An English Translation of Rudolf von Ems's *Der guote Gêrhart*

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Introduction

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The focus of many of our university seminars in the Anglophone world dedicated to medieval German literature continues to rest on the canonical texts, such as the romances by Hartmann von Aue, Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan*, Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* and *Willehalm*, and sometimes also Der Stricker's *Daniel von dem Blühenden Tal*, and Konrad von Würzburg's *Partonopier und Meliur*. There are good reasons for that decision since we want to present some of the best Middle High German texts to our students and hence to motivate them to turn to the world of pre-modern German literature and read more than just excerpts, either in a modern translation or in the original. Literary quality, however, cannot be determined easily; often it rather depends on whether a text offers valuable messages and allows ever new critical approaches to enter the picture when we investigate a romance, an heroic epic, or courtly love poetry. Many times, of course, both format and content confirm and support each other, bringing to light the full meaning and relevance of a specific medieval text for modern readers.

Recently, however, several voluminous thirteenth-century verse narratives and also contemporary poetry have finally been translated into English, such as Ulrich von Zazikhoven's *Lanzelet*,[1] the anonymous *Wigamur*,[2] Konrad von Stoffeln's *Gauriel von Muntabel*,[3] a selection of songs by Neidhart and also Frauenlob's *Song of Songs*.[4] It remains to be seen how successful those works might be among our college audiences, especially since these romances have never been fully acknowledged even by recent German scholarship as powerful or truly meaningful literary works representative of their times. Both their aesthetic and ethical values, both their thematic and their structural features still have to be discussed and evaluated in detail. Having English translations available, especially

students and researchers who might not be competent Middle High German readers can thus enjoy the great opportunity to explore new avenues into the world of late medieval German literature. However, every translation is also a kind of interpretation, which thus can make available a truly important thirteenth-century romance apparently characterized by strong ethical, religious, and intercultural components.

In this book we encounter a remarkable thirteenth-century German romance author, Rudolf von Ems, about whom, unfortunately, historical documents report nothing, although he was a rather prolific writer. Rudolf presents himself with his first name in all of his texts, sometimes directly spelled out, sometimes hidden in an acrostic. In his *Willehalm von Orlens* he refers to himself in the following manner:

> Von dem wart dis mære
> Wie es geschehen wære,
> Ainem knappen erkant,
> Der ist Ruodolf genant,
> Ain dienest man ze Muntfort. (15625–29)

> About him a squire found out,
> how the events in his life took place,
> and this squire is called Rudolf,
> a *ministerialis* of Montfort.[5]

Here he also mentions one of his other works, his *Barlaam und Josaphat* (15637–41), and his patron, Konrad von Winterstetten (15682–83). The continuator of Rudolf's *Weltchronik* (World Chronicle) praises the poet and identifies him by name: "Rûdolf von Ense was er genant" (33496; he was called Rudolf von Ems—note the difference between Middle High German 'Ense' and modern German 'Ems').[6] He also informs us that Rudolf died in Italy during the Italian campaign of King Conrad IV (1228–1254) in Apulia, who tried in vain to restore Sicily as his imperial inheritance.[7]

Rudolf belongs to the group of those late medieval poets who certainly deserve more of our attention than in the past because of their large and significant works, while they have oddly remained in the shadow cast by the poets who flourished about a generation before them, that is, around 1200. Rudolf is known for his religious narrative *Barlaam und Josaphat* (ca. 1225–1230; 21 complete manuscripts, 28 fragments),[8] his *Alexander* romance (ca. 1240; 2 complete manuscripts, 1 fragment), his courtly romance *Willehalm von Orlens* (ca. 1245; 20 complete manuscripts, 27 fragments), and his massive world chronicle, the *Weltchronik* (ca. 1254;

34 complete manuscripts, 57 fragments). He also might have composed the religious poem *Eustachius* (today lost) and other works, which he later dismissed himself as deceptive and fictional, hence not worthy to be preserved for posterity.

Rudolf was a contemporary of Konrad Fleck, the poet of the famous *Flore und Blanscheflur* (ca. 1220), whom he mentions in his *Willehalm von Orlens* as having already passed away (2221).[9] Most interestingly, Rudolf also included a catalogue with the names of the most famous German poets and some of their works (*accessus ad litteram*), listing, for instance, Heinrich von Veldeke, Hartmann von Aue, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Gottfried von Straßburg, Bligger von Steinach, Ulrich von Zazikhoven, Wirnt von Grafenberg, Freidank, The Stricker, and Ulrich von Türheim (2143–2334).[10] Whether any one of them was still his contemporary, or whether they all had already passed away, which seems most likely for the earlier ones, cannot be determined from those brief references.

Rudolf is identified as "von Ems," after the castle Hohenems (Upper Ems) south of Bregenz and north of Liechtenstein in the vicinity of the eastern part of Lake Constance. He had contacts with the poets around Konrad von Winterstetten (d. ca. 1242/1243) and hence with the sons of Emperor Frederick II. In other words, he was a strong supporter of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. King Conrad IV of Germany (1228–1254), with whom he probably traveled on a military campaign to Italy, was the patron for his world chronicle and had commissioned him to compose it in the first place.[11]

Moreover, Rudolf composed the curious, highly unusual, but truly fascinating *Der guote Gêrhart* (ca. 1215–1220/1225, 2 manuscripts) in which we encounter, virtually for the first time in medieval literature at large, a merchant operating as the universally admired and glorified protagonist who never can do wrong, possesses apparently infinite amounts of treasures, and yet emerges as a most selfless and religiously devout person.[12] God loves him more than the Emperor Otto I the Great (912–973), which explains Gerhart's epithet of being 'the good one.'[13] However, even though he earns his money through buying and selling merchandise, his social background does not matter significantly for the romance, since Gerhart appears to be, without us learning any details, independently wealthy and at the end of the story could have easily been appointed king of England, if he had permitted the English nobles to do so, since they admire him deeply and feel infinite gratitude toward him for his selfless act when he had freed them from their imprisonment in Morocco at a great risk for his own business.

