand, a very strong focus on the written word in the comic adaptation of Wigalois is apparent. On the other hand, other scenes are enhanced in their symbolic meaning by the avoidance of any text emphasis.[511] The first embracing of the father Gawein and his son Wigalois includes no words (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 16).[512] In another scene without words, three red, devilish demons with horns and bat wings carry Roaz' dead body away (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 56). Yet a prior pictures shows Wigalois explaining the following event to nevertheless ensure a 'correct' interpretation about the wordless image (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 56). Further, words in the comic are not always used for a narration of the story or for direct, or indirect speech. Words

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most iconic element of a comic, superimposed boxes play an equally important role and contain all additional information that is not direct speech (Kukkonen, *Studying Comics*, 24).

[510] Yet, the way Wigalois comic uses multiple channels for conveying information is not special to the comic. As Kukkonen points out: "In comics, readers pick up the clues from both the images and the words, and mostly, the two modes work together toward unfolding the comic's narrative in the panel sequence." (Kukkonen, *Studying Comics*, 32).

[511] Walter Pape writes: "If there is actually a 'warfare between the two media' text and image the comic strip must be the field of their wildest battles or the tribunal in which they have negotiated a temporary truce." (Walter Pape, "The Battle of the Signs. Robert Crumb's Visual Reading of James Boswell's 'London Journal'," in *Icons, Texts, Iconotexts. Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, ed. Peter Wagner [Berlin: De Gruyter, 1996], 324-346, 334). Visual elements are often conceived as superior to words in comics.

[512] For a further discussion on the emphasized absence of words in comics, see Kukkonen, *Studying Comics*, 34.

can also stand alone in inscriptions. Thus, the significance of the stone virtue is transmitted by the means of an inscription, which reads: "Nur wer makelos und rein, darf berühren diesen Stein." (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 13)

Figure 13: Stone of Virtue

Die phantastischen Abenteuer des Glücksritters Wigalois (2011), 13. © Landkreis Forchheim.

The relaxed position of Wigalois, resembles that of Richter's woodcut, which has been named as influence and model explicitly by Schwab. Finally, one of the last images shows preparations in Korntin to welcome back Wigalois; servants are putting up a banner with the words "Korntin. Heimstatt der Freude." (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 60).

Classic elements of comics include small hearts in one panel, emphasizing the moment Wigalois falls in love (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 25). The authors further utilize comic-specific possibilities to underscore scenes and emphasize motifs, often in a synaesthetic way. The voice from out of the sky is depicted by the means of red words on a white ground that has no clear fringe (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 45). Further, Japhite's pain offer the loss of her husband is underscored by using a spiked speech bubble "Oh Roaz!", which increases the impression of a high-pitched and acute scream over the death of Roaz (*Die Phantastischen*

Abenteuer, 52). The comic further emphasizes synaesthetic qualities with sketches of smells and noises represented with written words (such as "crok" [*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 21] and "klang" [*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 41]). These elements are part of a conventionalized comic inventory. Further, comics work like other illustrations with a certain conventionalization of illustrations.[513] On page 44 in a dream, Christ appears to the sleeping Wigalois. The image shows Wigalois lying with closed eyes in front of his horse. Christ is depicted with a halo and his right hand lifted, gesturing a blessing with the forefinger and the middle finger in the style of classic western iconography (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 44).

The figure of Wirnt functions as overall, personalized narrator, who has been introduced within the frame story in some detail to the reader.[514] Further, with Wirnt writing, the authors of the comic make a conscious decision to include the topic of adaptation. Within the narrative, Wigalois corresponds with this depiction of Wirnt von Grafenberg, since Wigalois' direct speech – in contrast to all other figures – is rhymed. This phenomenon is first introduced to the readers on page 12, when Wigalois bids his mother farewell with the words: "Zeit ist's nun, von Euch fort zu geh'n, den Vater zu suchen, die Welt zu seh'n. Was nützt mir ritterliche Tugend, wenn hier versauert meine Jugend. Will mich für Ruhm und Ehre regen – Mutter, gebt mir Eueren Segen!" (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 12). Having Wigalois render his speeches in rhymes, he draws closer to the poet Wirnt, indicating that he is the one who created the adventures originally.

In addition to the narrator Wirnt and the rhymed speech of Wigalois, the comic allows for even more voices. When the bewitched king tells Wigalois about his fate, the content of his

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[513] Grünewald, *Comics*, 39.

