

Oswald von Wolkenstein's Kl. 109a and 109b: Reconsidering a Problematic Bond

DARIO CAPELLI
Università degli Studi di Torino

1. INTRODUCTION

Second son of a 14th-century Tyrolean landed gentry family, Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77-1445) is considered the most prominent German author between Walther von der Vogelweide and Goethe.¹ Among the reasons behind this statement, foremost is his ability to renew and adapt medieval topoi and literary structures to his own poetry and to the time he lived in; for this reason, Sieglinde Hartmann's comparison between Oswald and the god Janus perfectly describes Wolkenstein's person and relevance within medieval literature.²

¹ H.-D. MÜCK, *Oswald von Wolkenstein zwischen Verehrung und Vermarktung. Formen der Rezeption 1835-1976*, in H.-D. MÜCK – U. MÜLLER (Hrsg.), *Gesammelte Vorträge der 600-Jahrfeier Oswalds von Wolkenstein Seis am Schlern 1977*, Göttingen, Kümmerle, 1978, pp. 483-526, here p. 484.

² S. HARTMANN, *Oswald von Wolkenstein heute: Traditionen und Innovationen in seiner Lyrik*, in «Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein Gesellschaft», 15, 2005, pp. 349-372, here p. 369. I would like to thank Prof. Hartmann for her constructive feedback on the present study.

However, it would be reductive to examine Oswald exclusively from a literary point of view, since both his own *Lieder* and the copious *Lebenszeugnisse* (or LZ) preserved today also attest a strong political commitment, marking Oswald's whole adult life. Having to carve out his own place in the world far from home, Oswald began his military career as a young man and, over the course of his life, he had the opportunity to witness numerous historical turning points, such as the Council of Constance (1414-1418) and the Hussite Wars. A fierce supporter of the imperial and Catholic cause, Oswald was strongly opposed to the social and religious rebellion that raged in Bohemia. His contribution to the efforts to eradicate it was articulated both on the battlefield³ and in literature.

The next paragraph summarizes some important studies on Oswald's *Hussitenlieder*, while the remainder of the present study presents an investigation into two specific *Lieder*, Kl. 109a and 109b.⁴ The second of these has until now been regarded as a German translation of the first, which is written in Latin. The thesis articulated here is that Kl. 109b may be read as a separate text from Kl. 109a, with which it nevertheless shares some stylistic similarities, but also as the final echo of Oswald's fight against the Hussites in his corpus.

2. OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, JAN HUS, AND THE HUSSITES

It is almost certain that Oswald had the chance to hear about, if not directly listen to, Jan Hus and his theses during the first weeks of the Council of Constance, to which Wolkenstein arrived as part of the retinue of the prince-bishop of Brixen, Ulrich Prustl. As documented by the LZ 70⁵ – dated February 16th, 1415 – Oswald soon went into the service of Sigismund of Luxembourg, king of Hungary and Germany, and architect of the convocation of the Council by John XXIII.

³ LZ 97 in A. SCHWOB (Hrsg.), *Die Lebenszeugnisse Oswalds von Wolkenstein. Edition und Kommentar*, vol. 2, Wien-Köln-Weimar, Böhlau, 2001, pp. 21-36.

⁴ Oswald's *Lieder* are numbered according to OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein. Herausgegeben von K. K. Klein. 4, grundlegend neu bearbeitete Auflage von B. Wachinger*, Berlin-Boston, de Gruyter, 2015.

⁵ A. SCHWOB (Hrsg.), *Die Lebenszeugnisse Oswalds von Wolkenstein. Edition und Kommentar*, vol. 1, Wien-Köln-Weimar, Böhlau, 1999, pp. 223-227.

In a study published in 2014⁶ Max Siller reconstructed Oswald's role in the «Krieg der Wörter»⁷ that occurred during the Council, an anticipation of the armed conflict that marked the following two decades of European history. This verbal attack on Hus and his followers had already been dragging on in Bohemia – *hus(a)* may be translated from Czech as 'goose'. This association between Hus and a bird, whose annoying noise tends to overwhelm the other sounds of the farmyard, found a great admirer in Ulrich Prustl: the bishop of Brixen made use of this pun even at a crucial moment of the Council, the vote on Hus' death sentence. In fact, according to the prelate, burning Hus at the stake would finally put an end to his preaching, similar to how a goose honks no more once it has been plucked and roasted.⁸

The *hus-goose* pairing was also used by several literary authors, Oswald among them. His first *Hussitenlied*, Kl. 27, composed in 1415, opens with a gnomic statement on the stupidity of geese; those from Bohemia represent a peculiar case, since

ir ainvalt si gescheidiklichen meren
zu Behem und ouch anderswo
do si die federn reren⁹

deliberately they increase their stupidity
in Bohemia and also elsewhere
wherever they have to let go their feathers.¹⁰

Sieglinde Hartmann does not translate *ainvalt* as 'stupidity', but as 'belief in simplicity', since the German noun «recalls the language of late medieval German mystics and associated heretical movements, designating an inter-

⁶ M. SILLER, *Hussiten und Katholiken (1414-1434). Zur sprachlichen Konstituierung von Feinbildern*, in P. KNÁPEK – B. BENÍŠKOVÁ (edited by), *Interkulturalität in Sprache, Literatur und Bildung / Interculturality in Language, Literature and Education / Interkulturalita v jazycce, literatuře a vzdělání*, Pardubice, Univerzita Pardubice, 2014, pp. 15-34.