Specifically, Gerhart helps a Norwegian princess Erene (Irene)—there could have been an error on the part of the scribe/s who might have confused Navarra (northeastern Spain) with Norway and Berengaria, the daughter of the king of Navarra, with Erene[14]—to gain her freedom from a Moroccan castellan; then he assists her and her English fiancé, the successor to the royal throne, in getting married; and he subsequently establishes peace in England through his wise council. Gerhart is a Cologne merchant, but he stands out as one of the most glorious and ideal individuals at his time, being highly praised everywhere for his piety, devotion, high morality, and ethics, who has also at his disposal seemingly infinite amounts of money which he freely spends to help other people and to organize amazing courtly festivals in his home town. Yet, although this citizen-protagonist commands astounding wealth, the poet does not include any criticism of his money, especially because Gerhart spends extraordinary amounts to help people in need—in this case members of the highest nobility suffering from having been kidnapped for ransom or suffering from shipwreck and loss of personal happiness—and to restore order and peace in England, for example.[15] He also remarks on his practice of alms-giving, but he blames himself for not doing enough for the poor people (941–958). However, even in that regard he seems to outshine everyone else in his community.

Although Gerhart lives in the city of Cologne, he operates on an international level and can easily be identified as a role model for everyone in his society, superseding even the emperor in his religious value system. While being 'only' a merchant, he appears as the idealized figure of a truly noble person with respect to his character and value concepts, and he even puts Emperor Otto I (actually Otto IV; see below) to shame for his mercantile thinking regarding the divine rewards for his own piety. Gerhart demonstrates through his behavior what true humility and modesty would mean and how those two ideals could be translated into concrete actions. Even when he is offered the highest honors and greatest riches, which would allow him to rise quickly to the rank of an English duke (Kent), he refuses to accept anything for himself and happily maintains his own lifestyle back home.

There are only fleeting references to the world of the urban class, while the entire romance could be identified as a 'mirror for princes'; however, it is still situated, for the purpose of narrative innovation, in the world of merchants, who in general gain a high status as independent and wise councilors to whom the emperor turns for advice.[16] Especially the research by Wolfgang Walliczek and Ursula Peters has deconstructed previous claims regarding the allegedly newly awakened pride and

self-confidence of the urban burgher class in Rudolf's romance. Gerhart is the ideal helper, supporter, advisor, facilitator, and mediator in many different situations, but he is not a representative of an innovative literary protagonist aiming to rise on the social and gaining the status of an aristocrat.[17] Here we clearly face the danger of an anachronistic reading resulting from early-modern concepts about the rising urban class finally superseding the nobility, a process which took place, at least economically, primarily in the world of late medieval and early modern cities. However, most aristocrats had moved into urban residences by the fifteenth century and thus held onto their own political and cultural lifestyle, as reflected to a large extent even by the novels published at that time. As to Rudolf's *Der guote Gêrhart*, then, there is very little ground in this literary text to support older social-historical readings.[18] This is a romance by a high-ranking noble administrator/bureaucrat for an aristocratic audience.

After all, the poet had no real interest in the world of cities, since he comments on Cologne only superficially, and when he places his protagonist Gerhart in London, we learn only of the aristocrats there who come flocking to the city in order to decide on their next king.[19] If there are references to the local burghers, they pay full respect to the assembly of nobles and never claim any independence or power for themselves. Yet, the romance presents, after all, a merchant as the most virtuous and pious person of them all who specifically does not operate on the basis of a merchant mentality, but has embraced a courtly value system; ironically, especially the Holy Roman emperor thinks primarily of the purchasing power of his money in order to secure his soul's salvation.[20] Overall, this is an almost facetious reversal in the characterization of those two figures, but it also underscores that Rudolf did not have any genuine interest in the world of burghers.

The text has survived in only two manuscripts; A, that is Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2699 (first half of the fourteenth century, if not several decades earlier), and B, that is, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2793 (ca. 1475).[21] Both manuscripts contain a number of commonly shared errors, but A stands far above B considering the scribe's meticulous approach to his task, which included at least two rounds of corrections. However, ms. A is missing 548 verses, lost with the disappearance of four leaves after pages 19 (v. 2639) and 33 (v. 4827). 76 verses are simply missing throughout the text without any good explanation. One reason might rest in the poet's constant effort to repeat himself and to use the same phrases in slightly different syntactical contexts to achieve a particularly aesthetic effect. The

scribe might thus have simply skipped a line here and there in the copying process.

Moreover, there are, despite the scribe's great efforts, hundreds of passages with textual corruptions. Ms. B at times contains the missing text in ms. A, but there are many gaps as well, probably because the scribe, identified as Gabriel Sattler-Lindenast von Pfullendorf, carelessly overlooked an entire passage in his original from which he copied. We can be certain on the basis of various indicators that he did not have ms. A in front of him, but another copy lost today. Furthermore, at times he added his own words or entire verses. Nevertheless, ms. B proves to be very valuable for the establishment of the historical-critical text, as published by John A. Asher (1971).