[514] Kukkonen, *Studying Comics*, 42.

narrative is depicted in the following image with a speech bubble coming from the prior image in which the king is portrayed (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 29). Thus, the comic requires a distinction between the narrators within and outside the story world. Wirnt functions as homodiegetic narrator as well as hero of the frame story, in contrast to the heterodiegetic narrator, telling the audience about Wirnt in the first place. Additonal homodiegetic narrators include the bewitched king, telling Wigalois about the events in Kornit and Wgialois' father Gawein.[515] Further, a number of commentators bridge the gap between the narrative and the audience: one of these is the parrot. This figure, which Wigalois wins in a fight for the most beautiful lady, is depicted according to modern notions, not trying to evoke what it could have looked like in the imagination of a medieval audience. As a recurring character, the parrot's main function throughout the adaptation represents comic relief. He comments on the arrival of prestigious guests, emphasizing the multiculturalism: "Noch zwei Könige aus Asien – das wird ein Multikulti-Fest!" (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 61).

Like the parrot, the elephant and the leopard (aka the bewitched king) do not resemble marvelous creatures but look like the actual animals. Similarly, Ruel is presented to the audience as a giant – albeit not beautiful – woman with no special or "marvelous" features at all. Armor and dresses seem to be based on historic sketches. Thus, Roaz' wife wears a costume that has an oriental style (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 49). Yet the picture of Marrien, whom the text introduces as "Fabeltier" (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 44), shows the body of a horse with an upper crocodile-like body and head. In addition, although the dragon is not consistently depicted according to Wigalois' description (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 32-33), its figure includes features that not necessarily correspond with contemporary imagination, such the three claws on

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[515] Ibid., 39.

each of his rather stubby legs. Here, the authors of the comic completely stray from the story as narrated by Wirnt. They try to depict creatures differently than suggested by Wirnt, often breaking with contemporary images. This shift gives the adaptation its own, special "signature." In clothing as well, the authors seem to aim for an "authentic," educational portrayal of the Middle Ages. Most of the costumes are traditional and represent medieval dresses.

As in a movie, the comic features many changes of perspective and focalization.[516] Thus, the comic represents different perspectives on the event.[517] A comic cannot be read with focus on a singular panel, but requires synthesizing, additive reading.[518] Further, Comics are differentiated according to simultaneity and successivity of the images.[519] *Wigalois* contains several examples of simultaneity. On page 9 for example, a battle within a panel is depicted, and in front of that panel the audience. A similar illustration capturing synchronicity can be found image in the Leiden Codex (79r). In the upper half of the picture Japhite and her ladies are placed, below in the second picture is depicted what the women were seeing: the two knights fighting. On Page 8 two knights are depicted, fighting with each other, and in two additional, separate frames, placed in the foreground, close-ups of the respective knights with their thoughts.[520]

The comic also uses the different "shots" to allow for surprises and twists.[521] Where Wirnt introduces Wigalois' first opponent in Korntin, Karrioz, to the audience as dwarf (Wirnt,

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[516] For a further discussion of similarities in changes of perspective to movies see Grünewald, *Comics*, 14.

[517] Kukkonen, *Studying Comics*, 26.

[518] Grünewald, *Comics*, 41.

[519] Reading comics requires a special familiarity, a special alphabetization, Grünewald argues (Grünewald, *Comics*, 28).

[520] Kukkonen points out that such a movement between background and foreground creates a special, dynamic reading experience (Kukkonen, *Studying Comics*, 19).

[521] Comics work with the same terminology and settings as movies, using elements such as long shot, medium long shot, medium shot, and close up (Kukkonen, *Studying Comics*, 46).

Wigalois, 6693), the reader of the comic see Karrioz for the first time from below a hill, sharing Wigalois' perspective, suggesting a mighty aggressor. Only in the next picture, the audience discovers that he is in fact only a dwarf on a tall horse (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 40). An audience familiar with Wirnt's text may still enjoy the depiction, finding pleasure in the knowledge they hold.

