53; paper £2.00] is an amended reprint of the late Richard Sayce's article first published in *The Library*, xxxi (1966), in which he sought to provide non-technical guidance to the users and students of older books when faced with the apparently baffling technicalities of the identification and location of piracies, counterfeits, reprints and misleading imprints. It remains a pioneering study from which the bibliographer and non-bibliographer alike can profit, and to which in the course of time refinements will doubtless be added. Sayce had made some emendations and additions to his original notes and they have been included in this memorial reprint.

<div align="right">J.D.F.</div>

The June issue will be devoted principally to the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

# Notes

## CELTO-GERMANIC *WĀTU-/WŌTU- AND EARLY GERMANIC POETRY

POKORNY groups the following cognates under the Indo-European root *u̯āt-/u̯ōt- 'geistig angeregt sein':[1]

(*a*) Irish *fāth*, 'Prophezeiung, Ursache'; Welsh *gwawd*, 'Gedicht'; Old Icelandic *ōðr*, 'Poesie'; Old English *wōþ*, 'Gesang, Laut, Stimme, Dichtung'.

(*b*) Gothic *wōds*; Old Icelandic *ōðr*; OE. *wōd*; Old High German *wuot*; all within the semantic range of Modern German *Wut*. Also Old Icelandic *ø̄sa*, 'rasend, verrückt machen', OE. *wēdan*, OHG. *wuoten*, Old Saxon *wōdian*, 'wüten, rasend, verrückt sein'.

(*c*) Old Icelandic *Ōðinn*, OE. *Wōden*, OHG. *Wuotan*; the pagan god.

(*d*) Old Irish *fāith*, Latin *vātēs*, Gaulish *ouāteis*; all meaning 'Weissager, Seher, Prophet'.

Pokorny refers also to the suggestion by Thieme that Sanskrit *api-vat-*, 'anblasen, inspirieren', ought to be added to the group, which is then further to be linked with IE.

*au̯ē-*, 'blasen', whose reflexes *aī* in Old Irish and *awen* in Welsh are connected with divinatory ritual, prophecy, and poetry. Pokorny's list can easily be added to. Latin *vāticināri*, 'to foretell, predict', is one example; from Old English one might mention *wōþcræft*, 'the art of poetry or song', and the self-explanatory *wōþsang*.

Because these cognates juxtapose poetry, prophecy and prophets, song, inspiration, and a heathen god they have been used to argue that Indo-European, and more specifically Germanic, poetry was in origin divinely inspired and ecstatic, linked with religious cult and the sacral function. De Vries, for instance, has written in this connection: 'Die Germanen betrachteten das Dichten . . . als eine göttliche Inspiration'.[2] More recently E. Werlich concluded on the same grounds: 'Als Grundbedeutung für *wōþ* ergibt sich auf diesem Hintergrund: "religiös-dichterische Erregung, Begeisterung"', and added that the OE. compound *wōþbora*, 'speaker, poet, prophet, philosopher' originally meant 'der von einer religiös-dichterischen und seherischen Erregung Ergriffene', who can furthermore be linked with the *scop*, 'ein säkularisierter germanischer Priesterdichter'.[3]

Even more recently Heinrich Wagner has argued that the words in section (*b*) in the above grouping are actually unrelated to those in sections (*a*), (*c*), and (*d*), which ought to be grouped under a Celto-Germanic root *wātu-/wōtu-*, which furthermore corresponds to Sanskrit *wātu-* (< *vātave*), 'to weave'.[4] The semantic justification for this phonological reconstruction is the metaphor attested in Irish, Greek, and Vedic literary traditions whereby poetic composition is spoken of in terms of a weaving process. 'If our equation of Celto-Germanic *wātu-/wātu-* with Skr. *vātave* is correct', Wagner concludes, 'the word must have meant "stuff, material", metaph. "subject matter (for poets or administrators of sacrifice and law)" and "poetry, poetic art, learning" in

[1] J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Berne, 1959), 1113. The rearrangement of entries follows Wagner, cited below.

[2] J. de Vries, 'Über das Verhältnis von *Ōðr* und *Ōðinn*', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, lxxiii (1954), 344.

[3] E. Werlich, 'Der westgermanische Skop', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, lxxxvi (1967), 352-75.

