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## SOMMARIO

<i>Jorge Luis Borges and Icelandic Literature</i> by L. MARTUL TOBIO	1
<i>The «Gulo filiros» and Narrative Fables (I)</i> by A. MARANINI	4
<i>Saxo Grammaticus and Ennius</i> by F. STOK	12
<i>A 'Romantic' Icelander?</i> by R. SCARCIA	15
<i>The 'Alvida' by Giacomo Contone</i> by A. PERELLI	17
<i>Alla ricerca dei Goti</i> di T. PAROLI	20
<i>Vestigia Normanne in mostra a Roma</i> di P. ORLANDI	22
<b>SCHEDÉ / REVIEWS</b>	24
<b>NOTIZIE / NOTICES</b>	27

## JORGE LUIS BORGES AND ICELANDIC LITERATURE

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Borges' knowledge of Icelandic literature was not an occasional or superficial one. It is true that his readings might seem haphazard, uneven or erratic, but this is only from a canonical perspective, precisely one which Borges' intervention would replace with the new point of view he proposed: a diagonal approach to the norm which, following the logic of a new concept of literature, allows the articulation of areas previously not considered. It is in the aesthetic-literary concept where we should situate Borges' relationship with Germanic literatures and Icelandic literature in particular. This relationship is one which is manifested in references from time to time throughout the life and work of the writer from Buenos Aires.

Many critical studies have in fact focused on a good number, if not all, of these examples which are spread in several modes and throughout the various genres which Borges cultivated. A quick overview necessarily includes the texts which contain recollections of his readings since adolescence, and thus pertain to his education as a reader; translations; poetic compositions such as "Fragmento" ['Fragment'], "A un poeta sajón" ['To a Saxon

Poet'], or *Seis poemas escandinavos* (1966) ['Six Scandinavian Poems'] in which he utilizes images similar to those of the *kenningar*; essays such as "Las kenningar" ['The kenningar'] or "La metáfora" ['The metaphor'], which reveal a wide-ranging interest in this figure, or books, such as *Antiguas literaturas germánicas* (1951) ['Ancient Germanic Literatures'], which is reorganized in *Literaturas germánicas medievales* (1966) ['Medieval Germanic Literatures'], which he also planned to publish in another, corrected edition; and, finally, short stories, such as "El desafío" ['The Challenge'], which have a direct presence of Icelandic culture and others in which, in the opinion of critics and by direct admission by Borges, the assimilation of procedures or themes of this origin can be identified: "El disco" ['The discus'], "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius", "La intrusa" ['The Intruding Woman']. We should note that Borges learned Anglo Saxon in order to write his second book on these themes, around 1955-56, and later he learned Ancient Icelandic. Nevertheless, this overview would be incomplete if we did not mention that Borges expressed his relationship with Germanic cultures on a more personal level. This is when he questions the effect that his English ancestors, his early familiarity with the literatures, and in particular his mastery of English had on leading him to feel comfortable in that world which was so different from Latin culture.

Borges' most ambitious work was his book on Germanic literatures; the second edition was the result of a direct study of the texts and a greater knowledge of their languages. The work does not pretend to be academic, although it recognizes the contributions of philological studies, which must be consulted, but is instead didactic, as he himself affirms. It thereby corresponds to the desire to present a literary production which was widely unknown and which nevertheless had very special characteristics. Precisely because of this lack of familiarity to the public he decided to include numerous examples and broad plot summaries so that the reader could have as direct a contact as pos-

sible. The result is that the book becomes to a certain extent an anthology.

These are the reasons why the work is organized along the lines of philological studies as far as the references to periods (the genres, poetic and narrative forms, or the selection of authors) are concerned. Using this systematization as a base, Borges inserts a certain point of view of the texts in accordance with his concept of what is literary, which is incorporated into the discussion rather than analytically presented. He introduces brief defining commentaries, which are very selective and directed toward the aspects of genre, theme or style. Together with the learned facts, he interpolates personal judgments which tend to center in a more concentrated manner on certain points of the text. The essayist focus structures the form of his prose.

What interests us here above all is what is particularly Borgian about this approach to Icelandic literature, that is, the interpretations and influences which correspond to aesthetic-literary concepts of the author. The fact that Borges was deeply attracted to this literature is proven by the various declarations in which he as reader and writer shows his involvement. But he also finds a feature which gives an enigmatic character to its destiny: its extensive development but yet its complete loss in history, with no surviving reference to its existence. This is a development for which he finds antecedents in the narrative order, a "prefiguration" of the novelistic procedures of later centuries. He underlines the fact that two great Icelandic discoveries - America and the art of narrating - have been lost without a single consequence.

In *Medieval Germanic Literatures*, Borges observes: "Of greater interest to us than Snorri's sources are the literary techniques he uses". We can take this affirmation as a general perspective and as proof of how Borges saw his relationship with that literature, as a terrain where questions could be raised - questions originated by the Borgian theoretical space - and ones that were literary in nature, whether concerning narrative and the sagas, or poetic-metaphorical ones in

relation to the *kenningar*, which at the same time show their surprising modernity. Thus it is possible to see a character's adventure or fate, the use of a motif, or the laconic nature of a phrase, as features of Borgian style.

Critical studies have given examples of these similarities or what Borges saw as anticipations. The role of the *kenningar* in Borgian symbolism has already been pointed out, as well as their relation to the later ideas of the writer from Buenos Aires regarding the metaphor and word play in his prose, the transformation of his style under their influence from an early, overdone and contrived period to another in which, under the attraction of the sagas, the tendency is to precision and circumspection; the recognition of a presence in Borgian texts of a similar Icelandic norm of brevity and economy of sentences which is in accordance with a certain concept of the manner of telling, the narrator's behavior, which should allow the details of the action to create a direct impact on readers. The intellectual control of the narration should provide a modality for dramatic situations but it should also avoid pathetic situations or expressions.

In fact, when Borges comments on the sagas he introduces a greater number of details about the elaborated narrative style of the Icelandic writers. These features can be seen in the texts of the Argentinian writer. Among the most evident are the distance of the narrator with respect to what is narrated; the fact that he does not comment on what is narrated nor stop to study the characters, which are created on the basis of their words and behavior. According to him, this is something which will be widely used in cinematic techniques. In the same way it is significant that he emphasizes his awareness of the value and function acquired by the events in the action, giving the indication, silence, surprise, knowing how not to mention the importance of a component that will later be revealed as decisive, surprising modernity. On the other hand, he emphasizes the sagas' realism, a concept which the author outlines, carefully comparing it to other realistic tech-

niques.

We should not overlook the fact that Borges makes an abstraction from the extensive descriptions of intertwined plots and the heroes' adventures, the dizzying combination, the chance symmetries, repetitions and minimal differences, the reflections, denouements and beginnings which resemble geometric figures. The idea of variations is tied to that of invariants, of literary motifs, which arise over long periods of time. This is implied by Borges in his reference to a specific work, the *Laxdoela saga*, but the commentary may be extended to the entire group. They concern the way in which literary creations are repeated in very distant eras: between Ibsen and the anonymous writers of *Laxdoela*.

They are chronologically prior to Ibsen but they also partially reproduced a previous text with complete awareness of their repetition, and so were integrating themselves into a tradition: "[...] the authors and their intention has been to point out the correspondence between what appears to be new and what is ancient". It is evident in the text that he is fascinated by the vast inextricability of events, places and characters which seem to be repeated infinitely. It should not seem unexpected that he includes an allusion to the concept of series and its (il)logical nature when in the *Gylfaginning* (Gylfi's Hallucination) the things that comprise the wolf's chain are an anticipation of the Chinese series of categories that Borges describes in "El idioma analítico de John Wilkins" [John Wilkin's analytic language], and which Foucault would comment upon, underlining the unsettling humor of such a construction.

To conclude, we shall add a final mention of what we have said concerning the ideas and techniques that are relevant to the work of the author from Buenos Aires. The criticism has referred to the presence in the sagas of such a constant theme in Borges' work as that of betrayal. The life of Sturluson is an opportunity for this theme to slip into the events described. But it is in the story of his death, in the way in which it is told and in the conclusions, where we perceive what

Borges felt as his own. His words emphasize the symmetrical nature of the death of Snorri and his assassin and in addition he interprets the latter's death as imagined by his antagonist. Death is in relation to a few words: "Arni's death seems imagined by Snorri. That man to whom a few laconic words announce his death sentence is one of Snorri's characters, a figure under the control of destiny and even that of the rhetoric of the sagas".

In *Medieval Germanic Literatures*, the author takes up the question of the metaphor again, and often returned to it in connection with the *kenning* or metaphorical form of Ancient Icelandic. During his Martinfierrista period Borges had written about this figure, locating the question in the very framework of the avant-garde. The essay "Las kenningar" is included in a book of particular importance in the author's theoretical-artistic projection, *Historia de la eternidad* (1933) ['History of Eternity']. Much later, the poem "Fragment", from *El otro, el mismo* ['The Other, the Same One'] (1964) will include several *kenningar*, adapted as much as possible to Spanish. It has been said that Borges turns to the *kenningar* because of a theoretical change: he saw what there is of creativity and at the same time repetition in the framework of a series. The *kenning* is not important to the Argentinian writer because of a desire for radical novelty, from the moment in which he believes that only a small repertoire of metaphors has been provided in history, what becomes decisive is the variant, the fragment, which can be introduced within the large patterns. The *kenningar* with their intensely crafted nature, belong to a heritage, an established model. Each one represents the carrying out of a possibility in an abstract system, thus it acts not as an irruption of the new but as the metaphorical image of cultural values of the Icelandic community. The *kenning* is the example of how the new cannot be considered an absolutely surprising act, but rather that one must see in it, according to Borges, that what is strange or new should not be reduced nor situated in a mysterious isolation but that

instead it should be manifested, for the sake of its strangeness, in the center of a poetic discourse that constitutes it but does not nullify it. It is at once both culturally universal and specific.



## The «Gulo filfros» and narrative fables. 1. Some of Olaus Magnus's Imitators

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### 1. The «Gulo» by Apollonio Menabeni.

The fascination of the narrative fables about the people in the North in Olaus Magnus's *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (1557: see the main entry for *Olaus Magnus* in S. Lindroth's *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 10, New York 1974, p. 197, but 1568 in Michaud, *Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne*, 26, Paris s. a., p. 52) did not leave the poet and philosopher Apollonio Menabeni - who was born in Milan and later became doctor of the Swedish King John III - unmoved. For Menabeni, in his *Tractatus de Magno Animali quod Alcen nonnulli vocant, Germani vero Elend, et de ipsius partium in re medica facultatibus: item Historia Cervi Rangiferi et Gulonis Filfros vocati*, wanted to reserve several pages (70-73, in the Coloniae edition, apud Maternum Cholinum 1581) for an animal named «Gulo».

This beast, whom the Germans called «Filfros» to indicate his voraciousness («id est multum vorans»), was never seen by Menabeni, nor - as we now think - by many other Italian travelers in those times.

One can, therefore, well imagine how much curiosity and amazement was aroused by the events in which the readership saw it as a main character, even if those events were already described by Olaus, from whose work Menabeni drew part of his descriptive and naturalistic elements, above all, when

they read about one of its curious eating habits.

The «Gulo» had such a craving to eat that it ate without restraint and swelled up out of all proportion; but since it had to feed itself continuously «ex sua natura», when it could not «aliud capere», it went looking for two trees so close together as to not be able to pass through them with its swollen belly. Then, with an outburst, it propelled itself through the trees with all its might «dum venter eius hinc inde pressus, quod intus habet in partes posteriores propulsum excernit», and so doing, emptied out.