Considering the fact that in ms. A we also find the religious text *Von gotz lichnam* (Of Christ's Body) by Nikolaus Schlegel, who relates of a Eucharistic miracle, it seems likely that the patron of this collection pursued spiritual-didactic purposes.[22] This now also finds confirmation through a prose version of *Der guote Gêrhart* in a handwritten version that belonged to the Protestant theologian, humanist, librarian, and court confessor Georg Spalatin (1484–1545).[23] This manuscript, Reg. O 157, is today housed in the Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar. Spalatin appears not to have written down that text (on folio 34r to 5v) himself, since it is in a different hand. This prose version carries the title: *Von kayser Otto dem Rotten vnd Dem guotten Gerhartt von Koeln* (Of Emperor Otto the Red and the Good Gerhart of Cologne). The entire volume was put together with the purpose of combining historical and literary texts about Saxony—the reference to the foundation of the Magdeburg cathedral, located in that state as already confirmed by Rudolf's original version, v. 182–83, apparently justified this decision. The scribe of the prose version considerably shortened the text, which he drew from the version which is also contained in manuscript B, but he seems to have used another copy.[24] In order to help his readers, he also provided concise chapter titles, such as "Wie der kayer mit dem guotten Gerhartten redtt" (45; How the emperor spoke with the Good Gerhart), or "Wie der guott Gerhartt widerumb mit der kunigin gen Koeln kam" (53; How the Good Gerhart again returned to Cologne with the queen [princess]). The conclusion of the prose version slightly differs from the verse romance, since the narrator finally comments that the original manuscript with that text can be found in the cathedral library of Magdeburg and also in a monastery in Cologne that used to be Gerhart's house and which he had transformed, probably at the end of his life, into such a religious institution for his own purposes (65). The prose version

was created some time after 1510 and before ca. 1530, written down somewhere in the area of Bavaria/Swabia.[25]

The quantity of manuscript copies (plus incunabula and early modern prints) is not always a good benchmark to evaluate the popularity of a literary text from the past. The contemporary audience might not have recognized the true quality, or a poet may have composed a text that was too alien or strange for his listeners/readers at that time. It is also possible that a text was very popular, while the majority of manuscripts might have become lost today. Or a text was transmitted mostly orally, whereas it did not seem necessary to record it on parchment because of its great popularity and general familiarity.[26] In light of the sixteenth-century prose version of Rudolf's *Der guote Gêrhart*, however, we know for sure that this narrative at least appealed to audiences even three hundred years later after its original composition, or ca. fifty years after manuscript B had been copied. The evidence that one other manuscript still existed then is overwhelming, but the interest of the prose author in the courtly themes appears to have been limited. He strongly reduced many of the religious and ethical arguments, cut out a number of lengthy debates, and focused increasingly on factual elements. This is in conformity with similar strategies by other authors who rendered Middle High German verse romances into Early New High German prose versions.[27]

The narrator of Rudolf's text informs us in the epilogue that Emperor Otto repented his arrogance and sinfulness after he had learned of the merchant Gerhart's example. Having returned to Magdeburg, he ordered that his own religious experiences, both the good and the bad, be recorded in writing, obviously in Latin (6803–10). An unnamed person later read and copied this account and brought it with him from Austria to Constance—there is no explanation how the text got from Magdeburg, i.e., in northern Germany, to Austria—and retold it to a Rudolf von Steinach, who was a high-ranking administrator in the service of the bishop of Constance, mentioned several times in the historical records between 1209 and 1221.[28] This Rudolf in turn requested the poet, Rudolf von Ems, possibly also active as a bureaucrat or simply a scribe, to render it into German verses (6229–30). Undoubtedly, there must have been more sources involved, and it cannot have been a straightforward translation from Latin to Middle High German, especially because of the hybrid characterization of the emperor, drawing from the life of both Otto I and from the life of Otto IV, and because of the Judeo-Arabic source by the Rabbi Nissim (see below). *Der guote Gêrhart* is not a chronicle, but it is also not entirely a courtly romance. There are elements of didactic

teachings, of travel adventures, of political commentary, and it is a work stylistically determined by multiple levels of narrative voices.

Obviously, Rudolf's *Der guote Gêrhart* was probably primarily received in Constance, where the political climate lent itself for this poem reflecting on the emperor's endeavor to achieve God's grace and to repent in time for his self-aggrandizement—here indirectly referring to Emperor Otto IV of the house of the Welfs, although the literary framework refers to Otto I by way of emphasizing that he had founded the cathedral of Magdeburg.[29] In the prologue the poet refers to the Emperor Otto as 'the Red One' (87), but this epithet had been given to Otto II, son of Otto I, whereas Otto IV descended from an entirely different dynasty.

The bishop of Constance and his noble courtiers apparently supported the Welf candidate for the imperial throne, Otto IV, even though his opponent, the Hohenstaufen Frederick II, who had arrived from Italy, at that time rapidly gained the general support. Projecting him as an emperor who had sinned but also knew how to repent, which meant that he probably regained God's favor, underscored the considerable respect which he enjoyed after all, at least in Constance. The bishop and the clergy there seemed to have harbored great hope that Otto IV would return ruefully to the safe haven of the Church, confess his sins, and make peace with the pope, who had excommunicated him in 1210.[30]

Otto IV (1175–1218) was rival king from 1198, sole king from 1208, and Holy Roman Emperor from 1209 until he was forced to abdicate in 1215. He was the third son of Henry the Lion, Duke of Bavaria and Saxony, and Matilda of England, where he grew up, speaking fluently French and German. Otto fully entered the political limelight only after the death of Emperor Henry VII (1165–1197) when the majority of the princes of the Empire, mostly situated in the south, elected Henry's brother, Philipp, Duke of Swabia (1177–1208), as king in March 1198, after receiving money and promises from Philipp in exchange for their support. Those opposed to him went for a member of the Bavarian house of the Welfs. Since Otto's brother was on a crusade at that time, the choice fell on him, so he was designated as king in Cologne on June 9, 1198. Archbishop Adolf of Cologne crowned him king on June 12, 1198, but he employed fake regalia, since the authentic ones were in Philipp's hands. While the English kings supported Otto, the French King Philipp II supported the Hohenstaufen prince Philipp. In the meantime, Pope Innocent III, long opposed to the Hohenstaufen, recognized Otto as the legitimate king of Germany, which allowed him to drive a wedge between Sicily and Tuscany on the one hand and the Holy Roman Empire on the other, and to strengthen his own geo-political power in Italy.

