



# Exciting Storms: Weather Phenomena as Catalysts of Chivalric Adventures

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## Abstract

The tempest is a conventional figure in epic tradition. This essay examines the narrative position of weather phenomena in Middle High German courtly romances and their relation to the adventures of the active characters—most of them knights. In particular, storms, as severe meteorological perturbations, seem to excite heroic exploits as they mark the difference between the space of origin and a space of danger. To return to safety, the heroes undergo adventures, but also expose themselves to perilous situations in which they lose their agency. This (in some ways paradoxical) constellation between passivity and activity is processed through various narrative possibilities in which agency alternates between the prescient characters and meteorological ‘entities’. The essay is concerned mainly with the *Eneas Romance* (Heinrich von Veldeke), the anonymous *Herzog Ernst* (B), and the Arthurian Romances *Parzival* (Wolfram von Eschenbach), *Iwein* (Hartmann von Aue) and *DiuCrône* (Heinrich von dem Türlin).

## Introduction

Raging tempests, sudden downpours, magical hurricanes, hailstones like grenades: medieval literature contains an abundant reservoir of meteorological phenomena. While the fascination with meteorological representations and metaphors in the modern era (at the latest from 1800 onwards) is related to the increasing progress in scientific knowledge (Grill, 2019), the weather in medieval texts must have other functions. In an age when weather forecasting was generally part of astrology and divination (Mandosio, 2013, p. 172; Kocánová, 2021, pp. 651–664), the thematization of severe weather inevitably summons up the notion of inescapable fate, chaotic

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chance, or an angry god. In all cases, the human being must remain more or less powerless and passive.

My paper is concerned with the significance of conspicuous weather phenomena for plot development, motivation, and structuring in adventure narratives. While I will point out transfers to other areas of interest at the end, the object of inquiry here is whether and to what extent an apparently anthropologically fundamental passivity toward the weather is undermined or transformed by the poetic rules of adventure. Storms and other severe weather phenomena certainly trigger reactions; but in patterns of adventure, they can also have intentional, active nuances.

A coincidence of passive perseverance and character activity is highlighted in research on ‘adventure’ – or Middle High German ‘âventiure’: already etymologically the word refers to a passive hero who is confronted with something or has something come at him (from Latin \**ad-venire*; cf. Lebsanft, 2011). Moreover, from the very beginning, the active search for an extraordinary event prevails in courtly romances, be it due to a concrete mission (*queste*) or by setting out into an open ‘space of uncertainty’.<sup>1</sup> Agamben (2015/2018, p. 71 f.) even integrates the active-passive component of adventure into his reflections on general anthropogenesis: “Desiring the event simply means feeling it as one’s own, venturing into it, that is, fully meeting its challenge, but without the need for something like a decision.” Exposing oneself to the weather could be a form of such a venture. Finally, Haug (1989, pp. 403 f.) establishes a direct connection between *âventiure* and storms by tracing the Arthurian knight’s adventure journey (“Aventüre-Fahrt”) back to the sea voyage (*navigatio*) and the vagaries of the high seas caused by the weather. Both situations are dangerous and in both the hero has only limited power to act, but both were purposefully initiated by the hero, be it to reach a goal beyond the sea, be it to accumulate prestige through trials. As dangerous and exceptional (ecological) *events* weather phenomena such as tempests offer the possibility of such a trial. They *afford* the behavior of an adventuring hero.<sup>2</sup> Or in the terms of Waldenfels’ (1994, p. 481) philosophy of response: these things and conditions have a certain ‘appellative character’.

During the storm the hero is subject to the uncontrollable and contingent forces of nature. According to Makropoulos (1998, p. 23), who distinguishes contingency as a possibility that can be attributed to concrete (individual or collective) actors and one that is absolutely causeless, weather events seem to belong to the second category – especially assuming a medieval sense of impotence to meteorological conditions. How this paradoxical entanglement of the adventurer’s desire for exceptional activ-

<sup>1</sup>This is the designation of one category in the catalog of adventure characteristics in Teuber, 2021, p. 22. See further Auerbach, 1946/2013, p. 134f., Koppenfels/Mühlbacher, 2019, p. 5f., and Schwarzbach-Dobson, 2022, p. 87 and *passim*. About this context in Russian formalism, cf. Nicolosi, 2020, p. 230f. See also already Simmel, 1911/1983, p. 17f. and Jankélévitch, 1963/2017, p. 21. The French philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch fleshes out Simmel’s basic assumptions with the hypothesis that the adventure, at least initially, must contain an intentional or voluntary action (“son déclenchement est libre et volontaire”), even if it later takes a different direction into ‘the ominous mists and worrying ambiguity of the future’ (“dans les brumes menaçantes, dans l’inquiétante ambiguïté de l’avenir”)

<sup>2</sup>Affordance is a term coined by Gibson (1979/1986) referring to “events in the atmosphere” (p. 18f.) only in passing. On the controversial terms of ecological ‘event’ and ‘affordance’ with further references cf. Stoffregen, 2000, and with an other perspective cf. Stewart/Blau, 2019

ity and a (predictable) passivity during the storm is narrated in Middle High German texts is the subject of this essay.

In the following readings, I will show that some literary texts consider, at least marginally, the possibility of active behavior despite being exposed to the weather, and that this has a peculiar affinity with medieval adventure narratives.<sup>3</sup> A second related issue is: How is human agency intertwined with an (im)possible agency of weather itself?<sup>4</sup> This article is a first approach to these presuppositional and comprehensive questions; it can only provide selective readings and does not claim to interpret the entire texts or to be valid for medieval literature in general. To scratch the surface of the various possibilities of representation, I take some glances at texts of a comparatively large corpus: first, I will specify the considerations in the introduction on the basis of the incisive event of the tempest; then, I will offer a few reflections on a (decidedly feminine?) approach to weather, using Dido as an example; and the final section addresses the particular situation in two Arthurian romances in which weather events seem to be human-made or at least influenced.