According to Menabeni, the only surviving specimens were in Sweden; actually, not even he had ever seen a live one, but this did not mean whatsoever that they did not exist, because he had been able to touch their skin. The only fact that he could not be certain of was that perhaps there were also some in Lithuania. Menabeni limited himself to saying, in short, that he had heard «ab alijs» and seen «ipse», apparently only the characteristic skin (from the copy of Bologna, B.C.U. Tab.I.G.I.466/4 belonging to the late Ulisse Aldrovandi):

Inter cetera animalia, quae soli Sueciae attribuuntur, est etiam illud, quod ipsorum Suecorum, ac etiam Germanorum lingua Filfros, id est multum vorans, nominatur: et a Cardano cognitum lib. 10 *De subtilitate* describitur sub nomine Rosomachae, seu Gulonis. Hoc ipsum an in Lithuania inveniatur, intelligere non potui, cum multos diligenter sim percunctatus huius viri autoritate motus. Animal itaque hoc vivum non vidi, sed ipsius pellem pertractavi. Quare quae ipse vidi, et ab alijs ibi audivi, breviter referam. Longitudine, et altitudine parum superat Vulpem, crassitudine multum. Cauda paulo brevior. Subnigro est colore. Pilorum longitudine, et densitate Vulpem aequat, mollitie, et gracilitate superat. Unde sit, ut ipsius pellis mollis sit, tactui iucunda, et delectabili colore. Propter quas conditiones, et paucam copiam magno pretio etiam apud Suecos venditur, et est in usu apud principes, et primarios homines. Ferunt animal ipsum esse edacissimum, ac voracissimum: nullam enim fere comedendi intercapidinem facit. Ex quo venter multum intumescit: et quando nil aliud capere potest, neque illud, quod habet, cito egerere; ac insuper ingerendi desiderio ex sua natura sempre teneatur, egerendi hanc opportu<n>itatem, et modum quaerit, ut iterum, ac saepius ad inexplicabilem satietatem usque ingerat. Quaerit itaque duas arbores ita prope terram vicinas, ut capite praemisso venter tumidis

per illas transire non possit. Vi igitur, et impetus facto in angustum illum transitum se coniicit, ut transeat. Quod tandem assequitur, dum venter eius hinc inde pressus quod intus habet, in partes posteriores propulsum excernit. Olaus autem Magnus cum hoc ipsum animal sensu fortasse oculorum cognitum eandem voracitatem recensendo describit, ab re non erit, ab eo quoque alia quaedam huc plenioris doctrinae causa transferre; quibus cum laude Dei Opt. Max. huic opusculo coronidem imponemus. Magnitudinem itaque, et figuram animalis ita exprimit: grossities eius, ut magni canis; aures, et facies velutcati; pedes, et ungulae asperrimae, corpus villosum, et prolixorum pilorum subfuscorum: cauda, ut vulpis licet brevior, sed crinium densiorum. Caro omnino inutilis. Sed pellis multum commoda, et pretiosa: quibus quoque insidijs circumveniant animal, his explicat verbis: venatores in silvam cadaver recens portant. Quod dum animal comedit, sagittis (hoc tempore parvis bombardis) conficiunt; vel in foveas, et cavernas cadaver reponunt, ibique animal conficiunt occupatum. Ungula, et dentes adeo acutos habet, ut eius congressum formident canes, qui in ferocissimos lupos vires suas extendere solent. Idem quoque haec habet: dormientibus sub harum pellium tegumentis evenire solent somnia quasi eius animalis vitae, naturaeque conformia in insatiabilitate devorandi, et bestijs insidijs faciendis, et praecanendis. His etiam pellibus indui bibendo, et comedendo nullum saturitatis vestigium relinquunt. Ex huius intestinis chordae pro citharaedis conficiuntur. Ungulae in modum circuli vertiginosis capitibus, et tinnientibus auriculis appensa celeriter recuperandae sanitati prosunt. Sanguis aquae calidae admixtus venatoribus est pro potu, et melle conditus propinatur in nuptialibus triumphis. Pinguedo putridis ulceribus illinita plurimum confert. Dentium usus incantatoribus patrocinatur ungulae recenter extractae, et demonstratae canes, catosque fugant, ut aniculae viso vulture.

## 2. Menabeni between Olao and Cardano.

Menabeni's narration isolated the tale of «Gulo filfros» (or rather «filfras», as I argue below) from the rest of the *Tractatus* on elk and "reindeer"; actually, he wrote a separate tract. It set, therefore, the animal inside an even more fantastic air than that of his teacher Olao - to whom I dedicated in the *Appendix* (see below) reference passages - as another of his sources, Gerolamo Cardano (1501-1576) had done.

This last person had already left evidence of the belief in the legend of the «Gulo», and it is possibile to read the following short tale in his *De subtilitate libri xxi*, edited for the first time in Nurimberg in 1550, later in

Basel in 1553 (from the Basilea edition, 1582, p. 317):

nasci animalia hominum moribus similia in singulis ferme regionibus, edocet in Lithuania Rosomacha seu Gulo, animal quantitate canis, facie felis, dorso et cauda vulpis. Hoc enim adeo est vorax, ut cum cadavera depascatur, plenum iam ventre toto, inter duas arbores quae parum invicem distent alvo compressa emittat quod ederit, inde ad saginam revertatur. Sic Lithuani hominum sunt voracissimi. Referunt huius animalis pelles esse pulcherrimas, quas si quis gestet, gestant autem nobiles multi, praeter etiam gentis communem voracitatem fiunt inexplicabiles comedones. Aut igitur potentia pellis talis est, ad actum autem calore hominis deducitur: aut refrigerato ventriculo id contingit: ventriculus enim calore plurimo atque exiguo abundans vix satiatur.

A comparison with the description by Menabeni shows that the latter basically relies upon Olaо, while laying claim to having its own specific features: the «Gulo», as a matter of fact, is slightly larger than a fox and very fat and dark; whereas for Olaо, it is the size of a large black dog. Both of them, however, agreed that it had a short but very hairy tail.

The burden of a thick pelt was the most obvious physical characteristic for them both. The animal was not edible, but it had such a «commoda et pretiosa» skin as to make it the target of an unmerciless hunt, details Cardano ignored (or was unaware of), preferring to place emphasis on the Lithuanian peoples (whom Menabeni, too, connected in the first lines of his history) and on the symbolical value assumed by the existence of such a voracious animal in their lands («sic Lithuani hominum sunt voracissimi»), as well as on the characteristic of heat, a detail indeed ignored by both Olaо and Menabeni, but which was already a characteristic of «potentia» linked to the fur. Menabeni's references to Olaо - who, it seems, had written about it after having admitted to a great personal voraciousness (but Menabeni precisely defined this last concept with a «fortasse») - thus were integrated with those of Cardano, thereby creating in chronological order the latest version of the story. The references had to contribute, moreover, to strengthen a by-now con-

solidated myth in order to transmit and, we believe, render it credible to everyone.

Menabeni also wanted, perhaps, to put to rest some of the sonorous laughter of the shrewder readers, above all those who had ignored the sources and had attributed the unlikely and disagreeable, hygenically-speaking, eating habits to him alone.

None of the well-known sources, and Menabeni less than the others, posed the question how the animal could survive such treatment ... such a drastic dietetic (according to Olaо, it could be repeated during the same meal); and thereby, the tricks used by the hunters, such as bringing a «cadaver recens» into the forest and waiting for the greedy animal to hurl itself on top so that they could pierce it with arrows (but «hoc tempore parvis bombardis» noted down once again the precise Menabeni) seem equally exaggerated.

The modern reader might suspect that the hunters were even more stupid than the Gulo, because it would have been less tiring to wait calmly for the moment of the animals forced discharge, when even such a wild animal would have exhibited some difficulties, at least of a respiratory nature, and then could be knocked out with a blow to the head, thereby preserving its precious pelt from piercing arrows or other damages caused by small mortars.

Indeed, by checking through Olaо's text one can verify that, in this detail as well, Menabeni wanted to go his own way, because the hunt, according to his teachers narration, occurred just at the moment in which the animal was busy discharging itself and the hunter could kill it without harm by shooting a single, precise arrow. This method was quite well-known to all of Olaо's readers, because the engravings that accompanied the chapters of the *Historia* illustrated this detail with clear and simple signs, to almost didactic ends.

The «Gulo» was actually depicted in the form of a large lion-like feline, with long cat whiskers, in the act of discharging; tightly posed, but not stationary, between two trees, in front of the remains of a rotting carcass of uncertain features and in front of two hunters

armed with bows. The detail in the symbolic portrayal of the cited 1555 edition is crystal clear. See facsimile:



### 3. The narrative fables.

It is not unrealistic to believe that many older readers as well-no less shrewd than modern readers, nor more accustomed to rude, violent, and illogical behaviors-would have commented ironically on the fact that faced with the violently squeezing trees and the unmerciless hunts, the «Gulo» would have quickly been on its way to extinction, more or less voluntarily, if only for its name. They were obviously aware of the fabulous contents of the old travel narratives, so much so that most of the interpretations written by Olao were eventually refuted by Giovanni Scheffer (1621-1679), in his *Lapponia, seu gentis regionisque Lapponicae descriptio accurata*.

A few irreverent annotations in Olaos editions still today give testimony to the incredulity of several readers. The most famous, written anonymously, wanted to define the tale about how Finnic women used magical arts as «coglioneria da orbi» (see A. Maranini, *Edizioni postillate di Giovanni e Olao Magno in alcune biblioteche emiliane*, in «Classiconorroena», 2, 1993, pp. 5-6).

The majority of the readers, all the same, adored the stories in which realistic elements mixed indissolubly with fantastic ones. Among the enthusiasts there also had to be illustrative devotees of these works; for instance Rudolf II, to whom Menabeni dedicated his *Tractatus*. For all of these people the «Gulo», and especially the conditions in which it would digest, had to be a symbol, among others, of a curious, unknown, and far-off world.

It should not be forgotten that the «Gulo»

was also an animal whose magical connotations were accentuated: its fur was so beautiful as to be coveted by the rich and powerful. If used as a blanket, however, the fur brought dreams in conformity with the animal's life, and those sleeping seemed to be possessed by an insatiable appetite and seductively inclined towards other beasts. Even those who would dress again in the furs were not satiated by food or drink. Its fingernails helped against illnesses, the fat healed ulcerous injuries, its blood was blended with honey and used at weddings, and the teeth were sorcerer's charms.

The curious and savage eating habits were present in Olao's tales, but the summary by Menabeni, in a continued history, became a way of isolating these features in respect to other ones. Menabeni had twisted the teaching of Olao, condensing three chapters into one, connecting it as well with Cardano and his doubt about the presence of the animal in Lithuania, and stressing the magical features - even by means of that strange name «filfros», which appeared new.

This in fact seemed absent in Olao; but after a more careful study, it comes to life as the alphabetization of the pronunciation of the name of the animal used by the Germanic peoples: «Vielefraff» or «Vielefrafs», as one reads in Olao, in his translations, and in many other sources that narrate the «Gulo»'s exploits.

It is possible therefore to hypothesize an error in the text of Menabeni's tract and correct the epitaph «filfros» to «filfras», as did the *Dictionnaire universel, historique, critique et bibliographique*, 11, Paris 1910, p. 414, which in listing Menabeni's works wrote of the «*Tractatus de Magno Animali quod Alcen nonnulli vocant, Germani vero Elendt, et de ipsis partium in re medica facultatibus: Item Historia cervi rangiferi et gulonis, filfras, seu vielfras vocatis*».

Nevertheless, one can also find the form «uilfros» in Olao, not in the *Historia*, but rather in one of "advances" of the *Carta marina* (Ain [sic] kurze Auslegung der neuuen Mappen von den Goettenreich und andern Nordlenden) that was printed in 1539.

#### 4. Francesco Negri.

Bewitched by the «gulone di scandinavia», Alessandro Citolini (1500 - c. 1583), too, accepted the testimony of its eating habits, and he enumerated this beast, among others, in his *La tipocosmia* (Venetian edit., 1561, p. 236), pointing out its insatiability and contributing to the passing on of its legend; he seemed to put into doubt, for the first time, «la strana forma del suo votarsi» [its strange method of emptying itself out], but, in spite of his travels in northern Europe he apparently could not ascertain its validity.

Francesco Negri (1623-1698), a priest from Ravenna, on the other hand, was absolutely certain that none of the preceding authors had ever actually eyewitnessed the actions narrated in this distant land, far from Europe; consequently, in the 17th century, he set out for the wide expanses of Scandinavia. The accounts of his long journey, which took place between 1663 and 1666, were edited by his heirs and published posthumously in Padua under the title *Il viaggio settentrionale di Francesco Negri* (Francesco Negri's Northern Travel) in 1700 (see also the Milan edition of 1929, edited by Enrico Falqui) and reprinted in Bologna in 1883, edited by Carlo Gargioli, who included as well the *Annotazioni sopra l'opera di Olao Magno* (Annotations on Olao Magno's writings).

Negri attributed to the Upsalan archbishop two types of errors: those which could be detected easily even from one who had never set foot in northern Europe - for example, the non-existence of the land Olao called «Biamia» and indicated as «regio septentrionalis, cuius zenith est in ipso polo arctico, ejusque horizon est idem cum circulo aequinoctiali», since at the pole «sono sei mesi di continuo giorno, e sei di continua notte, che è l'istesso che aver il polo verticale, e l'orizzonte conveniente all'equinoziale» [there are six months of continuous daylight and six of continuous night, which is the same as having a vertical pole, and the horizon convening towards the equinox] - and those which could be proven by an actual visit to those areas; for example, that Olao could

never have had, as he declared, friendly conversations with the inhabitants, since the terrain was so icy and uninhabitable «circa elevationem graduum poli arctici 86».

Negri was fond of making, as he wrote, only «veridica relazione» [verifiable accounts], which would not give rise to fancies, and he criticized Olao not only for his genuinely geographical and astronomical features, but also for his fabulous and extravagant narrative episodes: men on horseback, wearing armor that would roll along with the horse as the (non-existent) highly gustful Icelandic winds blew; Norwegian lakes filled with boiling water; seven brothers who had been sleeping in a cellar for a hundred years; gigantic and heavy elks' racing skills; pygmies in Greenland riding sheep into battles against cranes; and other similar things. These shameful inventions or obvious evocations of myths and ancient authors that Olao had manipulated in order to make his narration more fascinating seemed indeed highly reprehensible to Negri, who censured with considerable severity the attribution to Pliny and Solin - two of his most adored Latin authors - of a falsehood; namely, that «in polari regione omnia solis ardore pericitari».