⁷ Siller takes the concept of *verbal war* from J. WERTHEIMER, *Krieg der Wörter. Die Kulturkonfliktlüge*, Marburg, Literaturwissenschaft.de, 2003.

⁸ See SILLER, *Hussiten und Katholiken ...*, cit. p. 20.

⁹ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder...*, 2015, cit., p. 93.

¹⁰ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *The Poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein. An English Translation of the Complete Works (1376/77-1445)*, Edited and Translated by A. Classen, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 100.

pretation of the Christian faith especially focusing on simplicity of the spirit, pureness of the soul and voluntary poverty».¹¹

The noisy advance of the geese alarms the birds of prey, symbolizing the European nobility, as some of these noble animals have already fallen victim to this honking coven. As a nobleman, Oswald warns his peers that God has been angered by their laziness and that, in order to escape His punishment, they should make use of the sharp beaks and claws granted to them by God himself to flush out the Hussite threat.

The fifth stanza of Kl. 27 is characterized by a strong emotional charge, as Oswald directly addresses and curses the goose par excellence, Jan Hus. The poet predicts that, if the heresiarch will not abandon Wyclif's teachings and his senseless struggle, he will find himself together with Pilate in the Devil's jaws. As reported by Siller,¹² in this stanza Oswald's tone switches from irony and disparagement to hate and intolerance, as symbolized by the word game *Huss-hass* at v. 41. However, it is possible to state that Oswald is also trying to hide his real feelings, impotence, and fear: the Hussite fury was but another attack on the order on which late medieval society was based, and Oswald, as member of the imperial landed gentry, had a deep interest in ensuring that this system of values was not questioned in any way.

After three further stanzas in which Oswald carries on his verbal aggression against the heretical goose, the ninth and final stanza contains one last admonishment from Oswald toward all good Christians, that they might join his plea to God

das im sein zoren wird gewant,
den wir durch grosse zaichen rächlich sehen
in Frankreich, Engelant, Katalon,
in Lampart und zu Behem auf der mitte.¹³

that he turn away his wrath from us
the wrath that we recognize as His revenge when devastating things happen
in France, England, Catalonia,
in Lombardy and in the middle of Bohemia.¹⁴

¹¹ S. HARTMANN, *Heretical Hussites: Oswald von Wolkenstein's 'Song of Hell' ('Durch Toren Weis')*, in A. P. ROACH – J. R. SIMPSON (edited by), *Heresy and the Making of European Culture. Medieval and Modern Perspectives*, London-New York, Routledge, 2013, p. 191.

¹² SILLER, *Hussiten und Katholiken...*, cit., p. 25.

¹³ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder...*, 2015, cit., p. 96.

¹⁴ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *The Poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein ...*, cit., p. 102.

The final verses of the *Lied* contain a direct request to Mary, to whom Oswald seems to be particularly devoted:

stee für, Maria, wend dein kind!
ich Wolkenstein das bitte. Amen.¹⁵

Assist me, Mary, change Your son's mind!
This I am begging you, I the man from Wolkenstein. Amen.¹⁶

I will return to the link between Oswald and Mary below, but for now it is interesting to remark on the switch from the first-person singular to the plural – as Oswald asks to be joined in his supplication to God, Father of all Christians – and then once again to the first-person singular in the final prayer to Mary, as if Oswald wanted to carve out an exclusive niche for himself as author.

A minor reference to the Hussites is to be found in v. 60 of Kl. 39, a *Beichtlied*, a poem in which the author publicly confesses his sins and asks forgiveness.¹⁷ In the fifth stanza, Oswald writes that he was advised by God Himself:

auss beichten solt ich leren
Durch mein gesagk [...]
mangen ungewissen mentsch,
die sich verfliegen inn der heut,
recht als zu Behem tuent die genns.¹⁸

I should teach how to confess
by way of my song [...]
many undecided people
who are uncertain about themselves,
just like the “geese” in Bohemia.¹⁹

Here the poet resumes the parallelism between Jan Hus' surname (and, therefore, his followers) and the goose, but his use of it here is only to avoid

¹⁵ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder...*, 2015, cit., p. 96.

¹⁶ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *The Poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein ...*, cit., p. 102.

¹⁷ On this penitential poem, see G. F. JONES, *Oswald von Wolkenstein's Mein Sünd und Schuld and the Beichtlied Tradition*, in «MLN», 85 (5), 1970, pp. 635-651.

¹⁸ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder...*, 2015, cit., p. 125.

¹⁹ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *The Poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein ...*, cit., p. 117.

explicitly mentioning the Hussites, while in Kl. 27 it is the cornerstone of an invective full of symbolic connotations.

One last plausible reference to the Hussites may also be read in Kl. 32, rebaptized «Song of Hell» by Sieglinde Hartmann.²⁰ Alongside a description of hell, Oswald lists seven different chambers, each with a specific punishment for a precise category of sinner. Unlike Buffalmacco's infernal fresco in the Pisan *Campo Santo*,²¹ Oswald does not match each chamber with one of the seven deadly sins, a stylistic choice which can also be found in Francesca Romana's *visio inferni* painted by Antoniazio Romano in the Roman monastery of Tor de' Specchi.²² Hartmann focuses in particular on Kl. 32's third *kamer*, where «Jews, heathens and heretics are "fettered" by the darkest darkness»;²³ similarly to Dante's *contrapasso*, those who in life refused God's light are damned to stay in eternal darkness. Differently from Kl. 27, here Oswald does not directly mention either Jan Hus or his followers, but it is highly probable that these are implied within "heretics". The poet also includes among the mentioned sinners Jews and Muslims, the latter as *haiden* ('heathens' in Hartmann's translation).²⁴ A similar tripartite sequence, usually counting Christians, Jew, and heathens, is not only to be found in Oswald (who also made use of it in Kl. 18,4),²⁵ but also in a rich literary tradition, which includes Walther von der Vogelweide,²⁶ Freidank,²⁷

²⁰ HARTMANN, *Heretical Hussites*, cit., p. 195.