### **Activity and Passivity: Heroes in Tempests (*Eneas*, *Herzog Ernst*, *Parzival*)**

Tempests have been a topical motif of heroic poetry since Homer's *Odyssey* and are also recurrent in medieval literature (Fern, 2012). They are often situated at the beginning of a section or at pivotal points in the narration and motivate further events in general or adventures in particular.<sup>5</sup> Storms accentuate and perhaps even create the high seas as a (diachronically almost prototypical) space of contingency (cf. Snyder, 2010, p. 174; Wolf, 2013, pp. 90 f.; Makropoulos, 1997, pp. 7–13) by intensifying the loss of control due to confinement on the ship. Assuming that weather can constitute perception and support distinct semantics (Schulz-Grobert, 2003, p. 251; Störmer-Caysa, 2007, p.111), the tempest represents a specific form of hazard. Likewise, it forms a boundary with an 'adventure space' separate from the 'biographical space' at home (Bakhtin, 1937 f./1981, p. 100). Using three texts from around 1200 (1180–1210) as examples, I will examine the criteria of activity and passivity during the tempests. Particular attention should be paid to initial sequences, as they promise special interpretative significance: on the one hand, the departure, its motivation and evaluation are relevant to assess the action as an adventure; on the other hand, the

<sup>3</sup> Basically, I follow the assumptions of the German Research Unit 'Philology of Adventure' (Munich 2018–2024) that adventure is not reducible to the mention of the word and is not restricted to specific genres, but rather represents a narrative pattern or formal principle that is applied differently in historically different situations.

<sup>4</sup> For a summary and critique of Bruno Latour's positions on this topic, see Kipnis, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> This is especially important from the perspective of a historical narratology, because the Middle High German term *âventiure* is closely related to the phenomenological *Ereignis* (not entirely to be translated as 'event' or 'happening') and allows a poetological reading (Bleumer, 2020, pp. 110–120). Adventure/*âventiure* can be seen as a kind of pre-terminological narratological term, and the sea voyage (*navigare*) as a metaphor for the process of writing literature (Bleumer, 2020, p. 117; Curtius, 1948/1990, pp. 128–130).

handling, the reactions, and the preparations in the face of the approaching weather are important for the relation between activity and passivity.

The so-called *Eneasroman* (*Eneas Romance*), written around 1180 by Heinrich von Veldeke, obviously borrows from ancient sources, but sets its own accents. The mythological background of the ancient epic is retained, but the gods are reduced to ‘allegorically disempowered’ figures or ‘secondary agents’ behind a universal Christian God – more so than in the older French *Roman d’Eneas* (Jauß, 1977, pp. 286 f.; Dittrich, 1961; Kottmann, 2001; Gerok-Reiter, 2009, pp. 135 f.; Schlechtweg-Jahn, 2019, pp. 208–211). In the emblematic tempest following the departure from Troy, no Juno visits the caves of Aeolus, and no Neptune calms the waves like in Vergil’s *Aeneid* (Verg. Aen. 50–156). Gerok-Reiter (2010, pp. 142 f.) points out that the description successively shifts agency from the divine actors (*Eneas*, ll. 169–195) to the forces of nature (e.g., the “stormwint”; *ibid.*, l. 208) or an unspecified passive ‘it’; she argues that such procedures open up contingency spaces for (emotional) human decisions or pure chance. It is the violence of the tempest (and only secondarily of a goddess) that leads to the dispersion of the fleet, the sinking of a ship and the hero’s disorientation: “alsô müstens rîten, | wan sie sich vor den unden | berihten niene kunden.” (*ibid.*, ll. 210–212). It seems no coincidence that the verb “rîten” (besides the general meaning ‘to move on’) connotes the knight’s movement and parallels the ride into adventure with the tempest as a plot generator. Eventually, the tempest leads the protagonist to Queen Dido in Libya and to the first climax of the text.

However, a comparison with the adventure knight and the absence of gods intervening in the plot does not lead to an active hero. Like the ancient travelers Aeneas or Ulysses, the medieval Eneas remains passive. According to a definition of Jankélévitch, Eneas’ perilous journey through the storm would not be an adventure or even part of an adventure (cf. Jankélévitch, 1963/2017, p. 32 and Nerlich, 1977, Vol. 1, pp. 21–23), because he is a refugee from Troy and his path is predetermined by the providence of the gods (*Eneas*, ll. 1958–1964). Thus, he *must* enter the hazardous adventure space and surrender to the forces of the storm, while the ‘typical’ adventurer *voluntarily* sets forth to hazardous situation in the wild woods or wherever.<sup>6</sup>

Other romances not based on an ancient template seem to conform more to adventure patterns, since more weight is given to the heroes’ own decisions. The first two books of *Parzival* (written by Wolfram von Eschenbach about 1200) contain a prehistory about Parzival’s father Gahmuret (for a general survey, cf. Noltze, 1995; for a postcolonial approach, cf. Groos, 2004). It can be read in at least two ways: (1) As the second-born son, Gahmuret decides to leave his native country to gain fame and glory in foreign lands. A “pure love of adventure” (Sacker, 1963, p. 9) drives him.<sup>7</sup> (2) His departure, however, is not as voluntary as it seems, but raises problems

<sup>6</sup> By preserving vestiges of activity within passivity, ancient heroes nevertheless possess a certain adventurous potential, as recent research has been able to demonstrate on the basis of the ‘Apologoi’ in the *Odyssey* (Gödde, 2019, pp. 41–44).

<sup>7</sup> The independence of Gahmuret’s departure is also underscored (albeit less emphatically) by Green (1970, p. 77) and Schu (2002, p. 84). Gahmuret is less on a mission of divine providence to spread the values of the Grail community (cf. Green, 1970, p. 84; Fern, 2012, pp. 182–184), but rather at the mercy of the narrative. The framing and consequences of the storms, however, demonstrate the ambivalences of the interpretation of human action. Cf. Haug, 1990, pp. 199–217; and Fern, 2012, pp. 184–187.

typical to noble medieval recipients, namely the treatment of descendant children without inheritance rights. Although Gahmuret receives numerous concessions from his brother Galoes, the firstborn, he would still remain subordinate and economically dependent, so that – moderated by Wolfram – the hero's departure is also motivated by these constraints (Brall, 1984, pp. 149–151).

In any case, Gahmuret fights for the Caliph of Baghdad, the *baruc* of *baldac*. Since his deeds in Arabia are not enough for him, he sets off again. After a tempest, he finds himself in *Zazamanc*, a fictional Oriental-African country. Although the description of the storm is only two lines – “daz mer warf in mit sturme dar, | dô daz er kûme iedoch genas” (*Parzival*, 16,20 f.) – it contains two important components: danger to life (‘he barely survived’) and the marking of a borderline. In addition to the narrative boundary as a change of scenery and setting that does not require geographical plausibility, the tempest marks a border between *Baldac* and *Zazamanc* that complements the far less pronounced “spatial differentiation [...] between West and East” (Groos, 2004, p. 63). By mentioning another tempest during the year-long (!) journey back to European Spain,<sup>8</sup> the meteorological framing gives *Zazamanc* a certain spatiality in which, according to Green (1970, p. 84), geographical rules apply less than rules of adventure.