The narrative concludes with two images capturing both wedding and coronation. The parrot comments with a *Minnesang* reference on the following scene, which shows Wigalois and Larie happily married, retreating to their private quarters: "Frag keiner, wie seelig die Beiden waren… Nur ich war dabei – Tandaradei!" The word "tandaradei" represents a reference to Walther von der Vogelweide's poem "Under der Linden," in which the word is uttered by a nightingale. The parrot's use thus marks not only a reference, but also a comical twist. Inserting such a reference, uncovered only by an audience familiar with that poem, the comic addresses readers possessing some knowledge about medieval German literature (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 63). Another such reference to medieval literature is Larie's love declaration: "du bist min, ich bin din" (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 27), the words are part of what is often regarded as one of the first love poems in German vernacular (found at the end of a letter written otherwise in Latin language from around 1200). Yet, a reader incapable of detecting these references has by no means less pleasure or struggles with understanding the meaning and situation. Thus, the adaptation ensures to entertain both, an audience familiar with at least some medieval literature, if not *Wigalois*, and an audience new to this literature. Thereby the adaptation enables and encourages a knowing audience to enjoy the narrative as it unfolds in different media, in different ways.[522]

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[522] Similarly, the series *Classics Illustrated*, which offers comic adaptations of famous works of world literature, aims at acquainting the audience with the model text in order to encourage a reading of it: "They prized fidelity to

The actual depiction of the Wigalois narrative ends with the words "Dann kam eine Bote geritten…" in a parchment box, leaving the subsequent events open (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 65). This cliffhanger is somewhat resolved on the last page. The narrative is back in Wirnt's office, where the author explains upon his sweetheart's question the last words of the parchments box, explaining that the messenger brought news about Wigalois' mother's death (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 66). Thereby, the comic ends with the wedding and coronation festivities, leaving out – like almost all other pictorial retellings of Wigalois – the extensive Namur battle.[523] Wirnt himself adds a sigh to his explanation: "Wenn sie denn wahr wär, meine Märe." (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 66), but adds – referencing the prologue of Wirnt's *Wigalois* – that the knowledgeable will appreciate his art and work (*Die Phantastischen Abenteuer*, 66). Wirnt's sigh has then to be seen not just as lamenting a lost time as in *Wigalois*, but also as one more clue to differentiate between historical-(more or less)factual and fictional elements and narratives within the comic. The cliffhanger, references, and the introduction suggest a further reading, advertising Wirnt's Wigalois romance (no other adaptations, albeit mentioned in the preface).[524]

A glossary with different terms relevant to the adaptation, including terms such as

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the original by keeping the narrative in as complete a form as possible and by including salient lines from the novels into the dialogue. At the end of the comic book, they would characteristically suggest to readers to go on to read the original classic novel." (Kukkonen, *Studying Comics*, 84).

[523] With the list of wedding guests, however, the comic uses the Namur battle participants and puts them in a different setting.

[524] Kukkonen writes: "Transporting a narrative from a novel into a comic, or a graphic novel, therefore constitutes an adaptation. In adaptations, questions of fidelity and media affordances have to be considered. However, through their own affordances and narrative strategies, comics can reproduce elements which are traditionally considered 'literary' and connected to the novel, such as the cognitive complexity of a Jane Austen novel or the reflexivity and defamilarization of *Tristram Shandy*." (Kukkonen, *Studying Comics*, 94).

"Tjost," "Minne," and "Knappe," concludes the comic.[525] This glossary fulfills the educational aim, visible throughout the comic. Wigalois becomes a knight at Pentecost, a date historically popular for accolades ("Schwertleite"), yet not specified in Wirnt's Wigalois. Thereby, the adaptors even insert additional medieval traditions in the comic, aiming at an educational surplus value for the audience. Thus, the overall intentions of the comic can be summarized as educating readership on a historic Middle Ages as well grounding the Arthurian Romance in a context of regional importance by drawing on the preceding adaptations.

The latter is emphasized on back of the book, offering a blurb advertising this comic with a wink as "fränkisch-blondes Gegenstück zum amerikanischen Comic-Klassiker 'Prinz Eisenherz'," and referencing the model text composed by the "fränkische Ritter Wirnt von Gräfenberg." Two crests in the lower corners of the back emphasize this local connection: the emblem of Gräfenberg and Forchheim (superordinate district and publishing place). Two other crests in the upper corners, displaying a wheel for Wigalois and a fish for Wirnt von Grafenberg, match them. In addition, this back of the book shows three figures in black and white sketches. Author, illustrator, and colorist of the comic are portrayed in medieval fashion, sitting at a desk or standing with feather and parchment in their hands.

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[525] Although generally translating medieval terms freely, the adaptors decided to keep the Middle High German term "urlaub," which might startle an audience unfamiliar with medieval language and literature in the text without a final explanation.