²¹ See J. BASCHET, *Les justices de l'au-delà: les représentations de l'enfer en France et en Italie (XIIIe-XVe siècle)*, Roma, École française de Rome, 1993, pp. 293-303.

²² Cf. L. PASQUINI, *I luoghi dell'Aldilà: iconografia*, in A. L. TROMBETTI BUDRIESI (a cura di), *Un gallo ad Asclepio. Morte, morti e società tra antichità e prima età moderna*, Bologna, CLUEB, 2013, pp. 589-648, in particular p. 604.

²³ HARTMANN, *Heretical Hussites*, cit., p. 197.

²⁴ The Christian depiction of Muslims as heathens in the Middle Ages may be explained, on the one hand, as result of a scarce knowledge of Islam, and, secondly, by defamatory aims. Cf. T. R. JACKSON, *cristen, ketzer, heiden, jüden: Questions of Identity in the Middle Ages*, in J. HODKINSON – J. MORRISON (edited by), *Encounters with Islam in German Literature and Culture*, Rochester, Camden House, 2009, pp. 19-35.

²⁵ «bei cristen, Kriechen, haiden», OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder...*, 2015, cit., p. 47.

²⁶ See the first verse of stanza 16,29 in Walther's *Palästinalied*. Ed. WALTHER VON DER VOGELWEIDE, *Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche, 15. Auflage*, hrsg. von T. Bein, Berlin-Boston, de Gruyter, 2013.

²⁷ V. 10,18 of the *Akkon-Sprüche*. Ed. FREIDANK, *L'indignazione di un poeta-crociato. I versi gnomici su Acri*, a cura di M. G. Cammarota, Roma, Carocci, 2011.

and Tannhäuser.²⁸ Therefore, the «common reason for their [Jews, heathens, and heretics] punishment in Hell»²⁹ searched for by Hartmann may lie in a revision of this literary topos.

Neither Kl. 39 nor Kl. 32 are considered *Hussitenlieder*, a label which is applied to Kl. 134. This poem is actually not attested in the two authorized manuscripts³⁰ nor in the posthumously made ms. c,³¹ but in the ms. s (Regensburg, Stadtmuseum, Leihgabe des Historischen Verein für Oberpfalz und Regensburg, R 58), which is part of Oswald's *Streuüberlieferung*. As for any other work in this group, Oswald's authorship of Kl. 134 cannot be fully verified, but it is considered highly plausible.³² The rubric written before this *Lied* reports that on the day of St Hyppolitus (August 13th) 1431 a dishonorable withdrawal took place in Bohemia, a clear reference to the Battle of Domažlice, which was actually fought on August 14th and which put an end to the fifth crusade against the Hussites. Oswald's once vivid confidence in those who were to eradicate the Hussite threat with weapons has now faded, and the poet gives shape to his distrust by quoting God's words from the *Book of Daniel* (13,5): «A seniorib(us) q(ui) videbant(ur) reg(er)e p(o)p(u)l(u)m egressa e(st) iniq(ui)tas».³³ In the *Lied* Oswald accuses nobles, knights, and squires of ineptitude for a second time, since they can do nothing but prepare great plans instead of acting directly. In light of this, his only hope is direct divine intervention.

Despite the numerically reduced casuistry, Oswald's works featuring Jan Hus and the Hussites, as well as on heretics in general,³⁴ reveals a vivid sen-

²⁸ Vv. 41-42 of *Uns kumt ein wunneklīchiu zīt*. Ed. TANNHÄUSER, *Le liriche del Codice Manesse*, a cura di M. G. Cammarota, Bergamo, Sestante, 2006; TANNHÄUSER, *Die Gedichte der Manessischen Handschrift. Mittelhochdeutsch / Neuhochdeutsch*, hrsg. von M. G. Cammarota, übersetzt von J. Kühnel, Göttingen, Kümmerle, 2009.

²⁹ HARTMANN, *Heretical Hussites*, cit., p. 198.

³⁰ Cf. H. MOSER, *Die Überlieferung der Werke Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, in U. MÜLLER – M. SPRINGETH (Hrsg.), *Oswald von Wolkenstein. Leben – Werk – Rezeption*, Berlin-New York, de Gruyter, 2011, pp. 28 and 31.

³¹ Description and facsimile of the manuscript available in H. MOSER – U. MÜLLER – F. V. SPECHTLER (Hrsg.), *Oswald von Wolkenstein. Abbildungen zur Überlieferung II: Die Innsbrucker Wolkenstein-Handschrift C*, Göttingen, Kümmerle, 1973.

³² Erika Timm holds to be plausible «daß außer den in A und B überlieferten noch weitere Oswaldlieder existiert haben, und es ist nicht ausgeschlossen, daß solche, ohne den Namen Oswalds, in anderen Handschriften des 15./16. Jh.s überliefert sind» (E. TIMM, *Die Überlieferung der Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, Lübeck-Hamburg, Matthiesen, p. 123).

³³ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder...*, 2015, cit., p. 325.