Since neither the pay of a mercenary nor other traces of military reality are indicated, at least the journey to *Zazamanc* must be based on the (narrative, social, and individual) urge for adventure (cf. reading 2) and the impossibility of settling down, as symbolically expressed in his coat of arms with the anchor aweigh. Gahmuret's disposition as an adventuring knight drives him forward, specifically his chivalry (“rîterscheftē”, *Parzival*, l. 54,19) and his heroic strength: “sîn ellen strebte sunder wanc | van dan fuor er gein *Zazamanc*” (ibid., ll. 16,1 f.).

The last example is the *Herzog Ernst* epic (version B), which was presumably written at the beginning of the 13th century and is located in a semi-historical Holy Roman Empire (about the background, cf. Behr, 1979). Briefly, the Bavarian Duke Ernst gets into a quarrel with Emperor Otto through an intrigue and decides to leave the Empire after being almost completely defeated and impoverished. So he embarks on a crusade with his 50 best vassals, a number that is significantly increased by volunteers along his journey. A devastating tempest, however, causes him to end up not with an army in Jerusalem, but with his group of companions in a beautiful but strange and unknown country called *Grippia*.<sup>9</sup> Like the brilliant morning light after the storm, *Grippia* at first appears as a wonderful, even paradisiac place (Fern, 2012, pp. 116 f.), but soon also becomes a scene of bloody conflicts against the natives, fabulous and violent people with crane beaks.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> „nu wasez ouch über des jâres zil, | daz Gahmuret geprîset vil | was worden dâ ze *Zazamanc*: | [...] denoch swebter ûf dem sê: | die snellen winde im tâten wê.“ (*Parzival*, ll. 57, 29–58, 4). Kugler (1990, pp. 141–145) considers a vague location of *Zazamanc* in India and a return trip around the Cape of Good Hope.

<sup>9</sup> This reduction of the number of participants to the hero and his party of warriors also reveals a narrative function of the tempest: It allows for adventurous constellations, since wars between nations or tribes hardly have the structure of an adventure.

<sup>10</sup> On the interrelation of violence and a transcultural hybridity negotiated in the text, cf. Plotke, 2011, Stock, 2017, and Quenstedt, 2021, pp. 356–364.

As in *Parzival*, no geographical plausibility is needed (Green, 1977, p. 152); rather, the storm is a ‘signal of segmentation’ (Stock, 2002, p. 167) that indicates a ‘border crossing or world-changing passage’ (ibid., p. 191) into a world of unfamiliar marvels. Like *Zazamanc*, *Grippia* is known in research for not appearing in literary or natural history sources.<sup>11</sup> There are also meteorological parallels, as both the arrival and departure are marked by (severe) storms, although the second storm (*Ernst*, ll. 3886 f.) is much shorter—both temporally (three months vs. eleven days) and narratively (eighty lines vs. two lines)—still, this leads to a no less life-threatening situation at Magnet Mountain. The meteorological framing suggests that it is not so much to divide the epic into two heterogeneous parts, but rather to segment or denote *Grippia* as a space of in-between (cf. Quenstedt, 2021, 285–288).

To what extent, however, does Ernst’s exposure to the storm reveal an intentional activity? Obviously, Ernst has been forced to make the dangerous journey by external circumstances, since he is on the verge of defeat. In a long speech to his loyal followers, he admits that he has lost and explains that by leaving he wants to forestall his banishment and preserve his honor (*Ernst*, ll. 1816 f.). Furthermore, he considers the remission of sins at the Holy Sepulcher (ibid., ll. 1818–1823) and an economic reparation by the Emperor (ibid., ll. 1824 f.). Through the immediate succession, however, the individual (rather pragmatic than spiritual) reasons lose their relevance. It merely remains evident that Ernst’s departure is his own plan and decision: “daz wir füren über mer, | dar stêt vaste mir der muot” (ibid., ll. 1810 f.).<sup>12</sup> Unlike the fleeing Eneas, moreover, the storm does not catch Ernst completely unprepared. He has foreseen such a situation and has been aware that his decision to go to Outremer would be fraught with danger, even on his outward journey. Therefore, he has “wîslîche” gathered the best of his warriors on his ship (*Ernst*, ll. 2154–2161) – it is remarkable that all these actions and considerations are called wise and deliberate, both in the narrator’s commentary and in character speech (ibid., ll. 1742, 1807, 2155). Thus, even if he did not voluntarily sail into the tempest, he took the risk consciously and thoughtfully.

I cannot go into detail about the numerous stations of Ernst’s journey to the ‘Arimaspi’ people at the edge of the world. It is only important that the storm does not represent a universal border to an otherworld, but that it can be reached in a quite ordinary way. While African merchants are also driven by a tempest to the distant land (ibid., ll. 5347–5349), Ernst’s own return journey is without troubles and with “beste wint” (ibid., l. 5438). As he approaches his homeland via various, rather briefly recounted steps through the ‘Near Orient of the Crusades’ (cf. Quenstedt, 2018, p. 297), a hard border is blurred, as Ernst performs a transfer between East and West by bringing as a gift to the reconciled emperor a precious gemstone (the ‘Waise’),

<sup>11</sup> In recent research, Quenstedt (2021, pp. 355–428, esp. p. 363) has pointed out that *Grippia* parallels Arabic depictions of djinn palaces, which constitute the Middle High German text through transcultural processes of transfer and translation.

<sup>12</sup> In addition to political motivation, the journey also connotes penitential redemption. As an explicit penance for his (mis)deeds in the Empire see Kühnel (1979, p. 260). Knaeble (2019) argues for an outsourcing of the paradox of rights into transcendence. In contrast, Blamires (1979, p. 19) suggests that this guilt is “a more general one shared by all Christians”; Stock (2002, pp. 189–228) interprets the Orient as a space that reflects the first part of the plot, which takes place in the Empire.

specimens of the marvelous creatures and, above all, the account of his experiences (cf. Quenstedt, 2021, pp. 340–346).

In summary, the storm structurally marks a boundary between two spaces that for the moment can only be crossed in one direction. Moreover, it enables a narratively simply arranged displacement of the protagonist into a peculiar space with adventurous qualities. The tempest generates total contingency regarding the destination – and life.<sup>13</sup> The hero and the other characters cannot expect to survive the extreme situation.<sup>14</sup> They are at the mercy of the forces of nature and must remain passive. Even the onset and the confrontation with the tempest are not intentional: social or economic pressure are explicated as reasons for setting out, and the tempest itself is obviously not the designated target. Hence, the seafaring heroes in all three examples differ from actively seeking ‘typical’ adventure knights as they appear in the Arthurian romances.