The most striking fact wherein he deduced - without a shadow of a doubt - that Olao had never been to Lapland, was in his description of the "rangifero", «bestia tricornis, de genere cervorum» that pulled wagons on wheels.

Negri had been able to see it in great herds, he described its life and habits and he designated it as the proof of the survival of the population. This beast was in fact the cherished reindeer, called by locals «puozzo», that fed on «ieghle» grass, that is, on lichen. And it pulled sleighs and provided food for the Laplanders, meat as well as milk and cheese; hides for clothing, sleeping, wrapping up newborns and making ropes; sinews for sewing; tallow for candles; and, it was even money and barter. But it did not have three horns, nor did it pull wagons on wheels - as Olao had fantasized - because it would not have been able to move along the roads, which were covered with snow for

almost the entire year and practically inaccessible even for people on foot.

There was also, among the others, an animal called «Iefr», because of its bulk: «mediocre cane, ma più grosso e pesante» [an average dog, but bigger and heavier], with its long, black, and shiny coat used as linings on expensive birettas. They were hunted like other animals, with bows or crossbows (the «archibuso», ancient musket, was reserved for the bear, having one single shot and seldom used), and perhaps they were identifiable as that which the Latin speakers called «Hyaena».

Thus, more than a century after Olao and Menabeni, the «Gulo» reappeared in Negri; however, it was revealed only in part. It was not yet actually entirely clear which beast it was.

Its disagreeable eating habit disappeared, leaving behind only its characteristic voraciousness, which was newly established two centuries later by Melchorre Gioia, in his *Esercizio logico sugli errori d'ideologia e zoologia ossia arte di trar profitto dai cattivi libri* [Logical exercise on ideological and zoological errors; or rather, the art of drawing profit from bad books], Milano 1824 (pp. 249, 194). There he demonstrated the untruthfulness of the idea that the animals did not allow themselves to be dominated by voraciousness: «il ghiottone si pasce sì inconsideratamente e sì voracemente di carne, che talvolta ne rimane strangolato» [the Glutton enjoys meat so inconsiderately and so voraciously that at times it gets strangled]. For Negri, the «Gulo» was perhaps similar to the Latin Iena (Hyena), an animal that he apparently had not seen, which corroborates the opinion of recent critics (see *Viaggiatori del Seicento* [Wayfarers in the Seventeenth Century], edited by M. Guglielminetti, Torino 1967, pp. 49-53). According to them, even Negri - more linked to Olao than he would have us believe - resorted, in part, to the same investigative methodology as his predecessor, making an appeal, if you like, in the permanent postmortem of the narrated events to literary data and parallel fancies in which narrative and descriptive incongruen-

cies and uncertainties had already been pointed out.

### 5. One of Negri's sources.

It is rather probable that to make his comparison to the Iena, Negri used what Conrad Gesner had already written about in his *Historiae animalium libri*.

As can be seen, in fact, in the *liber primus*, entitled *De quadrupedis viviparis*, whose first edition was published in 1551, followed by a second edition in 1620: «Pinicianus grammaticus nostri saeculi hyaenae nomen Germanicum finxit, grabthier, quod circa sepulchra versetur: Ego filfrafs interpretater [sic]: quoniam vel gulo est, vel omnino congener ei fera, ut iam supra in Gulonis historia dixi» (Frankfurt edition, 16202, p. 555).

Gesner, too, was basically dependent on Olao, in particular on the «libello quem adiunxit septentrionali regionum descriptioni», in which he had treated the symbolic refiguration of the «Gulo» that decorated his *Liber* (p. 554), unidentifiable in any of the surviving editions of the *Historia*.

These editions, as a matter of fact, dedicate chapter XVIII - which included the most sweeping treatment relating to the entire Northern world to date - to the text and to the drawings relating to the «Gulo».

What does still survive, however, in copies at the Vatican Library and Augusta Library in Perugia is the already cited, small, 8-page booklet published in Venice in June 1539 in Italian (*Opera breve*) and in July of the same year in German (*Ain kurze Auslegung*, cit., see also the Stockholm reproduction of 1912), in which Olao "advanced" to his readership the publication of a major future work.

As Olao explained in the Italian edition, his intention was to offer a summary of the main themes, a «brevissimo indice» [very short index] of a «piu giusto volume» [more suitable volume], namely his already begun «Geografia delle settentrionali terre» [Geography of the northern lands], the work that would then lead to the *Carta marina* and the *Historia*.

Among the "advanced" themes there is, on an unnumbered page (that is 3r), the story of the «Gulo», limited to his mildly fascinating digestive portrait, but bearing as well an astonishing implication:

bedeut die thieren die man hayst auf Schuedisch Ierff auf teütsch uilfrofs uuelche seind unmeslich im essen an underschait. So aber die natur überflisig uuizdt bezungen stellen sysich zuyschen zuay baummen und trucken ihren bauch byss das sysich burgieren und lauffen vider zum frissen als dan kumbt der ieger und schuist sy allain umm ihr haut uuille dan die selben heut dienen dem adel und gross heruzbeklaudung dann syscindt hüpsch gebluemet uuie ain tamash. Aber uuanu sysolche rock tragen uuerden syschier ueruuandelt in der natur des thiers.

From the Italian publication:

G. Animali voraci, li quali per nome fitticio si chiamano guloni, perche non intermetteno mai la loro voracita se non quando i scaricano, over purgano il ventre stringendosi fra doi arbori: non dimeno quando col divorare et col digerire vivono, sono amazzati dalle faetre de cacciatori: et hanno le pelli molto preziose, le quali si applicano al culto de principi et accade spesso che vestiti di quelli a fatica si possono satiare.

The Italian publication shows that the two booklets were not published as translations one from the other but rather as two different versions; moreover, since in the title page he warned against whomever wanted to publish tales on the northern peoples without first obtaining permission from Magno («severiore Summi Pontificis et Veneti Senatus decreto cautum est, ne quis intra decennium, Geographiam Aquilonarium Regnorum, et libros eam declarantes, excudere, vel ab aliis excussam vendere praesumat sine authoris Olai videlicet Gothi licentia»), one could conclude that Olaus was pressured into such an advance to prevent plagiarism or to block analogous editorial plans.

The «Gulo» had to serve, evidently, to excite the interest in a project of more sweeping importance.

It is possible that Gesner's «libellus» may refer to Olaus's booklet - other sources have as yet escaped my attention, if one excludes the «Tabula Septentrionalium ad Europam

regionum» from which Gesner himself as we can read in the «Gulo» icon drew *Icones animalium quadrupedum viviparorum et oviparorum quae in Historiae animalium C. Gesneri libro I et II describuntur*, Tiguri 1560<sup>2</sup>, p. 78. Certainly it was by means of the indication in Olaus's *Historia* that Gesner consulted the «Sarmazia» [Sarmatia] of the «Mechovita», that is the *De Sarmatia asiana atque europea libri duo* of the Krakowian Canon Matthias of Miekow who, even before Cardano, in 1517, had described that «animal voracissimum et inutile» by the name of «Rossomaka», which lived exclusively in Lithuania and Moscow (see the Basileae edition of 1555, in S. Grynaeus, *Novus orbis regionum ac insularum veteribus incognitarum una cum tabula cosmographica*, pp. 480s.).

It had a particular eating custom that was perhaps imposed on it by nature for the purpose of making the many greedy people who populated those lands ashamed of their own voraciousness. Those - as Olaus would have specified - who would provoke vomiting in order to continue eating.

Gesner resorted also to tales he heard himself («ut audio»); among his friends there was a certain «Schenebergerus» who sent him a physical description of the «Gulo», which clarified ordinary characteristics («pili in ea [fera] sunt longi, sed non admodum dense dispositi, nigri, splendentes, ut Zobellae videri possint: minoris tamen quam Zobella venditur»). Another friend, I. Zimmerman from Vilnius, also wrote reviving anew its habitual food practices (see *Icones animalium quadrupedum viviparorum et oviparorum*, cit., p. 79).

Despite the diverse and conflictory sources, Gesner seemed to have attempted a more scientific investigation than his predecessors and to have given the most credence to this description:

Rossomaka minor lupo, brevioribus cruribus, adeo repletur ut venter propendens terram fere contingat. Rictum fere suis habet, dentes lupinos, longos. Genera sunt duo, unum nigrum, et aliud lupino fere colore. Hominem et animalia viva non laedit: morticina tantum vorat, et nimis repleta in suo latibulo revomit: ac rursus ad multum tempus ijs quae

evomuerit pascitur. Ursus occidere eam obviam non potest, ita dentibus se defendit.

The tale did not in any way eliminate the digestive habits of the animal, because these had a deeply symbolic and ethical significance (and because any information whatsoever played a role in science then). The *De quadrupedis viviparis* takes them up again, however, in a couple of lines attributed to Olao, citing with accuracy all of his sources and smoothing the way for successive naturalistic studies in which the «Gulo» would be given an even bigger place - in the quest for historical sources and, above all, in the confirmation, now amplified, of the symbolical significance inherent in its strange behavior. (*continued*)

*6. Appendix from the Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus autore Olae Magno, Romae 1555.*

a) b. XVIII (c. 7 De Gulonibus), p. 605 (end of the *Epitome* by C.S. Grafeo: *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus authore Olae Magno a Cornelio Scribonio Grapheo in Epitomen redacta*, Antverpiae 1562, p. 137):

Inter omnia animalia, quae immanni voracitate creduntur insatiabilia, hoc animal praesenti figura expressum, in partibus Suetiae Septentrionalis praecipuum susceperebat nomen, ubi patrio sermone Ierff dicitur, et lingua Germanica Vielefras, Sclavonice Rossomaka a multa comeditione: Latino vero non nisi fictitio, Gulo, videlicet a gulositate appellatur. Grossities eius, ut magni canis: aures, et facies, velut catti: pedes, et ungulae asperimiae: corpus villosum, et prolixorum pilorum subfuscorum: cauda ut vulpis, licet brevior, sed crinium densiorum: unde optima conficiuntur hyemalia capitum tegumenta. Hoc igitur animal voracissimum est. Reperto nanque cadavere, tantum vorat, ut violento cibo corpus instar tympani extendatur: inventaque angustia inter arbores, se stringit, ut violentius egerat: sicque extenuatum, revertitur ad cadaver, et ad summum usque repletur: iterumque se stringit angustia priore, repetitque cadaver, donec eo consumpto, aliud solicita venatione inquirat. Creditur a natura creatum ad ruborem hominum: qui vorando, bibendoque vomunt, redeunque ad mensam, noctes et dies continuatur, prout Mechovita in sua Sarmatia opinatur. Caro huius animalis omnino inutilis est ad humanam escam: sed pellis multum commoda, atque

pretiosa. Candet enim fuscata nigredine, instar panni Damasceni, diversis ornata figuris: atque pulchrior in aspectu redditur, quo artificum diligentia et industria, colorum conformitate, in quocunque vestium genere fuerit coadunata: soli Principes, et magnates eo indumento tunicarum more confecto, hyemis tempore utuntur: quia calorem adducit citius, et eum diutius seruat inductum: idque non solum in Suetia et Gothia, sed et in Germania, ubi raritas harum pellium maiorem sortitur aestimationem, quando navigiis una cum caeteris mercibus fuerit appretiata.

b) b. XVIII (c. 8 De honestandis hospitibus in harum pellium tegumentis), p. 606 (end of Grafeo's *Epitome*, p. 137):

Neque incolae terrarum quaestus causa permittunt has pelles educi in alienas regiones, cum et earum tegumentis tractent in hyeme hospites honorabiliiores: argumentum ostendentes sufficiens, sese nihil amoenius, clariusque ducere, quam bonos hospites quovis tempore et ordine magnificare, etiam in vehementi frigore, quando inter alia beneficia lectos tam pretiosis pellibus stratos, eisdem exhibent praeparatos, prout xvi. libro de hospitalitate gentis cap. xii. extitit declaratum. Sed neque silendum existimo, quod dormientibus sub harum pellium tegumentis, evenire solent somnia, quasi eius animalis vitae, naturaeque conformia, in insatiabilitate devorandi, et bestiis insidiis faciendis, et praecavendis: quod forsitan sub ratione sit, ut qui species calidas, zinziber, aut piper comedunt, comburi videantur: et saccharum manducantes, aquis suffocari credantur, prout Plutarchus habet in *Problematibus suis*. Videtur et aliud subesse naturae secretum, ut iis pellibus induiti, bibendo et comedendo nullum saturitatis vestigium relinquant. Intestina huius animalis, citharoedorum opera ad usum chordarum (voluptate gentium) formata, seu extensa, raucum generant sonum: qui temperamento chordarum dulcium cito resolvitur in amoenitatem. Ungulae in modum circuli vertiginosis capitibus, ac tinnientibus auriculis appensae, celeriter recuperandae sanitati prosunt. Sanguis eius aquae calidae admixtus, venatoribus est pro potu: immo etiam melle rarissimo conditus, in nuptialibus triumphis propinatur. Aruina, seu pinguedo eius, putridis ulceribus per modum unctionis adhibita, celerrime sanitati confert. Dentium usus incantatoribus patrocinatur. Ungulae praedictae recenter extractae, cattos, canesque demonstratae fugant, quemadmodum aviculae viso vulture, vel erythraona.