Figure 14: The "medievalized" artists
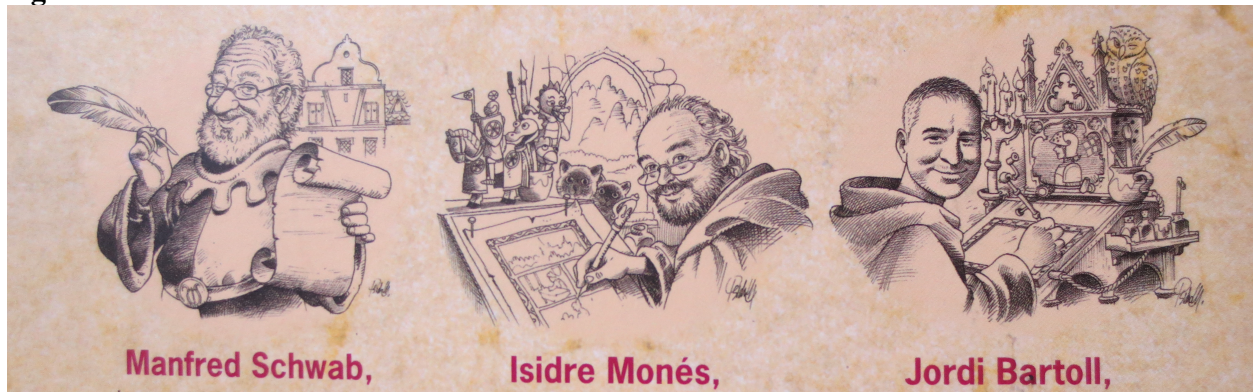
Die phantastischen Abenteuer des Glücksritters Wigalois (2011), back cover. © Landkreis Forchheim.

Bringing together a tradition of medieval or humanist writers as well as modern comics, they merge distinct and historically distant traditions.[526] In the spirit of repeated connections to Wirnt's Wigalois, both as narrative and as material manuscript, the comic illustrators and writers add images of their medievalized selves at the end of the Comic like Jan von Brunswick. These illustrations include two of the markers suggested by Thomas Leitch: historicizing and a fetishizing of the written word as seen in Leiden Codex.[527] Already in the Leiden manuscript the importance of the creator of the images or at least the scribe was emphasized. Only here, on the board, fiction and reality, history and presence are interwoven.

This modern adaptation both draws on and reacts to the established pictorial tradition. The pictorial tradition, as pointed out in the preface to the comic, is both familiar and available to the authors. Thus, they use established images, such as the combating knight – an important and motif already in Leiden Codex – and thereby relate to medieval manuscripts as point of origin. Thereby, they expand the connection to the medieval material they are indebted to beyond the

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[526] It is not uncommon that authors and illustrators depict themselves on the last or first page of a comic. Yet, here the style is unique and adheres to medieval manuscript culture.

[527] Thomas Leitch, "Adaptation, the Genre," 111-113.

reference to the materiality of a medieval codex, as achieved by the design of the pages. In a second step, the comic reacts to the more modern adaptations and their pictorial construction of medieval knighthood as it aims at presenting its audience with elements of historical accuracy and thus tries to fulfill an educative intent. The audience is confronted with an artifact aware of the longstanding pictorial Wigalois tradition, as well as with a text prioritizing the medieval heritage and thereby emphasizing a 'back to the roots' sensibility, by repeatedly bringing in medieval elements. Thus, the Comic summarizes from its perspective the pictorial tradition up to that point, both in paying a homage to predecessors and contributing a very own take on the narrative.

4.6   Knighthood in a Nutshell: The sketch in Cod. Hebr. 255

Drawing on the established tradition, the comic already on its title page emphasizes the image that connects all pictorial adaptations: the two knights in single combat, present even in the otherwise not illustrated Cod. Hebr. 255. Despite the fact that none of the three Yiddish manuscripts presents us with a thoroughly illustrated text, a small sketch at the end of Cod. Hebr. 255 encapsulates the changes in all other examples discussed previously in this chapter. The majority of Middle High German manuscripts containing fictional narratives are not illustrated, since illustrating a manuscript was an expensive and complicated endeavor, after all. Yet for the Yiddish text, the reason for the absence of illustrations is often explained by employing the concept of Jewish aniconism, the prohibition in Judaism against creating images in order to avoid idolatry, based on the second commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." (Ex. 20:4). Nevertheless, no consistent aniconism in Judaism existed or exists. A recent article in *National Geographic* discusses and highlights the

discoveries of Jodi Magness while undertaking archeological research in Huqoq, Israel.[528] Her

excavations, conducted in corporation with Israeli archeologist Shua Kisilevitz, have brought to

light magnificent mosaics from a 5th-century synagogue, heavily influenced by Greek art. The

rich mosaics include depictions of animals as well as a human head, presumably showing