Although Otto enjoyed the additional support of Ottokar I, the king of Bohemia, and of the Danish king, Valdemar II, in military terms he lost considerably on the ground against Philipp, who was crowned king again in 1204, this time even by the Archbishop of Cologne. The situation for Otto grew worse after the decisive battle near Wassenberg (west of Düsseldorf, northwest of Cologne) on July 27, 1206, where he badly lost and was personally wounded, which forced him to withdraw to his personal properties in Brunswick in northern Germany. Even the pope switched sides, giving the Hohenstaufen dynasty the preponderance. Philipp tried hard to reach out to his opponent, making him highly attractive offers, but he was suddenly assassinated on June 21, 1208.

Now, Otto had free reign, married Philipp's daughter Beatrix, and gained the support of the electoral princes and the pope, who crowned him king on October 21, 1209. These two, however, soon disagreed, and Otto broke all of his promises, reclaiming the imperial rights and lands in Italy. He even tried to fight against the Hohenstaufen Frederick II in Sicily, while the situation in northern Germany grew worse with the Danish king having conquered large expanses of land. At the instigation of King Philip Augustus II of France and with the consent of the pope, the German princes elected Frederick King of the Romans at the Diet of Nuremberg in 1211. Otto then lost virtually all support, and had to stand by helplessly when on December 5, 1212, Frederick was elected king for a second time by a majority of the princes. Otto tried to manipulate the conflict between England and France for his own purposes, but in the Battle of Bouvines on July 27, 1214, the troops supporting the French side were defeated after their leader Otto's injury and fall, forcing him to a hasty retreat. He had to abdicate the imperial throne in 1215, and he died three years later from a disease.[31]

Despite all that historical background, however, the poet explicitly referred to Emperor Otto I who wanted to demonstrate his political power after the successful Battle of Lechfeld near Augsburg in 955 against the nomadic Magyars by ordering the construction of the cathedral of Magdeburg even before his coronation as emperor on February 2, 962. This is the specifically historical framework, though the initially negative characterization of the emperor directly aims at Otto IV. After all, the implied criticism of the emperor because of his pompous insistence on having earned God's praise already here on earth undoubtedly aims at Emperor Otto IV, who enjoyed a dubious reputation throughout his career and amongst various political circles; even the clergy in Constance seems to have wavered in its support; hence Rudolf von Ems's concluding comments about the emperor's submission under the guidance of the

clergy in Magdeburg would fit the political situation insofar as even the members of the Church felt uncomfortable with Otto IV. In other words, Rudolf played with the same name of two, perhaps even three, different emperors (including Otto II, also known as 'the Red'), relying on his audience's awareness to know and perhaps also to appreciate the differences between them.[32] Whether this then allows us, as some scholars have suggested, to move the date of the composition of the romance even down to ca. 1210/1215, in contrast to the older position, assuming that *Der guote Gêrhart* was composed around 1222/1225, remains debatable and would not be that relevant for our purposes, unless we read this romance as a meaningful source for the ideological strife regarding the controversial Emperor Otto IV.[33]

Rudolf's *Der guote Gêrhart* did not experience any particular popularity in terms of the manuscript record (see above), which might not come as a surprise considering the problematic position held by Emperor Otto IV both in Constance and elsewhere—the situation would have been very different if the poet had had only Emperor Otto I in mind, who enjoyed universal respect and was regarded a major leader of his time and among his posterity. Both in historical reality and in the literary context our emperor emerges as a rather ambivalent character whom many people simply did not trust. Rudolf's poem voices rather harsh criticism against the pompous and extremely self-assured character who wants to force God to reveal to him what reward he would receive for his worldly deeds supporting the Church in the afterlife.

By contrast, returning to the literary text, modern scholars (at least until the end of the twentieth century) have responded with considerable interest to this romance because of the unusual framework of having a merchant surface as an ideal figure who becomes centrally instrumental for a Norwegian princess to find her long-lost fiancé again, an English prince, and to marry him. Gerhart manages this by first liberating the princess and her companions from her captivity in a Moroccan prison. Later, when he is about to marry her off to his own son because the fiancé seems to be completely lost, or might have drowned, the miracle happens, and the elusive prince appears just at the right time before the wedding is about to take place. Gerhart's son, though with great regret, submits under his father's and the archbishop's wishes and allows the princess to join hands with her original lover, who is then described in most glowing terms as the most deal and virtuous man on the face of the earth.

Not enough of this fascinating topic: we also need to keep in mind that Gerhart succeeds in buying the princess's freedom with the means of all of

his merchandise at a high risk for his own business because the Moroccan castellan, certainly a Muslim, has offered him his friendship, and would be more than happy to let the company of Christian captives go in return for Gerhart's goods.[34] The entire episode in the Moroccan harbor city lends itself surprisingly well for explorations of what transcultural experiences and perhaps even forms of tolerance might have meant for late medieval writers.[35] Moreover, the romance also contains a significant social-political dimension pertaining to England, where chaos rules supreme at that time because the old king has passed away and his son, our prince, has disappeared without a trace. In fact, everyone believes that he has drowned in a shipwreck. Competing aristocratic groups are almost prepared to engage in a civil war—a 'classical' case of internecine strife—just at the time when Gerhart arrives with the freshly married couple, the future king and queen.

The English nobles immediately recognize Gerhart as their liberator from Moroccan captivity,[36] welcome him jubilantly, and then decide to bestow upon him, who is a complete outsider and a person without the rank of nobility, the crown of England. As flattering as this proves to be for Gerhart, and as unrealistic it would have been to elevate a non-aristocratic person to the throne of an entire country, he quickly rejects this honor and hands the crown over to the young prince, who thus continues he dynastic line, and can establish peace and prosperity in the country once again.