³⁴ An investigation of the late medieval concern for witchcraft, which was considered a renewed form of heresy, is offered in D. CAPELLI, *Wer alden weiben wolgetraut:*

timent of fear and loathing of the poet in regard to this movement. In a first temporal phase, the literary confrontation may be divided into two sections: on the one hand, Oswald verbally attacks Hus and his followers by referring to the goose topos, which prospered during the Council of Constance. On the other hand, the poet urges the European nobility to act immediately against this menace and to not be lazy, while he supplicates at the same time both God's and Mary's intervention. After several debacles on the battlefield and realizing that the Hussite threat cannot be eradicated by human will and hands, Oswald abandons all confidence in his peers and entrusts himself to God, his last refuge.

3. KL. 109A AND KL. 109B

Oswald's devotion, in particular towards Mary, does not emerge exclusively in the *Hussitenlieder*, as it constitutes a relevant topos throughout his corpus, an example being the seven *Alterslieder* opening his second manuscript.³⁵ Here the poet several times implores compassion for his person and for his soul, pausing when it comes to describing the effects of ageing and of his previously dissolute life.

At ff. 43v-44r, ms. B is the only witness of Kl. 109a and Kl. 109b, poems attested neither in A nor in c,³⁶ and whose core is constituted by an invocation to the Virgin. Kl. 109a is a 68-verse long Latin *Glossenlied*,³⁷ in which each word from Gabriel's and Elizabeth's greetings (Lc 1, 28.42) constitutes the beginning of a *pars* of Oswald's work. In order to give an example of how this literary technique works, the first stanza of Kl. 109a, in turn consisting of two *partes*, is here presented:³⁸

Ageing and Ageism in Oswald von Wolkenstein, in «Annali. Sezione germanica», 32, 2022, pp. 59-88.

³⁵ Cf. S. HARTMANN, *Altersdichtung und Selbstdarstellung bei Oswald von Wolkenstein*, Göttingen, Kümmerle, 1980.

³⁶ Spechtler writes that the reasons for this peculiar collocation are unknown. Cf. F. V. SPECHTLER, *Beiträge zum deutschen geistlichen Lied des Mittelalters III: Liedtraditionen in den Marienliedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, in MÜCK – MÜLLER (Hrsg.), *Gesammelte Vorträge...*, cit., pp. 179-203, here p. 185.

³⁷ On this term, see G. BERNT, *Glossenlied*, in «Lexikon des Mittelalters», 4, 1989, col. 1515.

³⁸ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder...*, 2015, cit., pp. 258-259. Bold type is provided in the edition.

Ave, mater o Maria
 pietatis, tota pia,
 sine te non erat via
 deploranti seculo.

Gracia tu nobis data,
 quam fidelis advocata
 celi thronis es prelata
 in eterno solio.

2a p(ar)s

Written in a seesawing Latin, Kl. 109a represents praise of the Virgin, recognized as the ultimate foundation of Salvation. The poet accentuates Mary's relevance by weaving together several titles of hers, such as *fidelis advocata* (v. 6), *stella maris* (v. 10), *consolatrix animarum* (v. 26), and *pia mater et benigna* (v. 35), and by linking all the biblical figures mentioned in the *Lied*, from Christ to Adam and Eve, to the Virgin, ultimate bridge between the divine and the human spheres.

Kl. 109a harks back to a European literary tradition which, although not numerically relevant (four witnesses), proves that the *lauda Ave mater, o Maria* was a *Glossenlied* of great success throughout the 15th century. The origin of this topos has been identified by Kurt von Fischer in Italy,³⁹ while Welker opts for a Netherlandian-Burgundian origin.⁴⁰ On the other side, Kl. 109b has only 16 verses, in turn divided into two 8-verse stanzas. It is written immediately after Kl. 109a, at f. 44r, and its text is as follows:

Ave, muetter, küniginne,
 miltikait ain milderinne,
 an dich kain weg löblicher minne
 get in wainender welde.
 Gnaden vol an uns beginne,
 wo sich ruefft gelöblich stimme,
 trön der himel, kaiserinne
 in ewikleichem velde.

³⁹ K. VON FISCHER, *Die lauda „Ave Mater“ und ihre verschiedenen Fassungen*, in S. KROSS – H. SCHMIDT (Hrsg.), *Colloquium amicorum. Joseph Schmidt-Görg zum 70. Geburtstag*, Bonn, Beethovenhaus, 1967, pp. 93-99. This thesis is also shared by I. PELNAR, *Die mehrstimmigen Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein. Textband*, Tutzing, Schneider, 1982; see in particular p. 109.

⁴⁰ L. WELKER, *New Light on Oswald von Wolkenstein: Central European Traditions and Burgundian Polyphony*, in «Early Music History», 7, 1987, pp. 187-226: 208-209.

Ave, muetter, frau, magt und maid,
 erenreiche, lobesam beklait,
 seid und dir der herre nicht versait,
 so hilf uns, edle krone,
 Das wir nach des todes hinnenschaid
 vinden dort ain frölich öugelwaid
 und besitzen alle sälikait
 bei deinem kindlin schone.⁴¹

Ave, mother, queen,
 merciful consoler
 without you there is no path of true love
 in this miserable world.
 Have mercy on us,
 where the praiseworthy voice raises up,
 at the throne of the heaven's empress
 in the eternal world.