So how does a connotation of an active hero come about? The heroes at least accept, if not enforce, the danger of the tempest, which is either a necessary evil or already part of the adventure journey. This is the case, anyway, for characters like Gahmuret and Ernst who want to make an adventure narrative out of their own lives to gain honor. Although *during* the storm everyone is a suffering Ulysses, the storm is still a catalyst for action. Or rather, according to Waldenfels (2002, pp. 54–60; cf. Waltenberger, 2016, pp. 44–50): it is evaluated as such in retrospect, because only the *response to the occurrence* (‘Widerfahrnis’) can become narratively significant, as successive contingencies and a final, diegetic arrangement oscillate through the intervening diastasis (‘Diastase’). Being affected retroactively generates a history in an ‘active passivity’ (Waldenfels, 2002, p 58 f.).

While the response already has narrative potential, the intradiegetic *account* of one’s deeds is central to adventure narratives (Strohschneider, 2011; Schnyder, 2011); *dicta* and *gesta* belong together (Schwarzbach-Dobson/Wenzel, 2022, p. 7). Even though overcoming the storm is not explicitly part of the intradiegetic accounts in the medieval texts studied here,<sup>15</sup> it is at most the implicit introduction of the stories within the stories. The severe tempest is thus ambivalent in the case of the adventure hero. He responds to it not only with natural fear of death, but also with desire, since he perceives it (anticipating the account of the deeds) as a personal opportunity to prove himself *as* a hero.

The weather therefore ‘plays’ an important role in the plot; but is it more than an “it” (as in “it rains” or “it snows”), if a mythological originator is absent? Although

<sup>13</sup> The notion of total contingency can be restricted, since the action takes place in an environment that is ‘prepared’ by the author (cf. Haug, 1998, p. 164). Nonetheless, the emphasis on and the exposure to the severe weather suggests that contingency is the issue. For a detailed statement concerning the interferences of contingency and providence in medieval and early modern adventure tales cf. Mühlbacher, 2021, pp. 54 f.

<sup>14</sup> This peril (to life) is also a criterion in Teuber 2021, p. 22; furthermore in Jankélévitch’s (1963/2017, p. 17) definition of adventure: It oscillates between play (the comic) and seriousness (the tragic), but requires an – albeit minimal – peril to life (ibid., p. 22).

<sup>15</sup> Dido only wonders about how Troy fell (*Eneas*, ll. 1231–1233), Gahmuret is concerned with fighting for the *baruc* (*Parzival*, ll. 21, 11–22, 2), and Ernst is supposed to tell the emperor primarily about the wonders of the East (*Ernst*, ll. 5994–6002).



it is difficult to apply ecocritical and ecopsychological statements to literature (cf. Clark, 2011, pp. 153 f.), especially to adventures with their predominantly anthropocentric (and in many cases even androcentric) narrative structures, I will attempt some reflections. To minimize human/non-human dualism, Holzhey (2020, p. 13 f.) offers the term “weathering” as heuristic. He describes the polysemic ambivalences of the word between its association with deterioration and its (etymologically first) meaning of a beneficial action. Thus, “<sup>2a</sup>weathering involves self-preservation, sustained identity, and survival, and <sup>2b</sup>weathering denotes destruction, disintegration, and death. Reducing even further, an equation of life and death could be said to lie at the core of weathering’s enantiosemey” (Holzhey, 2020, p. 22). The valuation of the tempest is paradoxically doubled: it causes the loss of belongings and of friends, but also ‘affords’ the protagonist “new opportunities” (Classen, 2010, p. 19) to demonstrate his heroism. Just as ‘weathering’ “involve[s] homogenization”, reduces “entropic processes” and thus “can accentuate a thing’s identity” – e.g., by drying fruit or clothing (Holzhey, 2020, p. 29) – the storm reveals the (narrative) function of the adventure and the adventurer.

The destructive meaning of ‘weathering’ (2<sup>b</sup>) is intricate, however, considering the inherent logic of most adventure narratives, according to which the dangerous and contingent events must be reported by the hero himself or by those involved in the deeds. Hence, the survival of the characters is crucial.<sup>16</sup> Since destructive weather is ubiquitous, even the adventuring hero must, despite maximizing the risks, know or at least anticipate the consequences of the weather and take precautions to stay alive and be able to relate his adventures at the end. In the examples given, the storm – if not itself worth telling about – is at least the precondition for the adventures that can be told.

## Dido Knowing the Weather Forecast – a Female Perspective on Weather

These precautions become evident in Dido’s actions when she tries to get closer to Eneas. Although this scene is not recognizable as a typical (love) adventure, it is still insightful as it shows an ‘acting’ heroine in contrast to a suffering hero. Of course, Dido falls in love with Eneas under the influence of Venus, who, assisted by little Ascanius, lights the fire of love; but the ancient goddess resembles *in nuce* a personification of the medieval *minne* rather than an acting character, for the scheming arrangement of Juno and Venus is also deleted (Dittrich, 1961, p. 279; Schlechtweg-Jahn, 2019, pp. 207 f.; Kiening, 1994, pp. 347–387). In accordance with the concepts and patterns of medieval literature, she falls sick with love. Her sister Anne mentions physical union with her beloved as the only therapy (*Eneas*, ll. 53, 23–57, 20).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> On the interaction of intradiegetic causality and teleological directionality in adventure narratives, see Störmer-Caysa, 2007, p. 166 and, focusing on contingency, Reichlin, 2010, pp. 37 f.

<sup>17</sup> In contrast to the *Roman d’Eneas*, falling in love in the German adaptation is not a furious rage, but a mental activity that culminates in spelling out the beloved’s name. Cf. Schmitz 2007, pp. 164–176; and Wandhoff 2021, pp. 37–40.



Therefore, she arranges a hunting trip – even for the ancients (Vergil, Ovid) a topos of love (Thiébaux, 1974, pp. 89–143). While the *Roman d'Eneas* motivates the scene differently and gives only pleasure and diversion as the reason for the hunt, Heinrich von Veldeke directs Dido's actions to the concrete goal, which she also compels by the choice of her splendid, extensively described clothing (*Eneas*, ll. 1687–1755; cf. Schmitz, 2007, pp. 176 f.). Another important detail that has received little attention in research<sup>18</sup> is the fact that Dido wants to organize the hunt although the season and weather conditions are not suitable:

den meisterjageren sie gebôt,  
 si wolde rîten in den walt:  
 al wâre daz weter kalt  
 si wolde, daz man jagete  
 (*Eneas*, ll. 1678–1683)

As expected, the chase is disrupted by a dreadful storm, “ein weter vile freissam” (*Eneas*, l. 1813), the party scatters, and Dido gets closer to her beloved (*ibid.*, ll. 1812–1833). The fact that she insists on hunting despite the adverse conditions underscores her resolve to get closer to Eneas; the hunt becomes a hunt for the beloved, a “Minnejagd” (Schmitz, 2007, p. 182). Of course, that does not mean that she is in some way guilty or the hero's temptress (Pastré, 1992, p. 162; Mecklenburg, 2001, p. 181; Martin, 2018, pp. 17 f.), but the amorous situation is no mere misfortune. Dido actively initiates it. To achieve her goals, she also knows how to make the weather serve her. She cannot influence the weather, but her weather forecast can at least increase the likelihood of the desired event.