c) b. XVIII (cap. 9 *De modo venandi Gulones*), p. 607:

Venatorum arte varia acquiritur hoc animal insidiosum (cuius facies partim catto, partim cani similis est) solo respectu pretiosae pellis, hoc modo:

portatur in sylvam cadaver recens, ubi frequentius haec bestiae vagari videntur, praesertim in nivibus altis: (aestate enim nil valent pelles) quo cognito per odorem, et apprehenso, vescitur, donec ventrem instar tympani extensem, inter arbores angustas, non sine cruciatu cogatur exonerare: sicque occupatum, lata dimissa sagitta venator occidit. Est et alius modus huius bestiae capienda, per trabes tenuissima chorda distinctas, ut eius levi motu, cadaver edendo stranguletur: vel etiam in effossas scrobes, seu cavernas obliquas, ut fame urgente cadavere immissos vescatur, incidens capit. Aliaque via vix conceditur, ut a canibus apprehendatur, cum ungulas, dentesque, adeo acutos habeat, ut eius congressum formident canes, qui in ferociissimos lupos vires suas extendere solent [end of Graevo's Epitome, p. 138]. Huic guloni in avibus magnis assimilantur harpyae, quae in solitudine iuxta mare Ionicum morantur, tam rabidae famis, ut fere nullo cibo perhibeantur satiari. In marinis monstris ahunus cunctis aliis insatiabilior: cuius corpus extenditur, donec vomitu extenuet ventrem, prout Albertus et Vincentius attestantur. Ita et hippopotamus, fluvialis equus: qui naturali astutia inter arundines pedem vulnerando, saginam deponere novit, impressaque complanare vestigia, ut venatores fallat insequentes, prout Plinius et Solinus dicunt.



## SAXO GRAMMATICUS AND ENNIUS\*

by Fabio Stok, University of Salerno

For the Middle Ages Ennius was little more than a name (for us it is somewhat more: a list of fragments). But not just any name: in Horace, Ennius is the poet *et sapiens et fortis et alter Homerus* (*epist. 2,1,50*); in Cicero (*Arch. 22*), in Ovid (*ars 3,409-410*) and in Jerome's *Chronicon* (*a.Abr. 1850*) he is a poet so great as to merit a position in the sepulchre of Scipio; in an anecdote recounted by Cassiodorus, Ennius is a prized source of Virgil's, *dum Ennium legeret* [scil. *Vergilius*], *a quodam quid faceret inquisitus respondit: "Aurum in stercore quaero"* (*inst. 1,8*). A name recurring so frequently, in different authors, could not but excite interest on the part of Medieval readers, as well as an ambition to track down his works: Adhelm of Malmesbury (VII Century) cited

Ennius among the titles of the library of the abbey, but obviously knew only the name (see L.Bönhoff, *Adhelm von Malmesbury*, Dresden 1894, pp. 71 ss.); in the age of the Renaissance Pomponio Leto boasted the possession of Ennius' *Annales*, arousing the envy of the other Humanists (see A.J.Dunston, "A Student's Note of Lectures by Giulio Pomponio Leto", *Antichthon* 1 [1967], p. 92). Some of the attestations that I quote below hypothesised that the work could have been preserved in some codices originating in the Middle Ages and then lost, but this is a hypothesis that can be discarded: at the time of Macrobius (end of IV Century) the work of Ennius had already been lost, *quia saeculum nostrum ab Ennio et omni bibliotheca vetere descivit, multa ignoramus, quae non laterent, si veterum lectio nobis esset familiaris* (*Sat. 6,9,9*); Corippus (VI Century) drew on quotations of Macrobius and others, as Baldwin has recently shown (see B.Baldwin, "Corippus and Ennius", *Illinois Class.Stud.* 13 [1988], pp. 175-82).

With the impossibility of tracking down the Ennius text, the Middle Ages remembered his name, recovering noticeable appraisals in the sources: Beda (VIII Century) quoted Ennius in *De schematibus et tropis* (p. 610,20 *Rhet.Lat.Min.* Halm) by Sedulius, *Carm.Pasch.* 1,136; Muadwin of Autun took his cue from Ovid (*trist. 2,423-424*), *Carmina lusit item variis en maximus odis / Ennius, ingenuis scribens monumenta priorum; / Propterea in terris tenuit tum culmen honoris* (ed. Dümmler I p. 387, ll. 79-81); Theodulus (IX Century) from Martianus Capella's *distichum Ennianum* (1,42), *Adsint praecipue qui curant florida Tempe, / Quos in distichii serie complectaris, Enni* (ed. Wright 285-286); Alan of Lille (XII Century), *Illic pannoso plebescit carmine noster / Ennius et Priami fortunas intonat* (*Anticlaud. I.5*, ed. Wright), derives, for Förster, from Priscian, who quotes (*gramm. II* p. 97,8-9 Keil) Ennius' fragment *ann. 17* Vahlen<sup>2</sup> [= 14 Skutsch], *cum veter occubuit Priamus sub Marte Pelasgo* (see R.Förster, "Zur Handschriftenkunde und Geschichte der Philologie", *Rhein.Museum* 37 [1882],

p. 488); Alan probably also took account of the appraisal of Horace from *ars* 259-262 (and maybe also from "fortunam Priami cantabo..." from 137, which was, however, attributed by Horace to the *scriptor cyclicus*, and not to Ennius). The interest in Ennius allowed Ekkehartus IV, abbot of Sankt Gallen (XI Century) to save a couple of fragments from the *Annales*, extracting them from the tradition of Orosius. Again, Dante (XIV Century), for the response of Pyrrhus to the Roman ambassadors, cited (from Cicero *off.* 1,38) Ennius's fragments 194-201 Vahlen<sup>2</sup> [= 363-365 Skutsch] (*Mon.* 2,9,8). In short: the interest of the Middle Ages in Ennius is recurrent, and runs through the entire culture of the Age.

Saxo Grammaticus does not quote Ennius, as he does not almost none of the rest of his classical *auctores*. But, it is starting from them that he constructs his own stylistic imprint, the lexis and the language of the *Gesta Danorum*. Recent studies have highlighted the breadth of Saxo's cultural background, and especially the refined technique with which he used his sources in the writing of the *Gesta*. In this regard Saxo reflects the culture of the French Renaissance of the XII Century: no biographical attestations remain, but it is by now accepted that he received his education in northern France, at Tours or maybe at Orléans. The nickname "Grammaticus" by which Saxo is known starting from the XV Century, is surely not misapplied - the name deriving perhaps from the *Compendium Saxonis* of 1345, *Gesta Danorum quidam egregius grammaticus, origine Syalandicus, nomine Saxo conscripsit* (ed. Gertz), in which, however, "grammaticus" has the meaning of "Master of Latin Letters" and thus of "Latinist".

Ennius is not quoted by Saxo, as I have already said, and he is not even indicated among the sources of Saxo, for example in the apparatus of Olrik and Ræder. Rather, Ennius is a source of Saxo's, as we shall see, and is indeed the object of an undertaking of notable interest which reveals the refined strategy of composition this author has.

Some clues to the interest shown in Ennius by Saxo have been noted by Karsten Friis-

Jensen: at 2,1,8 (p. 39,3 Olrik-Ræder), *urbs somno sepulta diripitur*, the quotation of Virgil, *Aen.* 2,265, *invadunt urbem somno vinoque sepultam*, is probably mediated by the comparison with Ennius *ann. frg.* 292 Vahlen<sup>2</sup> [= 288 Skutsch], *nunc hostes vino domiti somnoque sepulti*, proposed by Macrobius, *Sat.* 6,1,20, source of Saxo (see K.Friis-Jensen, *Saxo og Vergil*, København 1975, pp. 43.84-85 and K.Friis-Jensen, *Saxo Grammaticus as Latin Poet*, Roma 1987, p. 89); other quotations of Virgil noted by Saxo are in Justin 43,4,7 and in Dudo of St-Quentin 1,4 (p. 131,10 Lair). Friis-Jensen notes again, in the Helga episode (6,6,7-12), the use of Virgil in a satiric mode, analogous with the degree to which Horatian exegesis (Ps.Acron on *sat.* 1,2,37-38) reveals the use that Horace makes of Ennius *ann. frg.* 465 Vahlen<sup>2</sup> [= 494 Skutsch] (see *Saxo Grammaticus as Latin Poet*, p. 115).

We are talking about cases in which the presence of Ennius is indirect. The case that I am examining here sees the direct reworking of Ennius on the part of Saxo.

Replying to his brother Hildigerus, beaten to death by him, Haldanus describes his own shield (it is a *mise en abyme*, in which the indication to the son killed by Haldanus mirrors the killing of the brother), cf. *Gesta Danorum* 7,9,15 (p. 204,19-26 Olrik-Ræder):

ad caput affixus clipeus mihi Sueticus astat,  
quem speculator vernans varii caelaminis ornat  
et miris laqueata modis tabulata coronant  
illic confectos proceres pugilesque subactos,  
bella quoque et nostrae facinus spectabile dextrae  
multicolor pictura notat; medioxina nati  
illita conspicuo species caelamine constat,  
cui manus haec cursum metae vitalis ademit.

Olrik and Ræder refer to Ovid, *met.* 13,291, *neque enim clipei caelamina novit* (Ulysses' words, in the *armorum iudicium*, on the boorishness of Ajax, incapable of appreciating the decorations on Achilles' shield). Actually Saxo takes into consideration as a priority Apuleius, who in *Socr.* 2 p. 6,19 Goldbacher quotes Ennius: *ut ait Ennius, clipeo miris fulgoribus variata / caelamina* (the fragment in generally placed in conjunction with the scenic fragments 215-216

Vahlen<sup>2</sup>, *Quid noctis videtur? in altisono / Caeli clipeo*, from *Iphigenia*, but the derivation is not certain, see *The Tragedies of Ennius*, comm. by H.D.Jocelyn, p. 330). That this may be Saxo's source, is shown by the contextual revision of Cicero, again in conjunction with an attestation of Ennius, in *Tusc.* 3,44: *vidi ego te adstante ope barbarica / tectis caelatis laqueatis, / auro ebore instructa regifice* (in this case from the *Andromacha*, they are the scenic fragments 94-96 Vahlen<sup>2</sup>). The outline of the sources is completed by Martianus Capella, certainly assumed by Saxo, cf. 1,66: *ex qua multicoloribus notulis variegata pictura vernabat* (and maybe also by *Ilias Latina* 630: *accipit [scil. Ajax] insignem vario caelamine balteum*).

What is striking is the combination of two different attestations of Ennius. Saxo's *clipeus* closely follows especially that of Ennius/Apuleius, *clipeus... variii caelaminis* (Saxo) / *clipec... variata caelamina* (Ennius/Apuleius); secondarily Saxo could also have taken into account both Ovid and the *Ilias Latina*. The matching of Ennius/Apuleius with Ennius/Cicero is clearly pressed for by *caelatis*, which re-echoes *caelaminis* from the other fragment (*caelamen* is quite frequent in Saxo: cf. for example 5,1,6, for the collar that Frotho gives to Gothwara, *habebat namque torques nexilia bullarum caelamina intersitaque regum simulacra*). The context of Ennius/Cicero concerns Priam's royal palace, with its panelled ceilings chiselled in gold and ivory. Saxo's attention was probably caught by *laqueatus*, which he used (in this case only in the *Gesta*) for the decoration of the shield (forcing the sense a little: the term concerns specifically the ceilings). But the contextual analogy may be noted: Saxo talks about an exotic *clipeus, Sueticus*, exactly as in Ennius/Cicero the Trojan royal palace is decorated *ope barbarica*. Also the more general context of Ennius/Cicero, Priam's royal palace destroyed, appeared perhaps fitting to the context of the *Gesta*, as a fratricide.