Oh Mary, lady, maid, and virgin,
 rich in honor, praiseworthy clad,
 since the Lord cannot reject any of your requests,
 so help us, noble crown
 that we find, after death has taken us,
 over there a joyful spectacle
 and win all blissfulness
 with your beautiful child.⁴²

As in Kl. 109a, Mary once more holds a leading role as addressee of the first-person-plural praise. However, significant differences in content are also easily identifiable. In particular, not so much Mary's key role in Salvation as her authority and her prestige are exalted: this is outlined, on the one hand, with the inclusion of titles which are not mentioned in Kl. 109a, like *küniginne* (v. 1) and *trön der himel, kaiserinne* (v. 7), and on the other hand with the observation, in the second stanza, that not even the Almighty could refuse her something if she asked.

⁴¹ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder...*, 2015, cit., pp. 261-262.

⁴² OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *The Poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein ...*, cit., pp. 190-191. Italic type is provided in the translation.

Moreover, unlike the Latin text, Kl. 109b has not been widely investigated within medieval studies, the most relevant contribution on this *Lied* being Bärnthaler's monograph on translation in German in the late Middle Ages.⁴³

4. IS KL. 109B A (AUTO)TRANSLATION OF KL. 109A?

In his study, Bärnthaler investigates a literary area until then rarely considered, namely late medieval translations of hymns and sequences in the German area. His choice to focus in particular on the literary corpora of the Monk of Salzburg, of Heinrich Laufenberg, and of Oswald von Wolkenstein is based on a desire not to investigate anonymous translations, but rather the works of three renowned German authors,⁴⁴ active between the 14th and the 15th centuries. This historical phase was, according to Bärnthaler, of particular relevance for the German religious *Lied*, with Salzburg as an active center of both Latin and German religious production.⁴⁵

The Monk's, Heinrich Laufenberg's, and Oswald von Wolkenstein's literary corpora consist of a progressively decreasing number of texts, and only three Wolkenstein's *Lieder* are investigated in the study, namely Kl. 109b, Kl. 129, and Kl. 130, the latter two being attested in four manuscripts of the *Streuüberlieferung*.⁴⁶

Bärnthaler believes that Oswald wrote Kl. 109a «in Anlehnung an eine schlecht belegte lateinische Tradition»,⁴⁷ but he also reports George Fenwick Jones' hypothesis⁴⁸ that Oswald «habe nicht genügend Lateinkenntnisse besessen, um dieses Lied gedichtet haben zu können».⁴⁹ It is not particularly

⁴³ G. BÄRNTHALER, *Übersetzen im deutschen Spätmittelalter. Der Mönch von Salzburg, Heinrich Laufenberg und Oswald von Wolkenstein als Übersetzer lateinischer Hymnen und Sequenzen*, Göttingen, Kümmerle, 1983.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁴⁶ The above-mentioned manuscripts are ms. L (München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 715), ms. w (München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 1115), ms. x (Wien Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Vind. 4696), and ms. y (Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Vind. 2975); the paper manuscripts also contain *Lieder* by the Monk of Salzburg. For a short description of the four manuscripts, see OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder...*, 2015, cit., pp. XVII-XX.

⁴⁷ BÄRNTHALER, *Übersetzen*, cit., p. 60.

⁴⁸ G. F. JONES, *Oswald von Wolkenstein*, New York, Twayne, 1973, p. 120.

⁴⁹ BÄRNTHALER, *Übersetzen*, cit., pp. 60-61.

clear what Bärnthaler meant by pointing out that the Latin tradition has few witnesses when, before him, both von Fischer⁵⁰ and Appelhans⁵¹ had highlighted how this tradition is actually particularly interesting in terms of both quality and quantity.

In addition, Jones' thesis may have a weakness in regard to Oswald's limited Latin knowledge: the use of this language in the poet's corpus is scant and essentially limited to the religious sphere, with sporadic references to the scientific (e.g. some astronomical and astrological terms in Kl. 22) and musical fields (e.g. the musical notes in Kl. 26 and 116). Oswald himself seems to have been aware of his poor Latin skills since, as noted by Kuen,⁵² the poet puts it in last position in the *repeticio* of Kl. 69, a real linguistic self-certification about the seven languages used in this plurilingual *Lied*.⁵³ The writing of Kl. 109a confirms this lack of knowledge of Latin, which does not seem to have been amended by the copyist, who left some imperfections: for example, the expression *pro salute gaudio* at v. 24 may be read as result of the fusion of two equivalent formulations, *pro salute* and *pro gaudio*. In general terms, Kl. 109a is also characterized by a wide use, often tending to abuse, of the absolute ablative, as well as by linguistic transfers (e.g. the Latin conjunction *cum* also covers some typical functions of the German equivalent *mit*). Kl. 109a is, therefore, far from being a *Lied* written in an optimal Latin, but this characteristic seems to confirm, absurdly, Oswald's authorship.

On the content of Kl. 109b, Bärnthaler states «[bei] Oswald spielt die Erscheinung der Emotionalisierung kaum eine Rolle; ah ehesten noch im Lied Kl, Nr. 109b. Diminutiva setzt der Wolkensteiner überhaupt nicht [...] Zu Oswalds Texte fällt auf, daß Kl, Nr. 109b keine der wichtigen Personen betont, was sonst in jedem der Lieder geschieht».⁵⁴

When it comes to discussion of the relationship between Kl. 109a and Kl. 109b, Bärnthaler states that the latter text, and in particular its first eight

⁵⁰ VON FISCHER, *Die lauda...*, cit.

⁵¹ P. APPELHANS, *Untersuchungen zur spätmittelalterlichen Mariendichtung. Die rhythmischen mittelhochdeutschen Mariengrüße*, Heidelberg, Winter, 1970, p. 56.