Finally, alone with her beloved she finds shelter from the pouring rain under a large tree (*Eneas*, ll. 1827–1829). In this place, a typical *locus amoenus* of the Minnesang, they make contact (about the tactics of tactility, cf. Lechtermann, 2005, pp. 165 f.) and Eneas approaches Dido erotically. She resists, but in the end they have sexual intercourse. I cannot discuss here whether the scene is to be interpreted as a consensual action or as a rape (cf. Martin, 2018); but with regard to the plot, it is certain that the union of the two characters is crucial for the entire first part of the romance, until Eneas leaves for Italy in obedience to his fate. The nasty and even violent weather triggers the union of the two. The storm restricts the characters' room for movement, so they have to get closer to each other. Even if Heinrich von Veldeke downplays the narrowness of the interior of a cave as in Vergil's *Aeneid* and the *Roman d'Eneas* (Wandhoff, 2021, p. 42), and instead emphasizes the quality of the pleasurable place, it is still a confined space. It becomes an ‘activating’ or ‘catalytic space’ that has the quality of generating action (Krah, 2019, pp. 93 f.), a configuration common in the description of severe weather events, as (safe) space is usually reduced and thus ‘condensed’.

And what about activity and passivity? Dido actively uses her knowledge of the weather to her advantage, but ultimately she is also exposed to the effects of

<sup>18</sup> Schmitz (2007, pp. 177) and Wandhoff (2021, p. 41) just mention it in passing and Stebbins (1977, p. 174) sees the instruction to the hunters merely as a realistic detail and misses the narrative significance.

the weather. One can draw a very cautious parallel between Dido's handling of the weather and her handling of the sexual affair. She can – like the heroes in the tempest – predict the weather to a certain extent, but is ultimately at its mercy. While she first calls the hunt (implicitly as a hunt for Eneas), she is then compared to the hunted game (*Eneas*, ll. 1864–1867). Eneas's lust, however, proves to be as inescapable as the thunderstorm. This doubling illustrates the wetting of her dress, which is significantly attributed not to the rain but to sex with Eneas: “dô was in korzen zîten | ir gewant wornen naz.” (ibid., ll. 1860 f.; transl. ‘her robe was soaked in a short time’).

Analogous to the enantiosemy of the tempest for the adventuring hero, Dido feels sorrow and joy (“Dô was diu frouwe Dîdô | beidiu rouwich unde frô”, ibid., ll. 1875 f.), joy that her wound of love has been healed (“daz sie der wunden genas”, ibid., l. 1178), but sorrow for the loss of control and for having given herself to him too quickly (ibid., ll. 1881–1885). Admittedly, this description of pain is minimal in view of the fact that it may be a narrated rape!

### (Man-Made) Weather: The Magic Well in *Iwein*

While agency over the weather must usually be limited to weather forecasting and attempted precautions,<sup>19</sup> the world of suspended disbelief in Arthurian romances allows fictional characters to have an actual influence on the weather. My examples are passages from *Iwein* and *Diu Crône*.<sup>20</sup> The confrontation with the weather resembles the examples of the hero in the tempest, but shows significant differences, which are not least related to the divergent conception of ‘aventure’.

*Iwein* by Hartmann von Aue (c. 1200), an adaptation of the French *Yvain* by Chrétien de Troyes (c. 1180) is one of the first (German) Arthurian romances. It is crucial for linking weather and adventure, as it combines a weather evocation with theoretical reflections on chivalric adventure, culminating in the prominent question “aventure, waz ist daz?” (*Iwein*, l. 527) – Adventure, what is it? In the plot there are several weather ‘incantations’ in the same place, which thus becomes a point of convergence (Schröder, 1972, pp. 304–306). Since they are always initiated by different persons and under different circumstances, a comparative reading is worthwhile, even if I have to focus on the first two cases.

The venue is a well in Brocéliande (“Breziljân”; *Iwein*, l. 263), the prototypical enchanted forest of Arthurian legend. It follows its own mythical law (“sîn reht” in *Iwein*, l. 556), according to which a devastating storm is created by pouring the well’s water on a stone. The storm-related destruction also means a breach of the public peace in the neighboring ‘well kingdom’, against which the landlord must take action. It is important to note that the first and most detailed description of this back-

<sup>19</sup> An exception is the prejudice against witches and wizards, whose most common charges – especially in German winegrowing areas – were weather and hail incantations. Cf. Dillinger 2020, p. 97; and Behringer 1999. More examples about the superstitions for magical weather-making cf. Stegemann, 1927–1942/1987, coll. 1305–1311. For an interpretation of the wetting of the stone as an alchemical ritual see Gebelein, 1994, pp. 319 f.

<sup>20</sup> Given the canonicity of the two texts, I cannot refer exhaustively to research.

ground is an intradiegetic account by the Arthurian knight Kalogreant. This gives the situation a special shape.

By command of the queen, Kalogreant recounts his adventure, or more precisely, his misadventure (*Iwein*, ll. 243–802), which occurred ten years ago. He introduces his narrative with the explicit remark that he had ridden out to seek adventures: “daz ich nâch âventiure reit” (ibid., l. 261). He thus follows an intended aimlessness. He specifies this when he encounters an ugly giant peasant (“walttôren”, ibid., l. 440), who herds wild animals at a *locus terribilis*. When asked what he is doing in this inhospitable region, the knight replies that he is looking for adventure. The peasant asks what the word means, and the answer is an – abbreviated and possibly ironically broken – definition of the chivalric adventure, which is unique in medieval literature (ibid., ll. 528–542): He would be in search of any powerful opponent against whom he could fight. The peasant reasonably cannot understand this search for mortal danger and “ungemache” (ibid., l. 545), an uncomfortable life, yet he shows the knight what seems to him like an adventure: a dangerous marvelous well.<sup>21</sup>

There, the knight finds a *locus amoenus* with a linden tree full of singing birds, a chapel and next to it a well, a gemstone and a golden pail; the natural space is thus equally marked by artificiality and has similarities with art or magic gardens. The well itself is even remarkable for its absence of weather, as the linden tree provides perfect protection from rain, snowfall and sunshine (*Iwein*, ll. 574–579). Even though Kalogreant admires the marvels of the place, he cannot leave it without further intervention because of the logic of chivalrous adventure. If he did not act, he would be considered a coward: “sît ich nâch âventiure reit, | ez wære ein unmanheit | obe ich dô daz verbære” (ibid., ll. 631–633). So he *must* destroy the utopia to set the plot in motion (Schanze, 2016, pp. 127 f.). In this way, he carries his own (narrative) rules into the mythical, self-legislated space (e.g., Wolfzettel, 2011, p. 207; Hammer, 2007, pp. 215–237; Hoffmann, 2012, pp. 245–261). By exploiting the quasi-ritual, legal obligation for himself, he converts the marvelous well from a mythical object into a mere magical artifact that can be used at will if one knows the right performances. Kalogreant knows these, but not the consequences.