The undertaking does not come out of Saxo's usual compositional technique: he

gives priority attention to lexical choice, but is guided frequently also by the analogy of contexts (see F.Stok, "Tecniche della imitazione/composizione in *Saxo Grammaticus*", in *Tra contesto e testo. Studi di scandinavistica medievale*, a cura di C.Santini, il Calamo, Roma 1994; see also F.Stok, "Die klassischen Vorbilder der Vita des Kanutus Lavard (*Saxo Grammaticus, Gesta Danorum*, Buch XIII)", in *The Audience of the Sagas II*, Gothenburg University, Gothenburg 1991, pp. 287-96). But the case examined reveals, I would say, the breadth and depth of Saxo's familiarity with classical texts. It has been asked, in the past, to what extent Saxo may have depended on the authors he used, and if he may have drawn on epitomes, anthologies and the like. It seems likely, in reality, that Saxo had at his disposal most of the authors that he uses in the *Gesta*. But what is more important, in Saxo's compositional technique, is especially the sure command he has of the vocabulary and narrative style of the classical authors, and the use he makes of them for the enrichment and refinement of his own poetic and narrative imprint. Finally, we are left with the comparison Saxo made between different fragments of Ennius. A singular undertaking, that seems to have no precedent in Medieval culture. To find a collection of fragments of Ennius, we have to wait until 1564, the year in which Henry and Robert Estienne (Robertus and Henricus Stephanus) published the *Fragmēta poetarum Latinorum quorum opera non extant*. Saxo, in some way, is a pioneer of the philological work of the moderns. This is also a confirmation of the fact that Saxo really was *grammaticus*.

\* paper presented at a Round-Table Conference "The Intertextual Journey", Rome 9th November 1993.



## A 'ROMANTIC' ICELANDER?

by Riccardo Scarcia, University of Roma Tor Vergata

Giacomo Leopardi published his *Operette Morali* in 1827, otherwise an important year for the Italian prose of the early XIXth century because of Alessandro Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* first issue. The *Operette Morali* were a sort of collection of different philosophical pieces (twenty, in this first edition), however treated with the typical Leopardi's poetical elegance of style and brilliance of colours. Although new for the Italian readers, this book, with its title in pure classical taste, belonged anyway to a well-known topic of the European literature of the previous century, that of the 'Moral Essays' (or also of the 'Philosophical Epistles'). But the contents of the work, a real masterpiece, are well varied if compared with those of the tradition, in accordance to Leopardi's excellent art of writing. So we may find in it, for instance, alternatively short dialogues in dramatic style between abstract entities (*Dialogue Between Earth and Moon*), or between fictitious or historical or even mythological characters (*Dialogue Between A Calendar Seller and A Traveller; Dialogue Between Friedrich Ruysch and His Mummies; Dialogue Between Cristoforo Colombo and Pedro Gutierrez; Dialogue Between Hercules and Atlas & c.*), and peculiar 'monologues' in disguise (*The Song of the Wild Cock; Praise of the Birds & c.*), meant to offer an immediate aswell as a picturesque opportunity to the author to express his own feelings. There are also some 'autobiographical' pages (*Memorable Sayings of Filippo Ottonieri*, a clear double of the writer), or more extended scenaries, which open a larger space to the fantasy (*History of Human Kind, or The Bets of Prometheus*).

One of the best pieces of the last group, not devoid of an authentic humour, is entitled: *Dialogue Between Nature and An Icelander*. The 'Icelander' of the story is a poor man, who tries to escape his cruel destiny running through the whole world, and to get away

from the scarcely fruitful country to which he has been originally assigned by the incomprehensible resolution of Nature. In his endless search for a more acceptable corner in which to survive, wandering from land to land he arrives to an internal region of Africa (so to say, the heart of the earth, and, as we will see, also the end of the Icelander's life), where he encounters Nature itself. Nature is presented as an enormous woman, with dark eyes and coalblack hair, having both a beautiful and terrifying face, sitting on the soil, leaning her elbow against a mountain, in the middle of a vast forest. The personification of a Concept or of an Ideal is a rhetorical figure frequently used in classical literature, especially in Late Antiquity (compare, ex.gr., Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, probably the direct pattern of the narrative structure of this 'Operetta', together with Voltaire's *Dialogue entre le philosophe et la Nature*, and Leopardi's poem *To Italy*). Here 'Nature' and 'Destiny' are, of course, the same 'Person': Nature is quietly waiting for that man, because despite all his efforts he cannot escape from her laws ("So the squirrel cannot escape from the rattlesnake, and falls by itself into its throat", Nature says abruptly in her introductory words...).

The following conversation develops the usual pessimistic ways of Leopardi's thought: to summarize it, we may say that the Icelander substantially complains in a quite long speech about all the contradictions he found during his continuous wandering (everywhere ice, heat, rains, hurricanes, illnesses, accidents, risks, various perils, despite an irreproachable personal behaviour towards all his similar people he was in touch with in different times: "at the end - he says - I don't remember having spent a single day without some pain..."). He arrives as a logical inference to this conclusion: "You are openly a foe to humankind, and to all your creatures, including other animals, and to all your works... You are the true executioner of your own offspring, and I am right in feeling wholly hopeless".

Nature's answer is chilling: "Did you be-

lieve that this world was made for your own sake? Never I aimed at bringing happiness or unhappiness to you: and if your race should become completely extinct, I would not even notice it. I am not aware of what I happen to do. You don't realize that this universe lives in an alternance of production and destruction, which must be considered so strictly connected to each other that the world would fall into a complete dissolution if one of them should be missing: any painless thing should be, consequently, a damage for this universe". Note that in a contemporary remark in his private *Miscellany* (the so called *Zibaldone*: see there p.4099) Leopardi refers to the topics of this dialogue as "l'orribile mistero delle cose e della esistenza universale". But when the debate is still going on (the Icelander is just about to ask the fatal question: "But tell me now to whom is such a devastating system of any use?"), the narrative voice breaks it reporting with nonchalance the two different versions of the sudden Icelander's death: some people relate - Leopardi tells us - that two lions came about, which were so thin and so exhausted by starvation that they had hardly the strength to devour him ("they were restored by this food, and survived a while thereafter..."). But other people maintain that on the contrary it was a very stormy wind that rose up, knocked the man down, and buried him under a very pompous mausoleum of sand ("... un solennissimo mausoleo di sabbia"), which dried him up perfectly, making a magnificent mummy of his corpse, that is nowadays preserved in the main museum of an undefined important European town for the curiosity of the tourists (a parallel way of matter recycling!). Out of the very simple metaphor of the tale, the Icelander is the Human Being, regardless to any real country, that is, as an any living Creature, a true toy in the hands of the mere 'Chance' (rather than of those of the classical 'Fate', which depends, on the contrary, on a religious vision of the events). But why did Leopardi choose as an exemplary moral prototype an inhabitant of such a mysterious land, a land, after all, in its reality no so strictly essential to his purposes? In Count

Leopardi's palace there was a very rich library, and Leopardi, a poet and an esteemed classical scholar, had certainly also some knowledge of geographical literature of his times (on the other hand he had compiled when he was sixteen a *History of Astronomy Since its Origins Down to the Year 1811*, and more or less at the same time a conspicuous *Essay on the Vulgar Mistakes of Ancient People*), and of updated accounts of modern explorations (he was certainly familiar with scientific newspapers: he wrote one of his more charming 'Canti', the *Song of a Shepherd Roaming Through Asia*, having read, as a starting point, a paper about popular customs of Kirghizian shepherds). He confirms this knowledge here too, for example, when he mentions the big Stone Heads of Easter Island, taking the hint from the famous report about Oceanic voyages of La Pérouse: to one of these "ermi colossali" (literally "colossal steles with human head") he compares, indeed, the first appearance of Nature, seen at a distance from the point of view of the miserable refugee. In the same way he speaks through his Icelander's mouth about the climatic contrasts of his native Island, and about the extreme frost of it, which forces people either to live too near to fire and smoke at home or to die in the outside; Leopardi adds also some details about the volcanic area of Mount Hekla (but this perhaps derives from Voltaire's *Histoire de Jenni*). Besides Leopardi makes elsewhere (in the *Zibaldone* quoted above: see p.2559) a passing reference to Lapps "who maybe are born and live in a climate not assigned by Nature to the human species", just in accordance with the Icelander's complaints. But apart from all that, since Iceland does not occur anywhere else in Leopardi's extant writings, we may suggest that Iceland is the occasional 'translation', into terms of geographical precision, and with an artificial flavour of science, of that fantastic land of remote North, which ancient authors named - as it is well-known - the undetermined 'ultima Thule': in other words, here Iceland is located, so to say, with all its exact longitude and latitude, in an ordered relationship with other, concrete regions of the Earth

(through which the man runs desperately), but it stands all the same as a place of the common imagery, the synthesis of all the features of a repulsive setting for the development of human civilization (at least, in no industrial times!): that is, conveying inevitably the reader to the paradoxical deduction that Life itself does not help to live. And this so far as the physical space is concerned. But regarding time, 'Iceland', or this transfigured 'Thule', is just the symbol of the hard, terrific and endless series of years of primeval humanity, always struggling for its existence against the blind hostility of the environment, and exposed night and day to the perils of wild beasts: a strong contrast with the legends of Lost Paradises and Golden Ages. And this refers back exactly to some fundamental verses of Lucretius' description of the continuous dangers and awful difficulties of life of primitive men in his materialistic poem *De Rerum Natura*, which was obviously, among Latin classical authors, the Leopardi's 'livre de chevet'.



### THE 'ALVIDA' BY GIACOMO CORTONE

by Antonella Perelli, Liceo B.Russell, Rome

After the success of Torquato Tasso's *Torrismundo*, other Italian tragedies were placed in mysterious Northern Europe. One of them was Giacomo Cortone's *Alvida*, applauded in Udine in 1614, printed in Padova in 1615, and quite forgotten now. This tragedy is mentioned, among the Italian imitations of *Torrismondo*, by Umberto Renda in a long essay published in 1905-6. Although the quality is rather poor, literally speaking, it is worth reading as a document of Nordic spell - combined in this case with the violent atmosphere of XVIIth century's tragedies. The male protagonist is Orcano, Count of Flanders, who seeks Alvida in mar-

riage from her father Lico, King of Norway. For Lico does not accept, Orcano leaves for Egypt thinking of revenging himself. In the meanwhile Lico promises his daughter to Ormondo, King of Denmark. Orcano, coming from Egypt with an army under the name of Arcesio, seizes the town and takes Alvida prisoner. Alvida is killed by Odrisia (but she had already maimed herself, biting her tongue and spitting it at Orcano, according to the violence of Giraldi's tragedies), Orcano's sister, who had been seduced by Ormondo (IV 8 p.110: she had fallen in love with him when he was wounded, as Angelica with Medoro in *Orlando Furioso* XIX 20-30; but Ormondo, behaving himself ignobly as many characters of the Italian tragedy of that period, refused to marry her). All the *dramatis personae* die a violent death.

I shall always quote the text according to G.Cortone, *Alvida*, Padova 1615, referring to the pages of this edition. From the first lines (I 2, 4-5) it is clear that Norway's distance from the rest of the world is not warranty of peace and safety. Lico and his court are waiting for Ormondo and are ready to celebrate the marriage, but Alvida is upset by her dreams (her nurse tries to reassure her, saying that dreams are not true, like in Tasso's *Torrismondo* I 1, 125-126). As a matter of fact Vaffrino, Orcano's lieutenant, plans to insinuate himself into the Court changing his voice and his language (like his homonymous, Tasso's Vafrino in *Gerusalemme Liberata* XVIII 57-60). In spite of the nurse's gossiping about kissing (I 6, 13-19) according to Aminta's model, the atmosphere becomes soon tragic not only because of Alvida's dreams (I 6, 20-23) but also of the counsellor's topical considerations about Fortune (II 3, 32-33). The dialogue between Odrisia and her waiter Locro is also gloomy, being constructed on that between Clorinda and Arsete in *Gerusalemme liberata* XII 18-20 and 39-40 (even if here Odrisia will not die fighting with her ancient lover Ormondo, as Locro has dreamt and is afraid of).

The sad destiny of Norway is strictly connected with its king's personality. The

Lico's character is modelled on the ancient good kings, as Priamus in Virgil's *Aeneid*. He has, for instance, some aspects of Theseus in Euripides' *Suppliants*: Lico too believes that a good chief must involve people in his decisions (II 6 p.43). Vaffrino's plan just relies on Lico's *pietas* (III 2 p.57):

## VAFFRINO

Siciliano son'io: fuggo i miei danni,  
E pietà vò cercando nel pio seno  
Del Re Norvegio, de la cui bontade  
La fama porta per lo Mondo il grido...

## LICO

Peregrino,  
O chiunque tu sia, vivi tranquillo,  
Ch'à noi non havrai fatto in van ricorso.