Rudolf was obviously very disinclined to take into consideration a post-medieval, Romantic conclusion, with the man from the mercantile class to rise to the highest position in the English monarchy. We learn of such a situation only once again in medieval literature, but this much later in Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken's novel *Huge Scheppel* (1437), which was based on a French verse romance (*Hugues Capet*), where a butcher fights for such a long time and so selflessly for the royal house that he is allowed to marry the princess and is then accepted as the successor to the French crown.[37]

Another intriguing phenomenon, mentioned only in passing but certainly worthy our particular attention, proves to be Gerhart's stupendous multilingual abilities. While originating from Cologne in the Low German language area, he can easily converse with the Moroccan castellan and then with the Norwegian princess in French. The other group of prisoners, who had accompanied the princess when their ship had been captured by the Muslims, only speaks English, but Gerhart easily handles that challenge as well, and thus proves to be a highly competent and effective polyglot.[38]

Even structurally, Rudolf's romance reveals impressive and unique features since there are several layers of narrative operating with each other. After the prologue, we hear Emperor Otto speak, who soon enough engages with Gerhart because he is most anxious to find out why God loves the other man more than himself, although he, the Emperor, had established the bishopric of Magdeburg and had ordered the erection of the mighty cathedral—a curious merging of the historical figures of Emperor Otto I and Otto IV, as I have discussed above.

There is no doubt that the narrator severely criticizes the Emperor for his selfishness, narcissism, and vainglory in demanding that God reveal to him already here on earth what reward he would receive in the afterlife. From that point on the narrative focus shifts to Gerhart, who relates to Otto his own life story, though at first only very grudgingly, since he is afraid of committing the sin of pride, so we are facing a narrative within a narrative.[39] Even though it mostly amounts to a biographical account—the first in the history of Middle High German literature—Gerhart's whole life and performance closely reflect the ideals of any outstanding person, especially from the rank of aristocracy, so the romance can be identified as a literary version of a *Mirror for Princes*, a literary genre very common throughout the Middle Ages serving as an instructive tool for princes to learn the principles of a virtuous, effective, moral, and religious ruler.[40] Near the closure of the romance, the poet has the emperor speak again, who briefly summarizes everything what Gerhart had told him about his life and his efforts to achieve goodness (6686–73), so we face another narrative within a narrative, as a kind of a check-list regarding the protagonist's moral and ethical accomplishments.

Even though Gerhart belongs to the class of burghers and merchants, he receives highest accolades for his virtues and social demeanor, which make him look much more like a Christian who is ethically and spiritually superior to the Emperor since the latter arrogantly tries to force God to give him so much praise for his monetary donation to the Church. Older efforts to recognize in the literary protagonist the idealized image of the Cologne toll keeper for the archbishop since 1169, the merchant, banker, and property owner Gerhard Unmaze—literally, Gerhart the Immoderate One, the epithet probably reflecting upon his ruthless business practices—from the second half of the twelfth century have not yielded the desired understanding of our text in its literary-historical significance. We cannot deny that there is a tenuous link between this historical personality who was praised in the sources as an enormously rich man who excelled through his wisdom and political acumen, and the literary protagonist, yet such a reading short shrifts the true meaning of this text.[41]

Even though Friedrich Sengle, like others before and after him, had assumed that Rudolf's narrative might hence be identified as the glorification of the Cologne citizenship at large, at least its upper social crust—he called it a "Patrizierwunschbild" (the ideal image of a patrician, or upper-class urban citizen)—such an approach ignores the strongly religious and ethical dimensions and the literary Gerhart's exemplary function entirely irrespective of his social status.[42] The poem idealizes ethical, moral, and also political behavior, as demonstrated by that individual, but it does not intend at all to glorify the burgher class over the nobility, as Ursula Peters has illustrated through her careful analysis of key passages in the text. Ultimately, Gerhart does not allow the idea of profit to dominate his thinking, and although he is most delighted about his son's gaining the rank of a knight (*ministeralis*), he himself rejects all offers by the English lords to appoint him as their king, or then at least as the duke of Kent.[43] Gerhart always insists on staying within his own social rank, absolutely refusing to be instrumental in a change of the social structure of his time, irrespective of the fact that his own son Gerhart is knighted by the archbishop of Cologne in preparation of his marriage with the Norwegian princess Erene, which then comes to an abrupt end, however.

Instead, as Walter Haug has argued more convincingly, Rudolf, while indirectly citing the prologue to *Tristan* by Gottfried von Straßburg (ca. 1210), attempts to create a very new literary model far removed from the type of the 'classical' Arthurian romance in order to explore both in theoretical and practical terms the fundamental meaning of goodness brought about by good deeds; hence *Der guote Gerhart* would be a specifically ethical romance. While in the Arthurian world (including *Tristan*) the courtly poet serves as the mouthpiece to voice praise for the good and shining hero, according to Rudolf's understanding goodness finds praise in God and no longer needs public approval, or even acknowledgment.[44] Internal values hence rise to the surface and leave behind the concepts that still undergirded the courtly romance from the generation of Wolfram and Gottfried. Whether the double course of the traditional courtly protagonist, such as in Hartmann von Aue's *Erec* and *Iwein*, closely following the models provided by Chrétien de Troyes, is specifically rejected by Rudolf, or whether he simply embraced a very different concept to develop a new world view, as has been suggested numerous times, does not need to be examined here in detail. However, as Haug observes:

> The key positions at which, in courtly romance, the series of *âventiure* find temporary or absolute fulfilment, i.e. at the end of the first and second cycles respectively, are occupied in *Der guote Gêrhart* by acts of renunciation. Such renunciation is the manifestation of a principle diametrically opposed, on both ethical and aesthetic grounds, to the Arthurian principle of correlation between merit and reward, inner and outer realms. (295)

While the Arthurian protagonist was still propelled forward to embark on his adventure in order to achieve fame and highest reputation through knightly actions, for Gerhart there is only an ethical and moral concern; how to do good so that God will eventually reward the individual in the afterlife, irrespective of social recognition and fame in this life. Relying on a merchant for a protagonist does not serve the purpose to bring into play the world of burghers, but rather to distance this new courtly romance radically from its traditional literary mold (Haug 296). As we learn from Haug: "The path Gerhart pursues follows an ascending scale of values until at the highest point he discovers that goodness contains its own meaning and is its own reward: the greatest satisfaction is to be found in the contemplation of the happiness one is able to bring about" (298).