After pouring the water of the well over the stone, he transforms the serenity into a disastrous storm – a twist that becomes even more dramatic by the German adaptation by the emphasis on the idyll (Hammer, 2007, pp. 219 f.). Black clouds gather, lightning flashes, thunder rumbles, and heavy rain and hail pelt from the sky. The storm kills animals and plants, and damages the entire environment around the knight, who repeatedly emphasizes that he almost died (*Iwein*, ll. 654–656; 666–669). He remains passive, while the surrounding dynamic natural space takes over the activity (Glaser, 2003, p. 210). When the storm and the horror (“vreise”, *Iwein*, l. 673) suddenly subside, the idyll – and even the foliage on the tree – is miraculously restored as a paradise on earth, “daz ander paradîse” (ibid., l. 687).

In the retrospective account, Kalogreant deeply regrets his actions and assesses them as foolish (“unwîser muot”, ibid., l. 635; 673–678), but it is not clear whether his

<sup>21</sup> Even though Hartmann, unlike Chrétien, does not mention what would happen after the stone was poured, it is already apparent because of the given definition of the adventure. The scene has been interpreted very intensively in German research; for a recent English analysis, see Hasty 2016, pp. 124–127.

repentance relates to triggering the storm or to the impending fight against Askalon, the guardian and lord of the well-kingdom. In any case, his only regret is that he put himself into a situation he could not handle. Askalon, in contrast, must intervene against the destruction of his entire realm; but, unlike the unwitting Arthurian aggressor, he observes all the precepts of chivalric (feud) law. He is even willing to sacrifice his own life to avenge the atrocity (*ibid.*, ll. 721 f.), but leaves his opponent alive after winning the joust and, according to knightly custom, only takes his horse. Thus, both opponents share the same basic courtly rules, but the connotation of the storm and its consequences are different due to the conditions of adventure (Quast, 2012, p. 71): The Arthurian knight Kalogreant creates the storm for selfish motives, namely to expose himself to danger and to prove himself in heroic deeds, but the well-knight must declare this behavior as haughtiness, “hōchvart” (*Iwein*, l. 715), since it is his duty to avert a social and existential threat from the inhabitants of his kingdom. The starting point of this conflict is a storm which, albeit to some extent accidental and within the restrictions of the mythical rules, is generated by a man.

This deed is repeated by *Iwein*, the protagonist of the book and Kalogreant’s cousin, partly to make up for the disgrace of his kinsman and partly to gain fame himself. He withdraws from society and turns his journey to the well into a mental trip, a “fiktive[ ] Kopfreise” (Schnyder, 2003, p. 310 on *Iwein*, ll. 929–937). Then he secretly leaves King Arthur’s court, meets the giant peasant, pours water over the stone, fights the well-knight, and, unlike his cousin, defeats and kills his opponent.<sup>22</sup>

Like other heroes in storms, *Iwein* fears for his life; above all, he concedes that he may have been too hasty: “daz in des dûhte daz im ze gach | mit dem giezen wære gewesen | wan ern triuwet niemer genesen” (*Iwein*, ll. 996–998). Apart from the outcome and the diagetic level, there is another major difference between Kalogreant and *Iwein*’s management of the adventure and the weather: both knights use the affordance of the well to voluntarily and actively expose themselves to a dangerous situation in order to commit heroic deeds, but Kalogreant lacks information and is therefore less well prepared. As the second, *Iwein* knows the procedure and the consequences quite well. The unknown danger becomes a calculable risk for him. In other words, he knows the weather forecast. As the well-informed and most skilled knight, *Iwein* is master of the dangerous situation, master of the weather, and master of the narrative – at least until he enters Laudine’s castle and depends on the support of Lunete, who pulls the strings of the events that follow.

The telling of the adventure at the well is the precondition for *Iwein*’s actions, so it motivates further adventures – or in meteorological terms: Kalogreant’s deeds, or more precisely his account of his deeds, are like the flapping of a butterfly’s wings in chaos theory (Lorenz, 1993; Holzhey, 2020, pp. 35–39), which ten years later triggers a cascade of adventurous acts. As a result, Askalon dies, the well-kingdom is ravaged three times – by *Iwein* at the beginning and end of the story and by Arthur and his knights in between (*Iwein*, ll. 2529–2546)<sup>23</sup> – and the entire realm left unguarded

<sup>22</sup> Discussing here the eminent problems that arise from killing Askalon would lead too far.

<sup>23</sup> Arthur’s knights also fear for their lives when Arthur pours water over the stone. Significantly, the king is not interested in proving himself in battle (he even has his knight Keie fight as a proxy), but in finding out whether the story of the well is true or a lie (*Iwein*, ll. 2529–2536). Cf. Struwe-Rohr 2019, pp. 24 f.

twice, the first time when Askalon dies and the second time when Iwein misses Laudine's deadline.

By repeatedly (accidentally or intentionally) activating the power of the well, the Arthurian knights 'weather' the well-kingdom, so to speak, or more precisely, the well 'weathers' it based on its own rules, which no one can escape. The Arthurian knights use this for their purposes. They provoke the dangerous meteorological situation and the following battle for their chivalric self-affirmation, which is based on the use of violence; at the same time they enforce their value system through Iwein's marriage and the taking of the land ("Landnahme").<sup>24</sup>

Unlike Arthurian Britain, the well-kingdom interacts closely with environmental factors, as shown by the well scene, in which artificiality, mythical laws and nature are closely interwoven. In any case, the storm poses an existential threat to the realm and the king, be it Askalon or Iwein. After his coronation, the latter stands between two spheres of value: When Arthur's court appears at the well, he fears the loss of his dominion and rides quickly to the place of battle (*Iwein*, ll. 2542–2546), though the reason is less to avert harm to his kingdom, than to make a brilliant entrance by defeating Keie, who earlier mocked him, and communicating his exploits to King Arthur, thus increasing his prestige (*êre*) by the proof of his successes. He even accepts the renewed destruction of his domain, which he could foresee due to the Arthur's announced arrival. The mythical and magical qualities of the place are set aside in favor of knightly probation and adventure.<sup>25</sup>