Vaffrino tells an invented story: he says that Ruggiero II, King of Sicily, having known about the discovery of the New World, sent his brother Tancredi with an army to get hold of wealth (III 2 p.58: "Mandar risolse il suo German Tancredi / Con Armata potente à far avанzo / Di stato, ò d'oro, ond'appagar potesse / Gl'ambitosi suoi avidi spiriti; Concedendo le leggi de le Genti / Al primo occupator l'Isole incolte"). Vaffrino, who introduces himself as the captain of some squadrons, says he was caught in a storm and he roved over the seas with his fellows for a year, without touching land. Vaffrino's story is sad and awful: he says they had nothing to eat and were reduced to feed on corpses; finally they landed on a small island and were helped by fishermen, but many of them died eating good food they were no longer used to. The story is similar to other descriptions of shipwrecks, for instance the *Viaggio e naufragio di Piero Quirino, gentiluomo viniziano* (1431) (see Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, edited by M. Milanesi, IV, Torino 1983, 47-77). But Vaffrino insists on dreadful details, for instance the need of food that obliges many sailors to eat human bodies (III 2, 60-61):

Ma, s'io dicessi, com'estinta fosse  
Da noi la fame, e la molesta sete,  
L'abominevol cibo, il rio licore,  
Onde nodriti fummo longo tempo,  
L'impietà nostra verso i propri amici

L'atrocità contro i Compagni estinti,  
E i sepolcri à i Cadaver da noi dato,  
O che horribile Istoria intenderesti.

Vaffrino uses all means to move his enemies into compassion: "rio licore" is perhaps an allusion to urin, mentioned by Piero Quirino as a better drink than salty water; but in Quirino's report there is no mention of cannibalism, not even an allusion. In Vaffrino's - as in Quirino's - tale, he and his friends get ashore after many difficulties. The little island they arrive at is in both cases inhabited by good fishermen who offer food and drinks: but the clear atmosphere described by Piero Quirino ("ma poi che da noi con li gesti e con la voce furono certificati ch'eravamo persone pericolate e bisognose d'aiuto, cominciorono a parlarne [...]: ma nulla per noi era inteso. [...] Ma, sopravvenuta la domenica [...] il suo capellano [...] fece intendere a tutti il caso [...]: e commossi a pietà tutti lagrimorono [...], sì che [...] barche sei [...] vennero per noi, portandone copia de' suoi cibi. E chi potria stimare quanta e qual fosse l'allegrezza nostra, vedendoci visitar con tant'amore e carità?") is substituted here by a tragic one (III 2 p.61):

Qui da vostri benigni Pescatori  
Non intesi al parlar, ci fu di Pane,  
Di Pesci, et d'acque dolci data aita;  
Ma, mentre le fameliche lor brame  
Molti satiar volean, sotto 'l soverchio  
Peso del cibo rimaneano oppressi.

The structure of Vaffrino's tale is that of Sinon's fraud in *Aeneid* II. Also the reactions of Lico and Leone are moulded upon Priamus' and Laocoon's patterns. Tancredi is presented as a cruel and devilish (III 2, 62-63):

Fuggo il crudel; fuggo il protervo Ulisse.

On the contrary Vaffrino takes care to present himself as a brave and honourable man, so that Lico could receive him without a doubt. He promises in exchange to make Lico's *pietas* well known (III 2 p.65):

Dovunque io me n'andrò, del Rè Norvegio  
Narrerò meraviglie.

So in Vaffrino's adulation Norway should be the equivalent of Ruggero's good government (III 2 p.64 "Spero condurmi là, dove salute / Trova da man benigna il giusto, e 'l buono, / Dove libero, e vergine Governo / Regge d'Italia la più bella parte / Con dolce Impero, e à più d'un Regno impera"). On the other hand, Leone too, in II 1, 25-26, had presented his political function according to classical examples of a good politician:

Poiche 'l mio Ré de' Popoli il governo,  
E 'l maneggio de l'arme in me hà deposito,  
[...]  
Io mi sento, no sò come, rapito  
A l'essere mortale, e mi sollevo  
Con ogni mio pensier sovra le stelle,  
[...]  
E quest'avviene (d' 'l credo) perche quando  
Gli omeri al grave peso io sottoposi:  
Ogni privato affetto pria deposi,  
A' i terreni piacer l'alma involando,  
E à tutto ciò, che 'l senso alettar puote.

That is what is now called the "bureaucrat's ideology": the idea of a man who renounces everything to devote himself completely to public affairs. This is for instance, in Seneca's *ad Polybium*, the case of Polybius, the powerful freed-man of the Emperor Claudius, who is not allowed to mourn the loss of his brother because he has to take care of his subjects (6,4 *non licet tibi flere immodice, nec hoc tantummodo non licet*. [...]) *Multa tibi non licent, quae humillimis et in angulo iacentibus licent*); but this is especially the case of the Emperor himself (7,2 *Caesari quoque ipsi, cui omnia licent, propter hoc ipsum multa non licent* [...] *Ex quo se Caesar orbi terrarum dedicavit, sibi eripuit*).

Leone is the good counselor whose function is always above all to think of public good. He is afraid of Lico's excessive *clementia* and *pietas* (II 6 p.49 "Ch'un Prencipe sia pio, già non è biasmo, / Mà li convien sapere anco esser aspro, / Severo, impetuoso, e risoluto, / Sendo virtù, ch'à tempo egli sia tale") and in front of Vaffrino he plays the role of Laocoön in Virgil's *Aeneid* II (II 2 p.59 Lico: "Pietosa Iстoria: intenerir mi sento". / Leone: "Fulmin dal Cielo uccida pur chi mente"; II 2 p.62 "O meraviglia: Che

sì, che 'l Rè à sogni / Del mentitore intiera fede presta?"). The model is openly declared by Leone himself (III 2, 65-66) who maintains the distance between Norwegians, wary and well organized, and Trojans, easily deceived and here presented with a little contempt:

crederesti

D'haver, nuovo Sinon, la frode ordita  
Del Cavallo Troian ne la Norvegia?  
Non sapran tardo questa volta i Frigi;  
Nè siam noi Frigi, come forse stimi,  
Onde divin voler t'haurà condotto  
A vender frodi, per menar supplicij.

The real catastrophe is open by the nurse's tale about the duel between Odrisia and Ormondo, where Ormondo is killed (III 4, 73-75). Odrisia reveals herself as a girl according to the *topos* of the helmet (III 4 p.75: "Tratto à l'hor l'elmo al prigionier si vide, / Che d'angelico aspetto era Donzella, / Con chioma bionda, e crespa, e de pochi anni"), and tells the dead Ormondo terrible words, shouting her revenge (III 4 p.75):

Altre feste, altre Nozze, disleale,  
Hor goderai nel disperato Inferno:  
Vanne altier de l'altrui rapito fiore,  
Milanta haver schernito Verginella  
Priva di Genitore, e di consiglio,  
E con titol di Putta noma Odrisia.

In opposition to the tragic atmosphere of the Courts, the Chorus proposes the model of shepherd's life, so far from envy, war, ambition, avidity (pp. 81-84). While the Court goes towards a complete overthrow, it is clearer and clearer than Good and Evil face each other: Lico and his country represent Good and their only fault is their *pietas*. Perhaps a good king should be less tender, in fact according to Machiavelli's suggestions; a good king should be like Leone more than like Lico: so the sly Vaffrino scorns Lico, but admires Leone (III 6; see also IV 7, 105-108). But when Arcesio accuses Lico to want to rule over the whole world, without showing any pity, Lico gives his enemy another lesson of *clementia*, also considering that, like in the ancient world, anyone could be a victim of Fortune and lose his freedom (IV 2 p.87):

O chiunque tu sia anima infame,  
Che l'infelice condition schernisci  
D'huom vinto, e in tuo poter ristretto homai,  
Mentre insegnan gli esempi dè passati  
Vincitor verso i prigionier nemici,  
Che si guerreggia sol fin, che si vince,  
Et che communi sono le vicende  
De l'instabil fortuna, onde pietade  
Da le sciagure altrui l'huom giusto apprende.

But Arcesio is ready to set his prisoner Alvida free only because he has fallen in love with her. Alvida's answer is terrible, as I said in the first lines. The cruel and famous story of Tereus and Philomela (see especially Ov. *Met.* VI 421 ff.) gave the idea of the cut tongue and Alvida shows her hate against Arcesio punishing herself (IV 2, 96-98). It is Vaffrino himself who accuses Arcesio to have betrayed the king of Egypt's trust and reveals the real aim of the expedition against Norwegians: Lico had not wanted to give her daughter in marriage to Orcano-Arcesio because he was only a servant educated at the Norwegian Court. Trying to escape death, Arcesio addresses his last speech to his soldiers, presenting himself as a warranter of coming back (V 3 p.126), according to the general model of Ulysses:

Ma, s'io morrò, à voi poi, che speme resta  
Di riveder la Patria? i cari figli?  
Le mogli? i genitori, i vostri amici?  
Chi vi ricondurrà salvi in Egitto  
Ad adorar d'Iside il simolacro?  
Chi pratico de l'Isole, e de' Porti  
Per l'immenso Ocean trarrà l'Armata?  
Chi le Circi fuggir saprà, e le Sirti?  
[...]  
Ne vogliate oscurar la vostra gloria

In an oppressing northern climate (in V 4 p.128 Vaffrino says that his heart does not want "più respirare à l'aria infausta / Di questo Infernal Clima") ancient virtues are perfectly at their place: Leone, like Cato the Younger, prefers to poison himself than to lose his freedom (V 6, 135-136).

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#### ALLA RICERCA DEI GOTI

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La mostra su "I Goti", organizzata a Milano (Palazzo Reale, 28 gennaio - 8 maggio 1994) dalla Regione Lombardia, con il concorso del locale Museo Archeologico, si presenta un'iniziativa ampia nel respiro quanto ambiziosa nel proposito di presentare la civiltà dei Goti, dalla costa atlantica dell'Iberia al Mar Nero, nella loro secolare vicenda che dall'inizio dell'era volgare si estende - nella piena evidenza del protagonismo - fino al secolo VIII, e assai più avanti per quanto concerne la prosecuzione nel più ristretto ambito della Crimea. Lo scopo didattico, che - ormai in ogni occasione consimile - mira a rendere l'iniziativa accessibile anche ad un pubblico vasto e non specialista, si unisce ad un notevole rigore scientifico nella presentazione della problematica connessa al tema prescelto, come emerge non solo dall'allestimento dell'esibizione, ma anche dal catalogo - splendido nella grafica - che l'accompagna (*I Goti*, edito da Electa Lombardia, Milano 1994, 400 pp.), e al quale spesso si farà qui riferimento.

Il volume, con capitoli affidati a differenti e spesso ben noti specialisti, si apre con due sezioni riservate, rispettivamente, ai Goti dal I al IV secolo e ai Goti in Crimea (secoli V-VII). La terza, e la più ampia, sezione è dedicata agli Ostrogoti dai Balcani all'Italia (secoli IV-VI) e consta di dieci capitoli; la maggior parte di essi trattano i diversi aspetti archeologici nelle varie fasi della vicenda di

quel popolo, come introduzione al materiale esposto alla mostra e illustrato nel volume da puntuali schede, ma si affrontano anche problemi più vari dalla numismatica alle miniature, alla lingua, e l'intera sezione è preceduta da un saggio di taglio prevalentemente storico. Analoga struttura presenta la quarta sezione, con otto capitoli sui Visigoti dai Balcani alla penisola Iberica (secoli V-VIII). Chiudono il volume, come appendici, un chiaro quanto sintetico saggio sul diritto dei Goti, un'utile prosopografia gota e un'ampia e aggiornata bibliografia. Il reperto archeologico appare primario per l'ambiente gotico, così avaro -ad Occidente ancor più che ad Oriente - di testimonianze scritte, come completamento e verifica dei dati delle fonti storiche redatte nelle lingue classiche. La mostra di Milano si distingue, innanzi tutto, per il fatto di proporre - per la prima volta in Occidente - quel materiale, relativo ai primi quattro secoli di storia gota (con particolare riguardo ai secoli III e IV) - proveniente dai Musei della Polonia, della Ucraina, della Repubblica Moldava, della Crimea e della Russia. Il filo del reperto lega quindi l'intera mostra, ove esso è presente nei suoi aspetti più vari. Gli oggetti della vita quotidiana, legati spesso a scavi di abitati, si coniugano all'analisi della collocazione e della morfologia di questi stessi luoghi come di residenze più altolate e di ambienti destinati ad un culto spesso ariano.

Il materiale proveniente da complessi tombali (assente però nella Gallia e nella Hispania visigote) appare - specialmente in epoca precristiana o a ridosso della conversione - assai ricco nel corredo femminile, donde la profusione di fibule, fibbie, bracciali, collane, anelli ed altri preziosi spesso di raffinatissima fattura, mentre le tombe maschili risultano assai più austere e quindi avare di oggetti, anche di armi. Le monete, smarrite negli abitati e altrove oppure raccolte in tesori, offrono spesso un insperato appoggio cronologico, che non sempre appare però di facile valutazione storica. Su donazioni votive (come le tipiche corone pensili), su alcuni gioielli e ornamenti (anelli e croci), su qualche lastra tombale di avanzata epoca

cristiana sono impresse o incise iscrizioni, che in lettere e(/o) in lingua latina conservano comunque almeno negli antroponimi una testimonianza gotica diretta. L'esame della produzione libraria a noi pervenuta, e delle relative pagine miniate, costituisce - a prescindere dalla traduzione vulfiliana della Bibbia, di cui peraltro si parla assai poco - una occasione più di rimpianto che di trattazione per la scarsità del materiale conservato e per la difficoltà di sicura attribuzione alla cultura gotica anche di quel poco che risulta ancora disponibile. Le testimonianze linguistiche - toponimi, antroponimi, prestiti nella lingue romanze - s'accostano al dato del reperto materiale, procedono in parallelo con esso, o lo intersecano e lo completano, donandogli comunque una voce, sì da contribuire, comunque, in modo determinante a tessere nello sfondo quella trama - a volte a maglie assai larghe -, ove gli elementi della cultura gotica di volta in volta risultano isolati già fusi con la cultura classica o almeno da essa largamente permeati.