Most interestingly, Rudolf von Ems seems to have drawn extensively from a Jewish source for his first romance, one of the Rabbinic narratives of Nissim ben Jacob ben Nissim ibn Shahīn, also known as Rav Nissim Gaon (990–1062), who was, writing in Arabic, primarily famous for his Talmudic commentaries.[45] Nissim lived in Kairouan (south of Tunis, North Africa), and seems to have enjoyed a great reputation, but at the end of his life experienced serious turmoil and suffering, especially because Berber tribes attacked the city and sacked it. Nissim, like most other Jews, had fled in time to the coastal town of Susah (Sousse), where he resided in 1061.

The story that forms somehow the source of Rudolf's Middle High German romance is contained in his *Sefer Ma'asiyyot ha-Hakhamim wehu Hibbur Yafeh meha-Yeshu'ah* (or better: "al-Faraj haᶜd al-Shiddah"— *Yafeh* meaning 'pious work' and *Ma'asiyyot* [or Maasijot, see below] meaning 'narrative'), a collection of stories now translated from Judeo-Arabic into English as *An Elegant Compilation Concerning Relief after Adversity*.[46] These stories were basically drawn from Rabbinic, Mishnaic, Talmudic, and Midrashic collections and anthologies, one of which was first printed in Constantinople in 1519 under the title *Maasijot se-ba-Talmud* and *Hibur ha-maasijot* and many times thereafter,

considerably based on Nissim's work. Those accounts enjoyed extensive popularity among the Jewish population in oral form, especially in Eastern Europe, first printed in 1870 under the title *Sippurim*.[47] Nissim's own collection appeared in print first in Ferrara in 1557.

Originally, as far as we can tell, Nissim intended his collection as specifically Jewish reading material for the wider audience, which should thus be convinced to turn away from Muslim literature and be confronted with its own literary tradition. The overall purpose in all those narratives consists of alerting people to the infinite and often incomprehensible divine justice—*Mu'tazila*. But despite the huge challenges which people face here on earth, especially when confronted with seemingly egregious injustice, the idea behind those stories consists of offering consolation, hope, and even the promise that ultimately God's messages will become understandable.[48]

The specific account concerning us here is entitled, "The Pious Butcher or the Fellow in Paradise," or "Secret Saints" (no. XV). In the narrative frame story a religious and scholarly man, who has arrogantly assured himself that he will be guaranteed a place in Paradise, wants to learn from God who his neighbor then would be up there. After having fasted and prayed for a long time, he finds out that it will be a simple and unlearned butcher, which makes the scholar feel rather insulted because of the indignity that he would suffer thereby; that attitude, however, in turn triggers the wrath of God, who indirectly commands him to listen to the butcher telling his own narrative himself.

The scholar grudgingly goes to the butcher's shop and urges the man to tell him his story, which the simple man finally does, after he has had to reflect for some time what the scholar could have referred to—which signals his modesty and personal virtue, in contrast to the other man. He had witnessed a young woman who was held as a captive by some heathens and cried heavily because she was afraid that she might be forced to convert to the other religion. In order to help her, the butcher had paid an enormous sum of money as a ransom necessary to release her, although he barely had enough cash available for that purpose. He adopted her as his daughter and then asked his own son to marry her in order to integrate her finally within his Jewish community. At the last moment, however, during the wedding feast, the true fiancé, impoverished and miserable after years of searching for her, appeared and could demonstrate to the 'father-in-law' that he was the right person and deserved to marry the young woman. The butcher then convinced his own son to withdraw from the promised marriage and pledged to find him another wife. The young

couple was thus able to join hands and, richly endowed by the butcher, finally returned to their home country.

The pious scholar, once he has understood the entire story, humbly acknowledges the butcher as a true man of God and recognizes him as a worthy fellow next to him in Paradise.[49] In contrast to the Judeo-Arabic version, in Rudolf's romance we additionally learn of Gerhart's successful efforts to help Prince Willehalm to ascend to the throne of England, which the nobles there had first offered to him, Gerhart. We do not yet know how Rudolf might have learned of Nissim's tale, but there is no doubt that the similarities in the essential components are strikingly close, if not almost identical irrespective of the religious differences, Nissim presenting a Jewish world, Rudolf working within a Christian milieu. It is likely that the rabbi's account was later transmitted into Hebrew, and from there into Yiddish, and thus it became familiar also to Christian writers during the late Middle Ages.[50] However, we cannot say much at this point through what channels Nissim's didactic-religious tale made its way into the German-speaking world in the early thirteenth century and thus became known to Rudolf.[51]

Anke Kleine points out a number of possibilities, citing a variety of popular Jewish tales, both written and oral, but those mostly date from the early modern age, whereas we would need references especially to twelfth-century sources that Rudolf would have been familiar with.[52] Even though no concrete evidence has yet been unearthed, we can agree with Kleine that Rudolf displayed throughout his entire œuvre a remarkable interest in Jewish history and was certainly willing to look beyond his own narrowly-defined German-Christian cultural horizon. His *Der guote Gêrhart* undoubtedly shares the fundamental ideas and much of the basic narrative material as already developed in Nissim's tale.[53] Nevertheless, the strongly Christian approach determining the romance still proves to be undeniable, although in ethical and idealistic terms the differences do not really matter.