⁵² H. KUEN, *Rätoromanisches bei Oswald von Wolkenstein*, in «Ladinia», 3, 1979, pp. 101-124: 112.

⁵³ On plurilingualism in Kl. 69 also see D. CAPELLI, *Oswald von Wolkenstein: un esempio tardomedievale di plurilinguismo*, in «Lingue antiche e moderne», 10, 2021, pp. 139-165.

⁵⁴ BÄRNTHALER, *Übersetzen*, cit., pp. 174 and 178.

verses,⁵⁵ is «eine wörtliche Übersetzung»⁵⁶ and even comes to proclaim it as «die wörtlichste Übersetzung Oswalds von Wolkenstein»,⁵⁷ but one could also point out that, being Kl. 109a also a *Lied* composed by Oswald, Kl. 109b should be more exactly considered an autotranslation.⁵⁸ Bärnthaler seems to agree with a long tradition, which includes for example Schatz⁵⁹ and Marold,⁶⁰ but, probably unintentionally, the scholar himself offers various elements in support of an objection to his strong assertion. If Kl. 109b is to be considered Oswald's more literal (auto)translation, elements of discontinuity with the Latin text indicated *passim* by the scholar in his study – such as the presence of new abstract profane terms, the disappearance of terms indicating a personal relationship with Mary, or the emphasis on unanimated terms – should not be found in the hypertext.

On the contrary, it is also undeniable that other characteristics identified by Bärnthaler, such as the structure and content of two incipits and the rhyme and syllable schemes, constitute an equally marked link between the two *Lieder*. If a connection between Kl. 109a and Kl. 109b has to be traced, a starting thesis may be Kl. 109b as a vernacular rewriting or as an independent text, with Kl. 109a as poetical model, also in light of Spechtler's observations, for whom Oswald initially takes inspiration only from the *lauda* tradition while writing Kl. 109b. Therefore, in the German text the *Mariengruß* would no longer be recognizable.⁶¹

5. KL. 109B AS A REWRITING OR AS AN INDEPENDENT TEXT

Erika Timm's 1972 codicological study will be here taken as starting point for a reconsideration of Kl. 109b: both this text and the supposed Latin original belong to the third working phase of the writing of ms. B. This *Arbeitsphase*

⁵⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 60.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

⁵⁸ Cf. L. BERTOLINI, *Autore, autore implicito e autotraduzione* in the present volume, and the there mentioned studies.

⁵⁹ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Gedichte Oswalds von Wolkenstein. Herausgegeben von J. Schatz*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1904, pp. 308-309.

⁶⁰ W. MAROLD, *Kommentar zu den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein. Im Anschluss an die Ausgabe von Jos. Schatz (1902/1904)*, doctoral thesis (Berlin): 1926, vol. 2, p. 513.

⁶¹ SPECHTLER, *Beiträge*, cit. p. 188.

is constituted by occasional individual entries,⁶² whose dates of writing are not always identifiable with certainty: Timm admits that it is impossible to fix a date for Kl. 109a (to which she simply refers as 109), while Kl. 109b, «[die] vier deutschen Strophen, die dem lateinischen Text folgen»,⁶³ shares relevant paleographic similarities with the subsequent two *Lieder*, Kl. 110 and 111, which were put into writing in 1436, four years after the official completion of the codex on August 30th, 1432.

Five years after Timm's study, Delbono ascribes the copy of Kl. 109b-116 (ff. 44r-48r of ms. B) to the eighth copyist of ms. A;⁶⁴ Kl. 109a is once again separated from the subsequent German text. The codicological analysis also shows that the copyist left a slim white space between Kl. 109a and Kl. 109b, while the latter *Lied* is separated from Kl. 110 by a second white space that, although not particularly large, could have contained at least a third stanza of Kl. 109b. This leads to the contradictory situation whereby the paleographic characteristics lead to a separation of the two *Lieder* Kl. 109, while the codicological characteristics see Kl. 109b much more linked to the Latin text than to Kl. 110. However, it is possible to affirm that Oswald almost certainly did not provide for further verses than those actually written by the copyist (there is enough space for an additional stanza between Kl. 109b and Kl. 110) and, therefore, that Kl. 109b has been transcribed in full. As things stand, it can be definitely excluded that Kl. 109a is a (auto) translation and the most literal (auto)translation of Kl. 109b, because of the above-noted wide divergences.

The dating of Kl. 109b to 1436 leads us to look for clues in Oswald's biography and in the European historical and social context following the first conclusion of the codex, in order to shed light on the possible pragmatic causes that led to the writing of the *Lied*. The *Lebenszeugnisse* reveal that, after the participation in the imperial diet of Ulm in 1435 (LZ 250-255)

⁶² «III. Den Rest bilden gelegentliche Einzeleintragungen» (TIMM, *Die Überlieferung*, cit., p. 3).

⁶³ *Ibid.* Timm divides the *Lied* into four stanzas according to OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein. Unter Mitwirkung von W. Weiß und N. Wolf. Herausgegeben von K. K. Klein, Musikanhang von W. Salmen*, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1962, pp. 259-260. This partition of Kl. 109b had already been accepted by APPELHANS, *Untersuchungen...*, cit., p. 56, but harshly criticized by SPECHTLER, *Beiträge*, cit. p. 185.