La civiltà dei Goti - per i due gruppi essenziali, Ostrogoti e Visigoti, che con percorsi e vicende diverse occuparono Oriente e Occidente, e che in epoche e con modalità differenti fecero dell'Italia un luogo di mero transito oppure al contrario di sviluppo e di massima fioritura fino alla completa decadenza - si configura intimamente come civiltà di contatto. Tale situazione può condurre in una prima fase ad una esasperazione dell'affermazione nazionale, e quindi della 'diversità' rispetto al sostrato colto, bizantino o latino occidentale, ma in ogni caso e luogo si giunge con differente gradualità all'avvicinamento sociale - per svariati motivi, quali, ad esempio, l'opportunità politica, i nuovi assetti ideali indotti con la conversione, la esistenza di matrimoni misti etc. -, per giungere fino ad una fusione che si configura assai spesso più come sintesi pragmatica che come un asservimento coatto. La difficoltà della 'restituzione' storica di un materiale, tanto vasto nel tempo e nello spazio, quanto lacunoso e insieme eterogeneo, emerge quasi da ogni capitolo

del Catalogo organizzato a più voci competenti, ma carente di un raccordo unitario come è a volte verificabile a vari livelli. Sul piano della problematica storica, l'assenza di testimonianze tombali negli stanziamenti visigoti in Occidente resta - dichiaratamente - un interrogativo del tutto aperto, ma anche il ruolo del ben noto Teoderico il Grande nella cultura dell'Italia tra V e VI secolo è affrontato, in numerosi contributi, da angolature assai diverse e con soluzioni spesso scarsamente coincidenti. Quanto al metodo, gli archeologi di scuola tedesca evidenziano con grande decisione le peculiarità delle testimonianze gotiche, mentre i ricercatori di nazioni romanze appaiono per esse assai più inclini (specialmente nei riguardi dei Visigoti) a sottolineare aspetti ed esiti del contatto tra culture diverse. Ancora sul versante interpretativo, si può, infine, citare proprio l'esempio degli etnici "Ostrogoti" e "Visigoti", per i quali si propongono - in capitoli diversi e senza alcun mutuo riferimento - precedenti etimologici, e quindi interpretazioni, così divergenti che il comune lettore non può che rimanere del tutto perplesso.

Appare, certamente, assai apprezzabile il taglio problematico di gran parte dei contributi, che immediatamente introducono il lettore nella vitalità critica del problema aperto, quasi invitandolo a partecipare a 'lavori in corso', di cui sarebbe arbitrario anticipare risultati definitivi non ancora raggiunti. Ma va anche evidenziato che, accanto a tali esposizioni nate da un 'lavoro sul campo', coesistono sia saggi - specialmente storici - più tradizionali e quindi meno innovativi, sia contributi di taglio archeologico assai modesti (come, ad esempio, per la Crimea e la Romania), tanto elementari nell'informazione quanto del tutto alieni da tentativi di critica e di seria ricostruzione storica. La non raggiunta organicità dell'insieme, che forse un più attento coordinamento avrebbe potuto agevolmente evitare, si accorda però, curiosamente e quasi per paradosso, con la materia trattata, con la difficoltà cioè di tracciare una mappa culturale omogenea e

conseguente, pur nell'ovvio sviluppo cronologico, per un popolo dalle vicende complesse e dall'aspetto sfuggente come quello dei Goti nel loro secolare, instancabile vagare tra terre, popoli, culture diverse.



## VESTIGIA NORMANNE IN MOSTRA A ROMA

di Paola Orlandi, Roma

Dal 28 gennaio all'8 maggio si è tenuta a Roma, nella sede di Palazzo Venezia, un'esposizione a carattere antologico delle testimonianze della civiltà normanna in Europa. La mostra era intitolata "I Normanni. Popolo d'Europa MXXX-MCC", con il chiaro intento di evocare una possibile connessione tra l'assetto unitario dell'Europa contemporanea e le realizzazioni statali di questo popolo di origine vichinga, dotato di uno straordinario senso politico, nei luoghi della dominazione. I Normanni, infatti, dal primo insediamento in Normandia (acquisito nel X secolo da Rollone, capo vichingo approdato lì dalla natia Norvegia con una flotta composta eminentemente da Danesi) sciamarono in nuclei compatti - nell'arco dell'XI secolo - in Inghilterra, in Italia meridionale (Puglia, Campania, Sicilia) e, con minore fortuna, in Irlanda, Spagna e Tunisia.

Nei luoghi dove essi si stanziarono denuero vita, senza provocare insanabili fratture con le realtà autoctone, a governi di tipo monarchico, dotati di apparati burocratici centralizzati, secondo schemi assolutamente innovativi per l'Europa del tempo. Basti pensare al Regno di Sicilia, governato da Roberto il Guiscardo e, dopo di lui, da Ruggero II, e amministrato legislativamente dalle Assise, primo corpo organico di leggi valide per l'intero territorio, fatto emanare da Ruggero II nel 1140. L'ambizioso

programma annunciato dagli organizzatori, secondo il quale la mostra avrebbe dovuto offrire "una prima visione esplorativa con caratteristiche di indagine comparativa della civiltà normanna all'interno dell'orizzonte europeo", si è dimostrato di difficile realizzazione, soprattutto in virtù dei caratteri tipici di questa dominazione, che, nei territori occupati, assimilò con rimarchevole tolleranza i sostrati culturali locali, connotandosi pertanto di un sincretismo tale da rendere difficile una separazione delle componenti originarie.

Le scelte organizzative seguite nell'allestimento, da parte loro, non hanno contribuito a diradare, ma anzi, hanno spesso aggiunto vaghezza a tali difficoltà intrinseche. Ci si riferisce in particolare alla strutturazione del percorso espositivo, segmentato secondo criteri tematici e non in base alla provenienza geografica, senza tuttavia essere corredata da un apparato atto all'individuazione di una mappa dei fattori comuni e degli elementi di differenziazione. Nelle sale sono stati infatti riuniti con semplificazione forse eccessiva oggetti provenienti da mondi culturalmente assai distanti, quali l'Inghilterra anglosassone e l'Italia meridionale, crogiolo di tradizioni bizantine e arabe, oggetti pertanto non assimilabili ad un tipo normanno per il solo fatto di essere stati prodotti in zone sottoposte alla dominazione normanna. Per i motivi suddetti non poteva considerarsi del tutto raggiunto quello che sembrava essere uno degli obiettivi principali dell'iniziativa, cioè quello di assolvere ad una funzione didattica. A tali carenze di chiarezza prospettica non è riuscito a supplire neppure il voluminoso catalogo, più un manuale di consultazione e studio, che non una guida attraverso la mostra. Peraltro il volume (edito da Marsilio), curato da M. D'Onofrio e promosso dal neoistituito Centro Europeo di Studi Normanni di Ariano Irpino, è un'interessante ed esauriente raccolta di saggi di studiosi della materia, caratterizzati da un'esposizione chiara e circostanziata. I testi, riuniti in capitoli secondo gli ambiti geografici, rimandano ad un'ampia bibliografia che copre tutti gli argomenti

trattati. Gli oggetti esposti sono inoltre quasi tutti documentati fotograficamente e corredati da ampie didascalie.

La mostra è stata strutturata, come si è detto, per temi: la prima sala era dedicata all'espansione, con modelli di navi e carte geografiche illustrate dei percorsi della conquista; nella seconda erano esposti gli strumenti della dominazione: le armi e gli equipaggiamenti del cavallo. La terza sala ospitava i ritratti dei protagonisti della storia normanna; ma di questi, mancando ogni riferimento iconografico coeve - se si eccettuano le monete o i sigilli - venivano offerte quasi esclusivamente testimonianze della più tarda memoria storica: acqueforti, olii e gessi, dal XVII al XX secolo. Nella quarta sala erano stati molto opportunamente presentati numerosi plasti riproducenti le diverse tipologie di fortificazione normanna; da questi risultava che un carattere comune a tali costruzioni era rappresentato dalla presenza di un mastio eretto in cima ad una collina, spesso artificiale. La quinta sala era dedicata alla battaglia di Hastings e accoglieva una copia parziale dell'arazzo di Bayeux. Il prezioso manufatto, realizzato tra il 1070 e il 1077 in un'officina inglese su commissione del vescovo Odone di Bayeux, racconta in 58 scene di fresca vivacità, corredate da didascalie ricamate in latino, la battaglia di Hastings - episodio iniziale dell'espansione normanna in Inghilterra - combattuta da Guglielmo il Bastardo, poi detto il Conquistatore, il 24 ottobre 1066.

Seguiva poi un affollato spazio dedicato alle gerarchie sociali e alle forme di vita, nel quale erano in mostra i simboli del potere laico ed ecclesiastico (corone votive, una replica del preziosissimo mantello di Ruggero II realizzato nel 1134 nelle officine regie di Palermo, mitra e pastorali), oggetti di uso comune (quali catini, coppe, lampade, cofanetti - rappresentativi di un artigianato di chiara matrice islamica -, olifanti - anch'essi di gusto islamizzante - e oggetti per il gioco, quali pedine e scacchi, tra i quali esemplari dei famosi "Scacchi di Lewis", del XII secolo, in osso di tricheco, ritrovati nell'isola scozzese di Lewis e di probabile

fattura scandinava). Un'ampia sala era dedicata alla Chiesa e alla devozione; qui erano radunati decori monumentali delle chiese (capitelli, lastre, archivolti), reliquiari ed altri oggetti della devozione nonché dell'arredo liturgico. I Normanni praticavano con ardore il culto dei santi, e tra questi, in particolare, S. Michele Arcangelo godeva di una speciale venerazione; egli è rappresentato mentre uccide il drago nel rilievo di una lastra proveniente dalla chiesa inglese di Ipswich e databile intorno al 1120. Quest'opera, al pari di una lunetta proveniente dallo stesso luogo e raffigurante un cinghiale, appare fortemente influenzata dallo stile scandinavo detto di Ringerike. Un altro referente della devozione era S. Nicola di Bari, che troviamo raffigurato, secondo un'iconografia di matrice bizantina, in una placchetta di rame con smalti del secondo quarto del XII secolo, di provenienza barese. Qui il santo è rappresentato nell'atto di incoronare Ruggero II, secondo una diffusa leggenda. L'ultima sala era infine dedicata alla "mitizzazione" dei Normanni; in essa erano radunate opere moderne spesso latrici della nozione stereotipata dei Normanni come popolo guerriero e barbaro, diffusa già presso i contemporanei, ma esaltata soprattutto dalla storiografia romantica. In generale si può dire che questo tipo di produzione artistica seriore era forse presente in maniera eccessiva all'interno dell'esposizione, soprattutto in considerazione dell'apporto oggettivamente scarso che essa è in grado di dare alla conoscenza degli usi e costumi dei Normanni.

Molte critiche sono derivate all'organizzazione della mostra dalla scelta di riunire insieme indiscriminatamente reperti autentici, copie e calchi. Una tale iniziativa trova però piena giustificazione nell'inamovibilità di alcuni oggetti di estrema preziosità e fragilità, quali il mantello di Ruggero II (conservato nella Schatzkammer di Vienna) o l'arazzo di Bayeux, oggi custodito nel Musée de Tapisserie di Caen, Normandia, uno spazio museale creato appositamente per contenerlo. Pur concordando con un tale principio meto-

dologico, praticamente obbligato nei casi citati, ci è sembrato tuttavia antifilologico oltre ogni limite accettabile il fatto che la copia dell'arazzo (in scala 1:1) riproducesse solo 22 metri dei 70 di cui il ricamo si compone, mutilando arbitrariamente uno dei pochi episodi chiari e univoci della storia e dell'arte normanna, raramente auto-celebrativa.

Di scarso ausilio ci è parso l'apparato informatico, concentrato nell'ultima sala. Infatti, oltre alla simulazione della battaglia di Hastings con tecniche di realtà virtuale piuttosto primitive, esso si limitava ad offrire una sorta di catalogo computerizzato in forma di ipertesto, mediante il quale si potevano seguire percorsi di collegamento tra i vari argomenti trattati nella rassegna. Nel complesso la mostra ha rappresentato l'occasione, unica per i cultori dell'arte del periodo, di vedere riunite insieme quasi mille opere provenienti da musei di tutto il mondo. Quel che è certo è che è stato raggiunto l'intento di divulgare al grosso pubblico l'idea, sia pure imprecisa nei contorni, di una civiltà normanna, ma, soprattutto, dell'estrema e straordinariamente fruttuosa complessità delle componenti dell'architettura e dell'arte d'Europa tra i primi decenni dell'XI secolo e la fine del XII.