The complex interference of mythical laws and chivalric probation becomes particularly clear in the two scenes at the well, in which Iwein, as a dissociated sovereign, would have to fight against himself. In the first, the mythical watering of the stone is missing, but the duel that Iwein tries to wage against himself is basically correct; in the second, the weather-magical act is in place, but lacks any mythical meaning (Kragl, 2011, pp. 23 & 30). Iwein uses the destructive power of the well just to ruthlessly enforce his goal that Laudine must forgive him, "daz ich noch ir minne | mit gewalt gewinne" (*Iwein*, ll. 7803 f.) – similar to the adventuring Arthurian knight: they accept hardships and risks to achieve the lady's *minne* without heeding their (social) surroundings. This is shown in a monologue in which Iwein does not consider the consequences for others, but only accepts his own distress – a short misery instead of eternal longing: "Unde lide in gener kurze tage | danne ich iemer kumber trage" (ibid., ll. 7801 f.).

A weather-focused reading of the text must also problematize the fact that Iwein enforces the happy ending at the conclusion of the so-called 'probation adventures' (cf. Störmer-Caysa, 2007, p. 93). It confirms interpretations that critically scrutinize the finale with Lunete's rhetorical trick and Laudine's submissive genuflection;<sup>26</sup> for the well-lady herself emphasizes that she would rather face heavier storms than rec-

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Perplies, 2021, pp. 185–189.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Kragl, 2011, p. 23 and Schnyder, 2003, p. 310. She links the catching up through words to the loss of magic. Further she assumes a degeneration of the storms. In my opinion, however, this reduction of verbosity has mainly narrative reasons, since the knights without exception fear for their lives in the storms.

<sup>26</sup> E.g., Hausmann, 2001, pp. 88–91; in contrast Lieb, 2020, p. 123, for a purely structural interpretation. Lieb sees the repetition of the storm at the well as a part of the 'reprise that once again recalls the essential aspects of the romance.'

oncile with her husband: No weather could afflict her enough to trust a man like Iwein: “mirne getet daz weter nie sô wê | dazn woldich iemer liden ê” (*Iwein*, ll. 8083 f.). Remarkably, again the storm serves to illustrate her suffering.

### (Woman-Made) Weather: The Cataclysmic Weather in *Diu Crône*

The last text provides an example of a reversed chivalric trial in and through the weather: *Diu Crône*,<sup>27</sup> written by Heinrich von dem Türlin in the first half of the 13th century. It is one of the most extensive German Arthurian verse romances and is famous for its three bizarre, fascinating, and rather enigmatic so-called *Wunderketten* (‘chains of marvels’; first mentioned by Wyss, 1981). My analysis focuses on the second chain, which exaggerates the depiction of weather phenomena into the catastrophic and exposes the hero Gawein to almost militarily violent weather. It is framed by a visit to *Frou Saelde* – Lady Fortune, the goddess of luck – who entrusts Gawein with a ring to pass on to King Arthur, a jewel with the magical power that the court could never perish (*Crône*, ll. 15,915 f.). Her vassal Aanzim then shows the protagonist the way to the forest with the significant name “wald Âventurôs”, adventurous forest.<sup>28</sup> There, he must remain completely passive, especially towards everything that happens behind him; moreover, he has to restrain his chivalry towards men and women (ibid., ll. 15,980–15,994), a tough test for the prototypically perfect and equally active knight.

When he reaches the forest, he is surprised by a raging storm that comes up behind him. At first, it resembles the storm in *Iwein* (Keller, 1997, pp. 192, 219 f.), but it assumes apocalyptic and cataclysmic proportions (ibid., p. 192; Shockey, 2002, pp. 247 f.) with – in climactic enhancement – boiling rain, burning stones and snowflakes like leaden bullets that crush the hero’s armor (*Crône*, ll. 16,006–16,052). The suddenness of the change in the weather (Tobin, 1980, p. 281) and the tremendous noise (Schöller, 2012) are signs that he is entering an otherworldly, liminal, and magical space. But while pain and injury do not harm the hero, Gawein is harassed by a knight and a damsel who try to persuade him to fight, especially since both call him “zage” (*Crône*, l. 16,146), a coward, in cacophonous accord. In ‘scandalous obedience’ (Wyss, 1981, p. 280), he must ignore internalized chivalric precepts and also his moral sense, compassion, and helpfulness, since he is not allowed to rescue the (three) damsels in distress.

The surrounding severe weather mirrors the knight’s passivity in these encounters.<sup>29</sup> It also structures the individual scenes through four erupting meteorological

<sup>27</sup> The text proclaims itself with a poetic double meaning to be a crown and the pinnacle of all the adventures (*Crône*, ll. 29,909–29,970); another Middle High German author, Rudolf von Ems, describes the romance in the poets’ catalogue of his *Alexander Romance* as “[a]llr Aventure Krone” (l. 3219). Cf. Schröder 1992, p. 131. An English introduction to the complicated text is offered by Kragl, 2017.

<sup>28</sup> That the space of this *Wunderkette* is the forest “Aventurôs” is a conjecture, because this name is mentioned only as the space of the first *Wunderkette* (*Crône*, l. 13,932).

<sup>29</sup> This internalization of the weather becomes clear when the roar of the hurricane (“windesbrüt”, *Crône*, l. 16,147) is associated with Gawein’s deafness and a solar eclipse with his blindness (*Crône*, ll. 16,147–16,163). On the ‘Wunderketten’ as an insight into the soul of the characters, cf. Kaminski, 2005, p. 114.

events. As a result of the orders of Lady Fortune (*Crône*, l. 16,284), the knight loses his ability to act as he is exposed to the storm. This enforced passivity also undermines his status and honor as a knight. He is caught between the demands of courage (“manheit”) and endurance (“stæte”; *ibid.*, l. 16,322), a double bind that he cannot break (Keller, 1997, 181–184 and 244–249).