⁶⁴ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Handschrift A. Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat des Codex Vindobonensis 2777 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. Kommentar von F. Delbono*, Graz, Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1977, p. 45.

and a severe illness in the autumn of the same year, Oswald seems to have never again left Tyrol; however, he was esteemed as a jurisconsult and expert statesman in his homeland.

At the same time, on the European stage, the Hussite wars had entered a new phase. With the ratification of the *Compactata* of Prague in 1433, Sigismund of Luxembourg secured on the one hand the conclusion of hostilities with the Utraquists, the moderate wing of the Hussite movement, coming to terms and accepting the application of the so-called four articles, formulated in 1420, while on the other hand he finally consolidated his power as King of Bohemia, until then strongly disputed.

This agreement was not ratified by the most extreme wing of the Hussites, the Taborites, who continued to be considered heretics by Rome. Against this last pocket of resistance an alliance was formed, unthinkable until a few years previously, between Catholics and Utraquists, which defeated the Taborites at Lipany on May 30th, 1434. On July 5th, 1436 a new agreement was signed in Jihlava between the Kingdom of Bohemia, in the person of Sigismund, and the Hussites. These new *Compactata* were ratified by the Council of Basel the following year, but they never obtained full support from Rome, and in 1462 Pope Pius II annulled them.

On the basis of his historical aversion to the Hussites, it is reasonable to assume that Oswald did not change his views on them and that, on the contrary, he did not accept the fact that Sigismund had to come to terms with his archenemies because he was unable to defeat them in battle. This was most likely enough for Oswald, whose distrust of the nobility, already expressed in Kl. 134, may even have reached the emperor, his patron and former companion on several journeys. Therefore, Oswald may have composed Kl. 109b in order to overcome this last shame he had been forced to accept, as he was now completely discouraged by mankind, and exhausted in his no-longer-young age. An analysis of the content and form of Kl. 109b may shed light on its pragmatic goal.

As already stated, Kl. 109a is connected to a well-documented tradition of *Glossenlieder* in which the figure of Mary is celebrated as the chosen Virgin, as an excellent woman, and as a friendly help for Christians. In addition, the references to Jesus, who is «dominus [...], Benedictus, cunctorum consolacio sanctorum [...] cibus beatorum [...] dux et conductus ad celestem patriam»,⁶⁵ are functional to Mary's exaltation because of her role as mother of the Savior.

⁶⁵ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder...*, 2015, cit., pp. 260-261.

On the other side, Kl. 109b is divided already in the manuscript into two sections: the core of first eight verses is Mary's *laudatio* as mother, queen, consoler, merciful woman, and empress, while the second section, as already stated, is configured as a request for intercession before Christ, who refuses nothing to his mother. Here the chorus of voices asks the Virgin to be allowed to rejoice in the afterlife together with her and her *kindlin*. This bipartite structure recalls that of the Latin *Ave Maria*, transcribed for the first time by Antonio da Stroncone (1381-1461), while some elements and verses recall the *Salve regina*, with a possible intermediate passage given by other German authors such as Muskatblut (e.g. Groote 92).⁶⁶ A pair of examples are given by the combination *küniginne-miltikait*⁶⁷ – due also to the fact that the first term is absent in Kl. 109a – by «in wainender welde», which shares the concept of the mournfulness of the earthly life with «in hac lacrimarum valle», and by the following verse «Gnaden vol an us beginne»⁶⁸, a supplication to Mary to turn her merciful gaze to her children, similarly to «illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte».

Contrary to Bärnthaler's assertion,⁶⁹ Kl. 109b is characterized by a significant emotional component and by the presence of a single, but crucial, diminutive: *kindlin* in the last verse. This diminutive refers to Christ and, together with the many titles addressed to His mother, it contributes to strengthening the familial relationship between the two most relevant entities of heaven. Among the Marian titles, it is moreover crucial to highlight that not only *küniginne* but also *trön der himel* and *kaiserinne* are missing in Kl. 109a; while the Latin text focuses on the earthly and maternal nature of Mary, Kl. 109b also exalts her celestial might. The fact that Oswald addresses Mary as empress may be read as a personal entrustment to the highest celestial authority: just as on earth there can be only one emperor, this should also happen in heaven. In order to glorify the Virgin's traditional role in

⁶⁶ MUSKATBLUT, *Lieder Muskatblut's*, hrsg. von E. von Groote, Köln, DuMont - Schauberg, 1852. The latest edition of Muskatblut's texts is MUSKATBLUT, *Die Lieder Muskatbluts*, hrsg. von J. Haustein und E. Willms, Stuttgart, Hiersemann, 2021. On the *Hussitenlied* Groote 92, see SILLER, *Hussiten und Katholiken* ..., cit., pp. 22-23.

⁶⁷ During the Middle Ages the *Salve regina* started with the words «Salve regina misericordi[a]e»; *mater* was added only in the Modern Age. An example is given by the Dominican Poissy Antiphonal (Melbourne, State Library *096.1/R66A), written between 1335 and 1345. The incipit of the preserved *Salve regina* there may be read at f. 395v: <https://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/MMDB/images/Poissy/FOL_395V.htm>.

⁶⁸ Cf. n. 41.

⁶⁹ BÄRNTHALER, *Übersetzen*, cit., pp. 174 and 178.

Christian soteriology and reject the Hussite (and in particular the Taborite) assertions against Mary's titles as mother of God and against her role as intercessor,⁷⁰ Oswald raises her status from *regina coeli* to empress, a poetical technique that, if one considers Oswald's impatience with how Sigismund solved the Hussite affair, may be read as the poet's farewell to worldly affairs and his final oath of loyalty to the only person who, in his view, deserves the imperial title.