Alexander the Great. Her findings represent only one example among many others debunking the

myth of a strict Jewish aniconism.[529]

     The image in the Yiddish Wigalois adaptation thus surprises not due to its existence, but

in other ways. Cod. Hebr. 255 contains a small sketch without frame at the very end of the

narrative, drawn presumably with the same ink as the text. It is not colorized. The lines and

proportions of the figures indicate an unskilled artist, perhaps the scribe himself. There have

been no spaces left empty within the rest of the manuscript, indicating that the manuscript was

not meant to be rubricated in general. The fact that it seems to be an unskilled sketch, put onto

the parchment with presumably the same quill and ink as the rest of the text could indicate that it

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[528] Ann R. Williams, "Surprising Mosaics Revealed in Ancient Synagogue in Israel," *National Geographic*, July 17, 2015,http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/ 07/150717-mosaics-synagogue-israel-magness-discoveryarchaeology/?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=Social&utm_content=link_fb20150717 news-mosaics&utm_campaign=Content.

[529] Already in Antiquity, rabbinic Jewish laws displayed a trouble with bringing in line the second commandment on the one hand and the detailed instructions to create the physical representations of the Cherubim (Ex. 25:18). Kalman Bland concludes in his monograph *The artless Jew. Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual*: "The rabbinic interpretation of the biblical law was therefore permissively liberal. It allowed ample room for the production and enjoyment of a wide array of legitimate visual artifacts." (Kalman P. Bland, *The Artless Jew. Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000] 65). By the Middle Ages, Jewish culture included art and illustration not just in "profane," but also in "relgious" frameworks: "Medieval Jews indeed placed the visual arts on their compulsory philosophic agenda; they indeed railed against idolatry. But through travel itineraries, polemical literature, biblical commentaries, and law codes proved that they did not construe the Second Commandment to mean that all visual images were forbidden." (Bland, *The Artless Jew*, 3) From 3rd ct. synagogues to 16th ct. illuminated books – many examples of an illustration culture in Hebrew texts survived. In contrast to Hebrew literature, no medieval illustrated Yiddish manuscripts are known, but this changes with the rise of the modern printing press, where woodcuts often crossed language barriers (Ott argues from a vernacular point of view. See for this debate: Norbert H. Ott, "Die heilige Sprache und das Bild. Hebräische Bilderhandschriften, jiddische 'Volksbücher' und der christlich-jüdische Kulturaustausch im europäischen Mittelalter," *Ashkenas* 14, no. 1 [2004]: 125-162, here 157-159).

was a way to test ink and feather. However, the position at the very end of the manuscript, following right after the last lines of the text, suggests otherwise.

Figure 15: Two unidentified figures

 Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky, Cod. Hebr. 255., 113v (16th ct.).

The sketch shows two figures from the side with weapons in their hands, albeit not facing each other. One wears bloomers and carries a lance or a sword (Jaeger argues a sword); the other carries a dagger and a shortsword.[530] Either two knights in combat with one fleeing from his opponent or two independent depictions of fighting knights are visualized. Jaeger argues that the illustration clearly displays a Jewish interest in a courtly culture and the knightly world,[531] but also a longing for something unreachable, as Jews were denied the right to bear arms since the 13th/14th ct.[532] However, the illustration in Cod. Hebr. 255 depicts the most common topic throughout all the examples of image-related Wigalois adaptations that were examined in this chapter: fighting knights. Already Leiden Codex repeatedly captures two knights seen from the

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[530] Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 132.

[531] (Ibid.) Indeed, the aforementioned illustrations in the ceremonial hall in Zurich already show a familiarity with courtly culture on a pictorial level (see chapter three of this dissertation).

[532] Jaeger, *Ein jüdischer Artusritter*, 132. The *Sachsenspiegel* includes an image of an arm-bearing Jew on a horse.

side on horses fighting with each other; *Wigoleis* includes at least one scene of two jousting knights, and one other scenes of knightly combat; Runkelstein offers at least a fighting scene with the enchanted knights, and the 19th-century woodcuts display a jousting tournament. Finally, the comic even includes two fighting knights on the title page. It seems that the image best summarizes the Wigalois narrative, despite changes in the respective adaptation's accompanying text. The sketch in Cod. Hebr. 255 thus corroborates the assertion that the audience primarily was drawn to the idea of a knight as fighting figure, offering these two figures as summary of the narrative – Wigalois not as the Knight of the Fortune's Wheel, but of knightly combat. Therewith the sketch blends into the pictorial Wigalois tradition, in which religious or love topics as well as the hero's quest for identity fade into the background. No complex stories about bewitched kings or other marvelous creatures, such as giants and dwarfs, play a role anymore; the dragon alone remains. It is this image of the combatant knight that connects all the discussed adaptations across cultural, temporal, and linguistical borders.