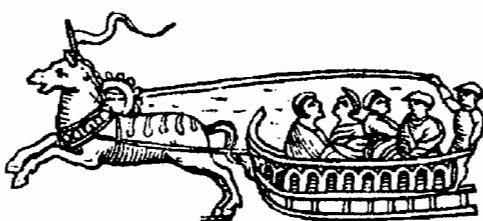
## SCHEDE / REVIEWS

**BOYER R., *La vita quotidiana dei Vichingi (800-1050)*, traduzione di M.G. Meriggi, Milano 1994, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, pp. 299.**

E' stata tradotta in italiano a soli due anni dalla pubblicazione presso la casa editrice Hachette *La vie quotidienne des Vikings (800-1050)* dello studioso francese Regis Boyer. Il prologo, che si apre con una scena di matrimonio «che potrebbe essersi svolta

intorno al 950, in qualsiasi paese scandinavo», dà subito conto della scelta di privilegiare nel corso dell'esposizione i temi più dichiaratamente antropologici e sociologici, che corrispondono all'impostazione della collana. L'A. si pone infatti subito dinanzi al problema di quali siano i denominatori comuni dei tre, e poi quattro gruppi scandinavi nel periodo storico così individuato, arrivando alla conclusione che il primo è di ordine sociologico, incentrato sulla «importanza fondamentale della famiglia, autentica cellula di base di quelle società»; il secondo è di natura più propriamente politica ed è rappresentato dal *land*, ovvero il territorio dove si raduna il *thing*, l'assemblea; il terzo, forse il più rilevante, è la lingua, chiamata per comodità antico norreno; e infine il quarto coincide con la sfera più propriamente culturale, che costituisce l'argomento stesso della trattazione, mediante la quale l'A. si propone di illustrare la religione, la legislazione e soprattutto la cultura materiale, dove risulta notevole una sostanziale uniformità, che giustifica del resto il libro in quanto tale.

Apprezzabile l'uso del parametro temporale (si vedano al riguardo le sezioni "l'anno del vichingo"; "le grandi date della vita"; "le grandi date dell'anno") e di quello spaziale ("l'habitat"; "spostarsi per via terra"; "la vita in mare") mediante i quali l'A. intende catalogare il materiale reperibile nelle fonti a sua disposizione con spiccata preferenza per quelle archeologiche e della numismatica e runologia) rispetto a quelle letterarie, meno sicure perché influenzate sovente da contesti allotri. L'opera è conclusa da un sintetico glossario e da una bibliografia generale (CARLO SANTINI).



**Marina Mundt, *Zur Adaption orientalischer Bilder in der Fornaldarsögur Nordrlanda. Materialien zu einer neuen Dimension altnordischer Belletristik*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt a. Main 1993, pp. 284**

Marina Mundt svolge attività di ricerca presso il Nordisk Institutt di Bergen. Il suo libro è un contributo filologico alla questione "Orient oder Rom?". Si tratta, come è noto, di un aspetto fondamentale del dibattito sulla formazione della cultura europea medievale, che ha avuto fra l'altro il merito di individuare vie "alternative", ovvero extra-mediterranee, tra le culture di Oriente e Occidente. L'interesse per questo tema, importante quanto poco battuto, va ricercato nella formazione dell'a., una "Fächerkombination" di filologia nordica e storia dell'arte. E' noto il ruolo di avanguardia delle discipline storico-artistiche su tutta la questione: da storici dell'arte come Strzygowski, Baltrušaitis, Wittkover, Ghirshman abbiamo appreso a valorizzare la "Begegnung" tra Oriente e Occidente e a ricercarne i non sempre evidenti percorsi.

Non sempre, però, vi è stato un adeguato riscontro negli studi filologici. Qui la "contrapposizione eterna" di kiplingiana memoria è più marcata: se immagini e manufatti si prestano meglio alla ricerca di punti e vie di contatto, la ricerca letteraria comparativa è ben più ardua. I non molti ricercatori multilingui, che non si lascino scoraggiare dagli steccati disciplinari, devono cimentarsi con edizioni critiche e traduzioni invecchiate, e comunque di difficile consultazione. La questione si fa poi più complessa quando lo scenario non è l'accogliente Mediterraneo, bensì una rete di itinerari oscuri e turbolenti attraverso il Caucaso, il Mar Nero, il Volga.

Ciò basti a valorizzare lo sforzo comparativo prodigato dall'a. nella sua ricerca, che pone a buon diritto le letterature nordiche in una "neue Dimension". Oggetto del libro è un gruppo di testi antico-scandinavi, detti convenzionalmente *Fornaldarsögur*

*Nordrlanda* e solitamente datati fra il XIII e il XV secolo (ed. standard di Guðni Jónsson, Reykjavík 1950; solo l'ultimo testo del corpus, la *Hrómundar saga*, si data al XVII secolo); l'a. vi individua una serie di "Bilder" orientali (il termine "Bild" è preferito al più vago "Motiv": cf. p. 30), che sottopone ad analisi comparativa con materiali sia letterari che iconografici. A una breve introduzione (pp. 9-36), e a una definizione del corpus in esame (pp. 37-53), seguono una ventina di brevi saggi, dedicati all'analisi dei "Bilder" orientali nelle singole opere (i testi più tardi sono analizzati con maggior rapidità). L'analisi prevale sulla sintesi, come mostrano le rapide conclusioni (pp. 249-66). Il libro si chiude con la bibliografia e l'indice analitico (pp. 267-82). Come è noto, il patrimonio orientale di racconti, immagini letterarie o anche mere reminiscenze era familiare al medioevo occidentale. I testi in esame presentano analogie con le letterature orientali, e del resto non mancano i paralleli con Bisanzio. Un vero e proprio ricettacolo di tradizioni d'Oriente è, ad esempio, la *FridIjófs saga ins frækna* (pp. 143-58). Nei *Fornaldarsögur* si riscontrano numerose analogie (più o meno dirette) con lo *Sāhnāme* e con le *Mille e una notte*, mentre non mancano richiami alla grande epopea georgiana, il *Vep'xist'qaosani* di Sot'a Rust'áveli (pp. 102 ss., e in generale, per i rapporti con la Georgia, 176 ss.).

Questi paralleli erano in parte già noti e acquisiti. Più difficile, però, è intuire i percorsi verso Occidente compiuti da miti e reminiscenze orientali. L'argomento è tutt'altro che marginale, e tocca aspetti metodologici molto delicati: ad esempio, come distinguere i "Bilder" e "Motive" iranici o indiani, introdotti nel medioevo nordico da mercanti e crociati, dagli elementi della comune eredità indoeuropea? Pur con grande cautela, l'a. individua alcune possibili radici storiche della migrazione di questi temi nei contatti dei popoli nordici con i variaghi, con Bisanzio e con il teatro di guerra delle Crociate, e ne desume una nuova "cronologia relativa" dei *Fornaldarsögur*, che rialza, in alcuni casi di

almeno un secolo, la datazione di molti testi del corpus. Uno dei casi più interessanti di incontro fra epica e storia è quello di Aroldo lo Spietato, che prima di diventare re di Norvegia come Harald III (1047-66), combatté per Bisanzio in Sicilia, Siria e Mesopotamia, diventando un celebrato eroe leggendario: nelle saghe ispirate a questo eroe si individuano vari "Bilder" orientali (pp. 55-66).

Il valore del libro è purtroppo limitato da un approccio scientifico "unilaterale". Manca, infatti, un vero e proprio dialogo con l'orientalistica; non a caso, le citazioni dei testi nordici sono riportate senza traduzione (con il risultato di scoraggiare il lettore non scandinavista); per converso, i nomi propri orientali non sono riportati in base ai moderni criteri di traslitterazione, bensì in forma semplificata, il che non giova alla scientificità dell'opera. Del resto, i confronti orientali si limitano a poche opere tradotte in inglese o in tedesco. Sarebbe stato proficuo estendere l'indagine ai numerosi testi tradotti in francese, e, in generale, approfondire almeno la bibliografia "occidentale". Questo limite non è solo formale, ma si riscontra anche in alcune mancanze sostanziali. Ad esempio, alle pp. 95-8 analizza l'attributo delle corna di Haraldr hilditönn menzionato nel *Sögubrot af fornkonungum*: i paralleli iconografici citati, pur se pertinenti, non bastano a giustificare l'assenza di un qualsiasi cenno al mito orientale di Alessandro Magno, chiamato in area islamica il "bicorne" (*Dū'l-qarnain*). Un'altra grave mancanza è l'assenza di riferimenti alla letteratura armena, che in realtà costituisce uno degli anelli più interessanti della catena. Mancanza ancor più imperdonabile, dato che l'a. riconosce giustamente l'importanza del Caucaso come regione di passaggio e crocevia di scambi, e individua analogie pertinenti tra i *Fornaldarsögur* e la tradizione georgiana. Così, accanto al *Digenēs akritas*, sarebbe stato opportuno almeno menzionare l'analogo ciclo armeno *Sasnay c̄rer* ovvero "Davit' di Sasun", oltretutto disponibile in varie traduzioni moderne (GIUSTO TRAINA).

**HOLBERG L., *Il viaggio sotterraneo***  
**di Niels Klim, a cura di B.Berni,**  
**Milano 1994, Adelphi Edizioni, pp.**  
**279 + tavv. fuori testo.**

Esce in traduzione italiana al n. 283 della "Biblioteca Adelphi" il *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*, edito tra la fine del 1740 e il 1741 a Lipsia, anonimo, probabilmente per evitare «che la censura, in un paese profondamente pietista come la Danimarca di Cristiano VI, ostacolasse la diffusione dell'opera» (p.268); a questa prima edizione ne hanno fatto seguito altre, in Olanda e in Francia, e quindi nel 1742 la prima traduzione danese e una traduzione inglese. Una successiva nuova edizione in latino del 1745 è alla base di tutte le traduzioni che si sono succedute. E' interessante rilevare come resti ancora aperto il problema di una ipotetica versione italiana, visto che l'accenno che se ne fa nella prima biografia di Holberg non ha trovato conferma nelle ricerche in biblioteche danesi e italiane (p.272). L'edizione Adelphi non prevede il testo latino; il curatore ha riportato solo le note delle numerose citazioni in versi da poeti latini; le tavole fuori testo, ad eccezione di una sola, riproducono le illustrazioni di N.Abilgaard e J.Juel che unitamente alla traduzione di J.Baggesen (1789), che queste adornavano, «sono divenute col tempo un classico continuamente ristampato in Danimarca» (CARLO SANTINI).

## NOTIZIE / NOTICES

Sarà pubblicato nell'autunno 1994 il primo numero di "Proxima Thule. Revue d'études nordiques". Il nuovo periodico, pubblicato sotto gli auspici della École pratique des Hautes Études di Parigi, è diretto da François-Xavier Dillmann. Il primo fascicolo contiene contributi dedicati all'espansione nordica in epoca vichinga e alla civiltà scandinava all'inizio del Medio Evo: Frédéric DURAND, *Un instrument de navigation des Vikings? A propos d'une découverte archéologique au Groenland*; Else ROESDAHL, *Les fortifications circulaires de l'époque viking au Danemark*; Lucien MUSSET, *Danois et Anglais au temps des Vikings. Un nouveau point de vue*; Gillian FELLOWS-JENSEN, *Les noms de lieux d'origine scandinave et la colonisation viking en Normandie. Examen critique de la question*; Vladimir VODOFF, *Les Vikings sur la route de l'est. Remarques au sujet de deux publications récentes*; Pikk-Liisa LEHTOSALO-HILANDER, *Bijoux et modes vestimentaires en Finlandie à l'époque viking*; Jan Ragnar HAGLAND, *Les découvertes d'inscriptions runiques de Bergen et Trondheim. Marques de propriété, relations commerciales et croyances magico-religieuses*; Françoise-Xavier DILLMANN, *Chroniques des études nordiques*. L'abbonamento alla rivista costa 165 FF (195 FF per paese extraeuropei).

# SAXO GRAMMATICUS tra storiografia e letteratura

*a cura di C.Santini*

Editrice «Il Calamo»  
Roma 1992

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*philologia  
saggi - ricerche - edizioni  
a cura di Teresa Pàroli*

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**John McKinnell**

# BOTH ONE AND MANY

Essays on Change and variety in Late Norse Heathenism

with an Appendix by Maria Elena Ruggerini

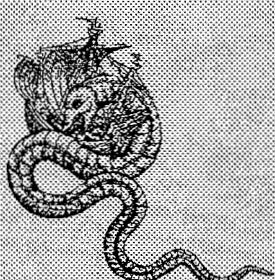
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