[4] H. Wagner, 'Studies in the Origins of early Celtic Civilisation', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, xxxi (1970), 46-57.

general'. In other words, the ecstatic element would be removed from the earlier interpretation of early Germanic poets and poetry, though Woden would continue as 'the lord (or god) of poetry (speech, wisdom)'.

The epilogue to the Old English poem *Elene* supports Wagner's argument. There Cynewulf says that his meditation on the True Cross *wisdom onwreah, breostlocan onwand, leoþucræft onleac*, and that in composing his poem he *wordcræftum wæf.*[5] A fourth literary tradition in which poetic composition is likened to weaving, the Germanic, can therefore be added to the three which Wagner cites to justify his reconstruction.

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[5] *The Vercelli Book*, ed. G. P. Krapp (A.S.P.R., ii 1932), 100, 1,236-50.

### BEOWULF 431-2 AND THE HERO'S CIVILITY IN DENMARK

IN his first speech to Hrothgar shortly after entering Heorot, the young warrior Beowulf declares his intentions to rid the hall of Grendel. Lines 431-2 of the speech make little sense as recorded in the manuscript, and editors since Kemble agree almost unanimously that scribal error has led to the transposition of the word *ond* (MS. 7) from its proper position before the words *minra eorla gedryht* to its present position before the words *þes hearda heap.*[1] Once this imagined error is corrected, the two phrases read in apposition to one another, and both refer to the band of Geats from whom the hero expects help in the coming struggle. The passage thus edited makes sense, and yet we are left with a somewhat jarring transition between verses 431a and 431b. Beowulf seems about to declare that he wishes to fight Grendel alone, and then as if by an afterthought – a sudden realization of the immodesty of his proposal,

[1] Thus for example the editions by F. Klaeber, 3rd edn. (1950); E. V. K. Dobbie, A.S.P.R., iv (1953; E. von Schaubert (Paderborn, 1958-61); and C. L. Wrenn, revised by W. F. Bolton (1973). In their reconstruction of this passage these editors follow the editions of Kemble (1835), Grein (1857), Sedgefield (1913), Chambers (1914), and Holthausen (1929).

perhaps – he catches himself in mid-sentence and calls attention to his band of Geats.

Following B. Thorpe,[2] I would propose a reading of lines 431-2 that removes this slight awkwardness and that seems to me more in keeping with the poem's design. Instead of having transposed the symbol 7, the scribe seems to have omitted the word *mid* before the word *minra*. Such an error probably arose by haplography.[3] To suppose transposition of the symbol 7 is less plausible palaeographically. It is to suppose two scribal errors, not one: the omission of the symbol in its proper place, and its addition in an improper place. *Beowulf* 431-2 thus should read as follows:

> þæt ic mote ana   [mid] minra eorla gedryht
> ond þes hearda heap   Heorot fæsian.[4]

If this reconstruction is accepted, the phrase *þes hearda heap* no longer stands in apposition to *minra eorla gedryht*. The *heap* in question must be not the hero's small band of retainers, but the larger troop of Danish warriors in the hall.

Such a reading has several advantages over the one generally accepted. First, it is in accord with the poet's customary formulaic diction. Verse 431b is paralleled almost exactly in 357b (*mid his eorla gedriht*) and closely in 633b (*mid minra secga gedriht*), 662b (*mid his hæleþa gedryht*), and 1672b (*mid þinra secga gedryht*). Secondly, the reading is in accord with what turn out to be the facts of the Grendel fight. During the actual struggle the hero is surrounded not only by his band of Geats, but by a number of Danes as well (see lines 767, 783). In verse 432a he seems to be alluding to the help that might be expected from these Danes. Thirdly, the proposed reading sets the young hero's words into an appropriate light. Far from bursting on the scene in Denmark as a boastful young man who neglects to acknowledge the presence of a troop of well-armed Danish warriors and who refers to his own men almost condescendingly, Beowulf presents himself as a mature leader who chooses his words with tact. Rather than being an almost

[2] *Beowulf* (Oxford, 1855). Thorpe presents his reading without comment or defence.

[3] As S. O. Andrew points out in his *Postscript on Beowulf* (Cambridge, 1948), 150.

[4] '. . . that I alone, with my band of retainers and this brave troop, might cleanse Heorot.'