Conclusion

Thus, in contrast to common belief, the Yiddish texts do not promote a Jewish aniconism, but rather within one sketch encapsulate the pictorial Wigalois tradition. The combating knight seems to best capture what audiences – at least in form of the artist of the respective pictorial adaptation – saw in Wigalois. It is present in all pictorial adaptations. Even contemporary researchers agree on this: in his recently published monograph on ekphrases in *Wigalois* and the early illustrations of the narrative, James Brown decided on one of the personal combat scenes from Leiden Codex as title illustration for his monograph for a reason.[533] It summarizes the idea

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[533] James H. Brown, *Imagining the Text. Ekphrasis and Envisioning Courtly Identity in Wirnt von Gravenberg's 'Wigalois'* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

of the Arthurian Knight Wigalois, visible throughout the pictorial adaptations. An analysis of the material shows that giants, dwarfs, epic battles, or cursed knights play no role anymore, are mostly eliminated from the narrative.

The pictorial Wigalois tradition represents a significant and distinct way of retelling the narrative. Despite its medial diversity, several patterns emerge and connect the artifacts. Overall, the shift from a heterogenic narrative filled with religious elements, already visible in the verbal retellings, corresponds with the pictorial tradition and the streamlining of the story. Except for one image in the woodcuts from 1493, none of the pictorial adaptations illustrates the Namur battle, but rather they all focus on Wigalois as the story of one single knight and his adventures with regard to personal combat. What in scholarship has been seen as inhomogeneous addition to the otherwise more or less coherent knight's tale has been left out by the reception in the heavily illustrated adaptations. Already in the verbal adaptations, a drastic reduction of this theme was apparent. However, is not necessary to argue which illustration is inspired by exactly which other text, as a common move towards a simplification of the narrative and a focusing on the knight as fighting hero becomes visible and thus a works as a transformation that bridges times, languages, and cultures. Further, the illustrations include neither religious motifs nor a focus on other knights. "Simplification," however, describes only the cutting of story elements and can by no means be used as term offering an evaluation of the material. The Wigalois pictorial adaptations constitute a rich tradition with representatives who retell the narrative very differently than the written texts and with their own emphases, by drawing on the material and medium available respectively. With regard to the illustrations discussed in this chapter, overarching and connecting themes that bridge temporal and cultural boarders in a different way than the verbal adaptations emerge. These examples help to question an understanding of separate, distinct

traditions and to understand how different audiences perceived the narrative – certainly differently from what the medieval text seems to suggest!

Especially the later adaptations, such as the comic, point out their connection to and inspiration by earlier entries with regard to the pictorial material. This suggests that each new entry in the pictorial tradition should be evaluated in connection with other material. The comic best underscores the value of Adaption Studies for this material as it refers to earlier material and encourages the audience to familiarize themselves with it. Thus, the comic puts itself into dialogue with older adaptations and inverts a temporal order as potential gateway to previous retellings. The pictorial tradition deserves an analysis that acknowledges its significance not as mere transformation of text into image, but as distinct entries in this tradition that have to be perceived as separate identities as well as acts of reception and (re)creation.

Epilogue

"And as for the knights who gave their lives, their deaths were cause for neither mourning nor sadness. For they will live forever, their names and deeds handed down from father to son, mother to daughter, in the legends of King Arthur and his knights."[534]

A dying Lanzelot provides Guinevere with this reassurance in the 2004 movie *King Arthur*. With these words Lanzelot reflects on how he and the other Knights of the Round Table will live on through tales. In the process of adaptation, cause and effect become interchangeable. Implicitly, the form of the movie as adaptation plays a role in this statement and thus reflects the beginning of the Arthurian Tradition, in which the movie participates as one artwork. The movie anticipates how these supposed events turn into the well-known stories about King Arthur and his knights. Thus, the film is at the same time a result of the very tradition and presents its birth. Lanzelot's comment consequently exceeds the film as a medium and establishes the oral tradition of retelling the Arthurian material, which made this movie possible. The words Arthur Philipps puts into the mouth of the dying Arthur at the end of the supposed Shakespeare play *The Tragedy of Arthur* sound similar: "What chronicle will soon be writ of us […]? How will it play and how best fill a stage?"[535] With this meta-theatrical device, the supposed Shakespeare ex-post-facto lets Arthur hint at the many adaptations to follow the very events within the play. The dying King Arthur anticipates the stories to come about him in the future. This reflection within the

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[534] David Franzoni, *King Arthur*, directed by Antoine Fuqua (2004; Burbank, CA: Touchstone Home Entertainment, 2004), DVD.