As the urgency of the battle cries increases, so does the danger of the storm. Even though it is no longer described in detail, its impact on the unprotected hero has intensified to great distress and vexation, “[m]ichel nôt und ungemach” (*Crône*, l. 16,227). After the third temptation, he finally decides to fight, but like a “*Dea ex machina*” (Glaser, 2003, p. 225), a (fairy-like) maiden suddenly appears, who later turns out to be Lady Fortune’s messenger and Aanzim’s sister (*Crône*, ll. 16,481–16,496). She tries to prevent the fight by comparing the dire consequences of his actions for Arthurian society with the dire consequences of Parzival’s silence under the eyes of the Grail King (*ibid.*, ll. 16,356–16,364). While Parzival was to be active, Gawein is to be passive (Keller, 1997, p. 270 f. and Heller, 1942, p. 77). While Parzival’s activity during the Grail ceremony was triggered by the display of weapons – sword and bleeding spear – Gawein’s passivity is triggered by the display of severe weather. Her insistent pleading, however, cannot prevent the start of the jousting. To avoid worse, the maiden turns out to be a magical weather-maker. She strikes a tree with a long cudgel, and in a magical correspondence of microcosm and macrocosm, she creates a shower of hail and snow that simultaneously burns and freezes, much like the previous storms. Instantly, all the supplicants disappear like mere illusions, so that one could imagine them and all storms as projections of the maiden and/or Fortune (*Crône*, ll. 16,373–16,385; cf. Keller, 1997, p. 259).

The following (and last) scene repeats and duplicates the previous encounters, heightening them by accusing Gawein of various crimes rather than asking him for help. The desire to help others, to adventure, and to fight is complemented by an earnest defense of his own honesty. Gawein responds to the provocative speech by preparing to fight, but the maiden intervenes again. The ‘adventure’ of self-control, in which Gawein fails twice, ends when the two companions leave the (adventure) forest and return to open terrain, “ûf die heide” (*Crône*, l. 16,475). There, she emphasizes the (not entirely comprehensible) importance of her mission and enlightens Gawein about her origins, then they part ways. A direct connection to the events that follow – Gawein’s fights against his doppelgänger Aamanz – can hardly be established. The wording at the end of the episode suggests closure: “hie liez sie diu mære” (*ibid.*, l. 16,496; transl. ‘With that, she closed the story’; cf. Glaser, 2003, p. 227).

Hence, the weather in *Diu Crône* is not the catalyst of adventure but the adventure itself, which, according to the inverted rules of this romance (especially in the ‘Wunderketten’), is an adventure of a passive non-knight. There are no potentiated (so Keller 1997, pp. 188 f.), but rather inverted *âventiuren*. The deeds of the invincible knight Gawein do not consist in defeating other knights, but in avoiding conventional exploits. His heroic feats are incapacitation and fainting – analogous to being at the



mercy of the weather, which is obviously sent or rather made by (the messenger of Lady) Fortune.<sup>30</sup>

The reversal of the hero's (re)action does not abolish the adventure, but shifts it through the close interweaving of adventurous eventfulness and allegorical inauthenticity. Although the maiden – precisely because of her association with the court of *Frou Sælde* (Lady Fortune) – can be interpreted in a figurative sense she also acts as a quite 'normal' (human) character and is comparable to the messengers of the Lady of the Lake in *Lancelot propre*, who also help the hero in various situations (sometimes with magical aids), e.g., at the 'Dolorose Garde' (in German *Prosalancelot*, vol. 1, pp. 434–439). Without Fortune's help – allegorically and concretely through her servant – Gawein could neither have survived the storm ("hete daz Glück in niht behuot, | er möhte dâ wol sîn beliben", *Crône*, ll. 16,040 f.) nor averted the impending downfall of Arthur's court, since the protective ring of fortune would have been lost with him (*ibid.*, l. 16,495). With his 'stormy' nature, Gawein is the one who afflicts – or 'weathers' – Fortune and her plans (as a character), respectively fortune and its plans (as chance); obviously she/it has plans, otherwise the maiden's mission would be pointless. The knight's rush through the forest seems adventurous and risky, not for himself, but for Fortune and her messenger, who can only breathe a sigh of relief when Gawein is finally guided over the last obstacle and their mission is finished.

*Diu Crône* is an ambivalent example of the treatment of weather, because the agency remains with Lady Fortune and thus with an entity who embodies the central characteristics of weather (uncontrollability and randomness), which is especially applicable to medieval recipients without meteorological knowledge. The text, however, cites and reverses the conventional rules for responding to severe weather: The hero accepts an exposure to danger and pain, but this is followed not by adventurous probation and subsequent glory, but a reprimand from a servant; or more precisely, the affordance of probation remains, but the hero does not understand the reversal of the rules and is thus bound by the instructions of another character. The latter, in turn, faces its own challenges with the 'perfect knight'. The result is that Fortune itself (by proxy), and thus the weather itself, becomes the acting heroine of the passage, perhaps even a kind of 'adventuress', who is herself exposed to the "weathering" knight and must withstand his confrontation.

## Conclusion and Transfers

The simple notion that humans in medieval texts just passively endure weather is fragile. Of course, literary characters are also helplessly at the mercy of meteorological phenomena, but it is precisely in the idealizing narrative of adventure that active seeking and passive enduring are intertwined. On a structural level, storms offer the possibility of narrative and spatial division over which the characters have little con-

<sup>30</sup> The almost artisanal production of weather is also evident in the omnipresent comparisons with cultural or rather technological elements: the rain is imagined to be boiled by a fire, the burning hailstones are like a lump of iron and the snowflakes are (like) leaden bullets. Cf. Wyss, 1991, p. 281.

trol. By often ‘condensing’ space – on the ship, in the cave, in the shelter, etc. – they catalyze new actions.

Whether these structural features reveal cultural effects of weather on human society (cf. the multiproxy analyses in Camenisch et al., 2016) and to what extent they are discursively located in the handling of weather in the Middle Ages would require further research. Starting points could be the theological-philosophical discourse on contingency and providence (cf. Böhme et al., 2016; Herberichs & Reichlin, 2010), the discourse on (weather) magic in the High Middle Ages (on this rarely treated area of research using the example of *Vacca Platonis*, cf. Van der Lugt, 2009, p. 240), or mythical semantics (cf. Cassirer, 1929/2010, p. 75; Hoffmann, 2012). To all these aspects I could at best give suggestions.

Regarding the relationship between the storm and the pattern of adventure, however, some fundamental parallels could be identified: The adventurer seeks danger, but then encounters the limits of his human capabilities and must react to what comes his way. With astonishing consistency, an initial response is a pronounced fear of death, which is then replaced by self-fashioning *as* an adventurer that guides further heroic actions. These factors remain relevant even if the protagonists can clearly forecast the weather (Dido) or ‘make’ it themselves (Iwein), but then fail to foresee the consequences. In situations of violent weather events, even the meteorological can become active (in *Diu Crône*). Not only is it narratologically relevant by making boundary transgressions plausible and instigating further (adventurous) action, but it is even possible for the weather itself to become an actant or even an actor (cf. Latour, 2015/2017, p. 163), which is not reduced to mere allegorical prosopoeia. Thus, exciting storms in literature excite not only further adventures, but also reflection on the self-evident.

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