These few comments should make it clear that this is a text determined by numerous intriguing motifs and topics of an innovative kind, inviting a variety of critical readings that easily prove to be highly relevant even today,[54] while they illustrate innovative esthetic, moral, and aesthetic approaches in later thirteenth-century literature. The personal bonds that connect Gerhart with the Moroccan ruler Stranmûr, for instance, constitute the closest representation of true friendship between two men across the religious divide that we might ever find in medieval literature—perhaps

with some exceptional cases in Boccaccio's *Decameron* (ca. 1351) and in the pan-European popular account of *Amis and Amiloun*.[55]

The protagonist's economic background has also proven to be highly unusual and provocative for research, as the studies by Werner Wunderlich, Ursula Peters, and then by Sonja Zöller indicate, though a social-historical reading of this romance, as we have already observed above, does not seem to lead to a proper and in-depth reading of the poet's real attitudes toward the lower social classes and non-Christian religions.[56] Surprisingly, the last decade or so has not seen any new efforts to engage with this wonderfully intriguing text, as if no new angles or perspectives could be discovered.[57] Only Otto Neudeck has made a new effort, highlighting the particular role assumed by Emperor Otto, both here in Rudolf's work and in other Middle High German romances.[58] One big challenge still awaits us, that is, to figure out the way how Rudolf became acquainted with his Judeo-Arabic source in Constance, where a Latin version circulated at that time according to his own account, and why the narrator never gives any indication as to where he had actually learned about that Jewish source. The epilogue only refers to the account of Emperor Otto IV in Latin, and does not say anything about the parallel story of the saintly butcher from the Hebrew tradition.

An English translation of *Der guote Gêrhart* promises to change radically the poor situation of Rudolf's work within current scholarship and academic teaching, especially because we are by now deeply invested in topics such as the History of Emotions, Transculturality, and Mediterranean Studies. Rudolf's work offers a whole spectrum of features that lend themselves exceedingly well to these new scholarly orientations, especially because *Der guote Gêrhart* specifically addresses transculturality from a German perspective, and this already in the thirteenth century.[59] The emphasis on emotions, that is, on feelings of friendship, suffering, sorrow, and the constant expressions of laments also deserve our close attention, since they underscore a new orientation in literary terms, giving particular weight now to human feelings, which are closely connected with a strong religious orientation.[60]

We have available a trustworthy and reliable critical edition by John Asher, along with a fairly solid body of relevant research, whereas no one, as far as I can tell, has ever made an attempt to translate *Der guote Gêrhart* into a modern western language.[61] I hope and expect that the present translation will provide significant inspirations both for medieval literary and cultural scholarship and for literature classes on the Middle Ages at large. Here we face a most fascinating case of true tolerance, and

this already in the pre-modern world. Of course, Count Stranmûr keeps a large group of Christian nobles as prisoners, hoping to receive a good ransom for them. But he heartily welcomes Gerhart, treats him most honorably, and even sends him off wishing him all the blessing of the Christian God, and that of his own gods. Although all this is described from a Christian perspective, reflecting wishful thinking of the 'noble heathen,' it certainly documents that the poet embraced the concept that the representatives of both religions could form good partnership, if not even friendship. The differences in their religions do not matter at all for either one of them, and Gerhart never voices any concerns about the Muslim religion, since its representatives appear as worthy, noble, friendly, and honorable contemporaries.[62] Moreover, as already indicated, Rudolf's work contains intriguing elements criticizing a pompous emperor, efforts to present an idealized urban citizen, early interests in projecting a literary space involving, apart from Germany, countries such as Morocco, Norway, and England, and this already in the thirteenth century. Moreover, it is characterized by a remarkable strategy to incorporate a narrative within a narrative.[63]

The English translation itself

The translation tries to stay as close to the original as possible. It sounds more elegant, granted, to render, for instance, "swen sîn gemüete lêret / daz er ze gote kêret / herze, sinne unde muot" (5) as "Whoever is inwardly disposed to turn his heart, mind and senses to God." But the verses really say in straightforward English: "Whoever is taught by his own character / to turn to God his heart, senses, and mind." These are, of course, stylistic differences. Yet, I do not have the ambition to compete with the poet and to create similarly poetic lines. The translation is supposed to make this romance available to English speakers who then, hopefully, will feel encouraged to turn to the original Middle High German text as a valuable source for their own critical investigations of similar topics in non-German narratives. Rudolf employed to some extent a fairly uncomplicated sentence structure, but he as well had to adapt to requirements resulting from the rhyme scheme and meter. Yet, whenever there is an opportunity for him to expound on theoretical issues, pertaining to ethics, aesthetics, emotions, religion, love, and other esoteric topics, his language gets highly complex and difficult.

    The poet tends to repeat certain key phrases in other, yet similar contexts, which I try to render by expressing the same idea in a slightly different way. In order to maintain as closely as possible the verse

structure, sometimes sentences might sound slightly unidiomatic. It might be better to translate "von swem guotes iht geschiht, / des ruom ist gên der welt ein niht" (19–20) as "The worldly fame of a man who does a good deed is in itself meaningless" (Haug, 291). I have preferred: "Whoever does something [really] good, / does not care about the praise in the world." This allows, I think, for more transparency and takes the reader, if s/he desires, directly back to the original. After all, in philological terms, the translation should not fully replace or substitute the original.