[535] Philipps, *The Tragedy of Arthur*, 359.

existing play seems to invert the order of things: first the event then the play as the event within the play.

These two modern contributions to the Arthurian adaptation tradition mirror how adaptations reflect on their own identity and simultaneously question the order in which these stories are traditionally perceived. Thus they illustrate characteristic traits that this dissertation emphasizes in regard to the Wigalois material: the dialogical nature of adaptations and the inherent reflections on the implications that come with such. By emphasizing these characteristics of the tradition, my dissertation expands previous research on the Wigalois material and opens the floor for many more analyses in the broader framework of the adaptations.

Using the framework of Adaptations Studies, especially as promoted in Linda Hutcheon's theory of the threefold identity of adaptations or in Thomas Leitch's notion of adaptation markers, furthers a description of the phenomenon of Wigalois in a new and different way than previously done in scholarship. The theoretical framework allows for a deeper analysis of the dialogical processes within the tradition uncovering that this is a shared narrative with retellings of very distinct agendas that use the previously established story to promote different ideas and use the essential quality of literature as playfield of scenarios and possibilities. Within the Wigalois material the identity as adaptation plays a significant role, either in the form of markers of adaptation, such as the fetishizing of the word, as proposed by Thomas Leitch, or by referencing predecessors. Thus the adaptors – often consciously – place their entry in this narrative tradition into a dialogue with other Wigalois retellings and create a dialogical process that overrides a diachronic and teleological line of adaptations and crosses lingual and medial borders.

My dissertation further shows that it is worthwhile to expand the field of Adaptation Studies in regard to its limitations for pre-modern material by including developments in the research on texts in the field of Medieval Studies. Notions of the fluctuation and unstable texts, the construction of what we consider "a text" enhances and extends the applicability of Adaptation Studies on that pre-modern material. Further, the expanded framework of Adaptation Studies allows us to include phenomena such as Wagenseil's Yiddish and German *Wigalois*. Thus, this dissertation gives insight into the advantages of an expanded Adaptation Studies framework for such a diverse transcultural, -lingual, and -medial material as the *Wigalois* adaptations by tracing the topics of gender and religion in the respective three cases and by exploring the pictorial tradition.

It is the Yiddish *Viduvilt* that functions as a significant point in transmission and makes the later adaptations, at least up to the 19th century, possible in the first place. The classic understanding in scholarship about the Yiddish adaptation being a religious tale does not hold true. It is the very absence of a coherent religious narrative or Jewish religious-cultural elements that enables the continuation and reworking in very different settings, so much so that the Yiddish text becomes a narrative considered relevant for the anthology constructing a "German" Middle Ages (Wagner's *Erzehlungen aus dem Heldenalter Teutscher Nation* from 1780). Similar to the topic of religion, a research on gender uncovers how the once established narrative offered a structure flexible to be filled with very different meanings and emphases. Thus, the *Wigalois* of Wirnt, in which women presented the mere extra for a successful Arthurian knight, was retold to emphasize the immobilization of female agency (in the case of *Wigoleys*) and, on the other hand, turned into an Arthurian story about powerful female figures (*Viduvilt*). Despite being set in the realm of the patriarchal Arthurian society, the Wigalois narrative proved highly flexible and

adaptable in regard to gender construction – and thus displayed another crucial factor for the continued retelling and appropriation of the Wigalois material. Further, the story of Gawein's son crossed medial borders of all sorts and entered manuscripts, incunabula, wall paintings, comics, an opera and many more. The rich pictorial tradition shows that the adaptations by no means relied on the textual representation and often diverged so much from some of the textual retellings that they came to present their own tradition with inter- and transmedial references to the earlier pictorial material.

Yet, the concept of Adaptation Studies holds further ways of approaching the Wigalois material. It lends itself perfectly to a more in-depth debate genre. Adaptations scholars promote the concept of adaptation as genre. In addition, the Wigalois tradition includes some major genre shifts and a diversity of genres such as early modern prose novels, poems, and even an opera. Therefore, a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of genre for the material, framed in the context of Adaptation Studies and Arthurian romances, promises a fruitful analysis and an exploration of this topic in order to understand better the attraction of the material for respective adaptors and their modes of retelling. A second larger topic that will benefit from a more in-depth research in the larger framework of Adaptation Studies presents the phenomenon of the two larger adaptation waves in modern times, the first one occurring around 1800 with four adaptations from 1786-1809, the second one begins with the new millennium. Both waves participate in an academic and non-academic interest in the Middle Ages, constructing and to some extent idealizing the time according to the respective cultural and political developments. Each of these analyses could uncover new movements within the Wigalois tradition and the way in which different angles help to put different adaptations into a dialogue in order to trace different movements, thus questioning teleological or diachronic readings of the material.