Oswald's response to the Hussites' anti-dogmatic theses about Mary also covers the second section of the *Lied*. Here the poet addresses in the first-person plural the celestial *advocata* in order to obtain eternal grace through her request to her son. Oswald's confidence in Mary is a consequence of his firm faith that Christ cannot refuse anything to his mother: «seid un dir der here nicht versait»⁷¹. At v. 13 Oswald hopes that his reward will come «nach des todes hinnenschaid»⁷², a passage whose meaning in Kl. 109b seems to have been widely ignored, especially in modern translations.

The noun *hinnenschaid* may be translated as *death*, *departure*, or *passing away*,⁷³ and in Kl. 109b it is preceded by the genitive *des todes*. This passage was translated by Spechtler as «wenn der Tod uns wegnimmt»,⁷⁴ and by Hofmeister as «nach unserem Ableben»⁷⁵, in addition to Classen's translation quoted in paragraph 3. There is nevertheless a single, but crucial, reason not to consider this passage as a synonymous pair: from the theological point of view, this verse can be read as another counter-argument by Oswald against the Hussites. The *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1 Cor. 15,26) states that the Kingdom of God will be fulfilled at the end of time, once death, the last enemy, is finally defeated. Over the centuries, the relevance of this and other eschatological biblical passages (e.g. Wisd. of Sol. 5,15-16) gave rise to an intense debate on the fate of the soul between death, when it gets separated from the body, and resurrection, when the two parts of the *persona*

⁷⁰ Cf. M. P. CARROLL, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary. Psychological Origins*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992, in particular the scheme at p. 15.

⁷¹ Cf. n. 41.

⁷² Cf. n. 41.

⁷³ Cf. the entries in M. LEXER (Hrsg.), *Mittelhochdeutsches Taschenwörterbuch*, Stuttgart, Hirzel, p. 90 col. 1, and in B. HENNIG, *Kleines mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, Berlin-Boston, de Gruyter, p. 153 col. 3.

⁷⁴ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Sämtliche Gedichte. Aus dem Mittelhochdeutschen ins Neuhochdeutsche übertragen von F. V. Spechtler*, Klagenfurt, Wieser, 2007, p. 237.

⁷⁵ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Das poetische Werk. Übersetzt von W. Hofmeister*, Berlin-New York, de Gruyter, 2011, p. 272.

will finally reunite. The concept of purgatory, a third place beyond hell and heaven, first became part of Catholic doctrine in the 12th century, the result of a long eschatological and theological debate. However, there were voices opposing this new dogma, such as the Cathars, the Waldensians (who to this day deny the existence of purgatory, since there is no trace of it in Scripture), and Wyclif.⁷⁶ Jan Hus personally believed in purgatory, as may be read in his sermon *Dixit Martha ad Iesum* (November 3rd, 1411), but he equally opposed any form of paid indulgence, as he states in two documents, *Quaestio de indulgentiis, sive de Cruciatæ Papæ Johannis XXIII* and *Contra Bullam Papæ Joan. XXIII* (both 1412).⁷⁷ Hus' ideas were shared by his most moderate followers, while Taborites denied any possibility of the existence of purgatory. Oswald could, therefore, once more have rebutted the Taborites on the End Times and, indirectly, on Mary's key role in indulgences and in the soul's permanence in purgatory. From the stylistic point of view, Oswald does not simply repeat the noun *tod*, which he reserves for death, the last enemy of humanity also emphasized by the prenominal genitive construction, but he also resorts to the noun *hinnenschaid*, which indicates one's departure from a place, implying that nothing will remain of death after its defeat. In so writing, Wolkenstein emphasizes that only after the defeat of the final enemy, the righteous will be finally rewarded with eternal joy.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Having established that the relationship between Kl. 109a and Kl. 109b cannot be described as a (auto)translation from Latin to German personally made by Oswald, the present study has proved that Kl. 109b still shares some similarities with Kl. 109a, but that at the same time it contains authorial innovations of great relevance. From a technical point of view, the definition of Kl. 109b as «Oswalds Versuch einer Nachdichtung»⁷⁸ given by Burghart Wachinger does not fit the German text, since a *Nachdichtung* implies that a literary work has been freely translated and revised.⁷⁹ On

⁷⁶ Cf. J. LE GOFF, *La naissance du Purgatoire*, Paris, Gallimard, 1981.

⁷⁷ Texts of the two documents in J. HUS – JEROME OF PRAGUE, *Joannis Hus Hieronymi atque Pragensis, confessorum Christi. Historia et monumenta*, vol. 1, Nürnberg, Johann Montanus and Ulrich Neuber, 1558, pp. 174-190. See also L. MAZALOVÁ, *Eschatology in the Work of Jan Hus*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2021, pp. 191-211.

⁷⁸ OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN, *Die Lieder...*, 2015, cit., p. 260.

⁷⁹ Cf. the entry for *nachdichten* at <https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/nachdichten>.

the other hand, considering Kl. 109b as a *Versuch* may also be belittling, since Oswald has demonstrated his ability to masterfully blend a Marian *lauda* with a strenuous defense of the Catholic creed, for him increasingly threatened by the Hussites.

The more-than-casual links with the theses of Jan Hus and the Hussites also do not match the literary tradition of which Kl. 109a is a part. While it is hoped that this analysis may be a starting point for a productive reflection on and reevaluation of these two texts, their classification as variants (-a and -b) of the same *Lied* (Kl. 109) has to be reconsidered.