Further, projects building upon the expanded Adaptation Studies framework similar to the Wigalois material could contribute significantly to comparative studies of medieval literatures and literatures that expand over a large time. Traditionally, research on the European literature of the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period has particularly been focused on German and French material and their respective influences. However, as this dissertation shows, moving beyond this classical approach uncovers a tradition that is utterly under-researched despite its importance and implications for the study of Germanic literatures and the German Yiddish dialogue. The system of bringing the German and Yiddish, verbal and textual retellings into a dialogue by using the framework of Adaptation Studies is applicable to other material originating in the Middle Ages too, such as for example the German and Yiddish *Kudrun* material. Such a project could open the scholarly debate, mainly focused on whether or not the Yiddish *Dukus Horant* (14th ct.) is a direct retelling of the Middle High German epic *Kudrun* (13th ct.) and bring it to a literary analysis beyond a fidelity debate that acknowledges dynamic processes and helps to understand the modes of adaptation.

For the Wigalois material, the expanded Adaptation Studies framework proves very beneficial. The diversity of the Wigalois material as uncovered by the analyses in these chapters debunks even Heinrich Heine who, in his verdict, echoes the neglect of the Wigalois adaptation in research:

> Nun aber, aus der christlich spiritualisierten Kraft, entfaltet sich die eigentümlichste Erscheinung des Mittelalters, das Rittertum, das sich endlich noch sublimiert als ein geistliches Rittertum. Jenes, das weltliche Rittertum, sehen wir am anmutigsten verherrlicht in dem Sagenkreis des Königs Artus, worin die süßeste Galanterie, die ausgebildetste *courtoisie* und die abenteuerlichste Kampflust herrscht. Aus den süß närrischen Arabesken und phantastischen Blumengebilden dieser Gedichte grüßen uns der köstliche Iwein, der vortreffliche Lanzelot vom See und der tapfere, galante, honette, aber etwas langweilige Wigalois. […] Ich bin aber überzeugt, daß die minniglichen Burgfrauen des Mittelalters sich an dieser Lektüre viel besser erbaut, schon wegen der

bunten Kleiderschilderungen, wodurch solche Dichtungen vielleicht die Stelle der modernen Modejournale vertraten."[536]

Earlier scholars adhered to Heine's ironic assessment, even though *Wigalois* was dismissed as a syncretistic or eclectic romance rather than a fashion journal.[537] Recent developments in research, including this dissertation, however, showcase a new interest in Wirnt's text and further raise hope that other adaptations will be discovered for scholarly work. Despite the scholarly neglect and Heine's judgment, the text fascinated not only courtly ladies, interested in fashion, but audiences across different languages and epochs and it continues to foster adaptations into the present.

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[536] "Now, out of the Christian spiritualizing force blossoms the strangest phenomenon of the Middle Ages: knighthood, which is eventually sublimated into spiritual knighthood. This, the worldly knighthood, we see most gracefully exalted in the legends of King Arthur, in which the sweetest gallantry, the most well-bred courteousness, and the most adventurous combativeness prevail. From the sweet, quixotic arabesques and fantastic floral constructs of those poems we are greeted by the delightful Iwein, the virtuous Lanzelot of the Lake, and the brave, gallant, decent, but slightly boring Wigalois. […] But I firmly believe that the lovely courtly ladies of the Middle Ages enjoyed this reading much more, not at least because of the colorful descriptions through which such poetry perhaps filled the role of modern fashion journals." (Heinrich Heine, *Gesammelte Werke. Kritische Gesammtausgabe,* volume 5, ed. Gustav Karpeles [Berlin: G. Grothe'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1887], 157 and footnote 1).

[537] See for example: Werner Schröder, "Der synkretistische Roman des Wirnt von Gravenberg," *Euphorion* 80 (1986): 235-277.

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Ayn sheyn lid fun ayn riter oyz frantsien land. Zigmund iz zeyn nomen ginent. Un fun ayn kingstokhter Magelena … [transliterated title]. Fürth, 1698.

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