But there are also numerous very difficult passages where the poet delights in presenting a long series of expressions concerning a woman's beauty, or the true extent of some knight's suffering, or a religious experience, which often goes on for many verses, in which then the grammatical structure, as we would expect it both in the medieval and the modern context, is at risk, especially if the verb is missing or elusive. Rudolf tends to reiterate concepts and ideals many times, formulating almost the identical aspect in just slightly different grammatical terms. Since I try to maintain the exact verse numbering, I have had to be quite creative in those passages and was at times forced to include new grammatical structures to convey a logical sense of the thought pattern, while still staying as close to the original as possible and without slipping into unidiomatic English.

Rudolf was particularly intrigued by the ethical and religious concepts of goodness, blessedness, delight, happiness, suffering, sorrow, lamenting, love, and played on them in highly complex linguistic terms that might have been deeply pleasing aesthetically, especially for his audience, but which now create incredible headaches for the translator. As many medievalists have already commented, translating from a medieval text into a modern language represents numerous challenges and has never been an easy task, or is not even fully possible in the first place.[64] I hope to have at least approximately reached the goal of making this unusual and fascinating Middle High German romance palatable and understandable, while rendering it as accurately into English as possible.[65]

The extent to which the poet allegorizes female beauty and combines nature images with religious allegory, and then creates metaphors for the description of the female protagonist's physical features can be rather irritating, not to speak of the difficulties of translating all that into meaningful expressions. However, this also reflects the typical highly dramatic, emotional, excessively formalistic style from the post-classical period, perhaps best represented by Heinrich von Meissen's *Frauenleich* from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. At times we also observe a rather contradictory flow of the narrative, even specific

'mistakes,' but I do not emend the text in the translation and rather add a note to explain some of the problems. I hope thereby to establish more transparency, instead of inappropriately harmonizing the text where 'problems' occur, at least according to our modern concept of grammar. It also deserves to be mentioned that at times Rudolf resorted to very asyndetic exchanges, which I have replicated in the translation, and presents an intensive, short-verse conversation, such as in lines 3789–3800, which would be rather characteristic of a staged drama, very unusual for a medieval romance, especially of the kind which Rudolf composed, with its strong emphasis on emotions and excessive descriptions of feelings and ethical values (goodness, blessedness, love, beauty, etc.). In other words, this poet experimented with a variety of linguistic features, which make it very challenging to translate this text, but which also underscore a considerably innovative poetic quality.[66]

We also observe numerous times the employment of chiasm as a rhetorical strategy, which the poet brings about by way of repeating the same phrases in a reverse order (such as in lines 5410–5417). It is almost impossible to translate this in a meaningful way without clumsily reiterating the same words, even if a noun suddenly appears in the form of a verb, which is then repeated in the form of an adjective, etc. (*figura etymologica*). The modern reader might get frustrated with such ornamental elements, but the romance certainly gains thereby an unusual degree of aesthetic innovation. At times this stylistic feature forced me, if possible, to regroup carefully and sensitively the verses in the English translation in order to establish a meaningful syntactical structure.

Nevertheless, or just because of those peculiar formal aspects of this romance, there is much to discover in Rudolf von Ems's *Der guote Gêrhart*, and for the purpose of future scholarship we must keep the channel of communication between original and translation open, making it always possible to find the way back from the modern English to the Middle High German. For that reason I also provide the verse number for every fifth line. But this is only one position within the wide field of Translation Studies, and I can foresee some critics arguing against my approach, demanding a much stronger adaptation to the rigors of the English language, irrespective of the constraints of the original text.[67] I hope, however, that the primary users, those without or with only little knowledge of Middle High German, will profit from my work and then might pick up the courage to investigate this romance on their own in a critical fashion, relying on the original above all.

After I had completed the entire translation and had re-examined it several times, comparing the Middle High German original with the

English version, my wife Carolyn Classen and I went over the translation one more time, synchronically reading both versions to guarantee that the highest degree of authentic English idiomatic expressions was achieved without excessive or erroneous deviation from the Middle High German. While she read the translation out loud, I compared the original, a procedure which seems to be the ideal approach to all translation work, having two 'native' speakers of the two languages collaborating as closely as possible. I wish to express my gratitude to my wife for this valuable contribution. I also owe thanks to my colleague Prof. Thomas Willard (University of Arizona) for his kind proof-reading of this introduction, and to an anonymous reader at Cambridge Scholars Press for alerting me to a number of infelicities. All remaining mistakes are, of course, my own.

Notes

1. Ulrich von Zatzikhoven, *Lanzelet*, trans. Thomas Kerth (2005).

2. *Wigamur*, ed. and trans. by Joseph M. Sullivan (2015).

3. Konrad von Stoffeln, *Gauriel von Muntabel*, trans. Siegfried Christoph (2007).

4. Barbara Newman, *Frauenlob's Song of Songs* (2006); Neidhart, *Selected Songs from the Riedegg Manuscript*, intro., trans. and commentary by Kathryn Starkey and Edith Wenzel (2016).

5. As to the role and rank of unfree nobles, or *ministeriales* (pl. of *ministerialis*), see Joachim Bumke, *Ministerialität und Ritterdichtung* (1976); John B. Freed, "Reflections on the Medieval German Nobility" (1986).

6. *Rudolf von Ems Weltchronik aus der Wernigeroder Handschrift*, ed. Gustav Ehrismann (1915/1967); see also Xenja von Ertzdorff, *Rudolf von Ems* (1967), 50–61.

7. See, for instance, Michael Gerhard Schöner and Caroline Regina Schöner, *Staufische Herrscher als Minnesänger* (2014).

8. Albrecht Classen, "Kulturelle und religiöse Kontakte" (2000); see now the contributions to *Barlaam und Josaphat: Neue Perspektiven* (2015).

9. Christine Putzo, *Konrad Fleck: 'Flore und Blanscheflur'* (2015), 37–41.

10. *Rudolfs von Ems Willehalm von Orlens*, ed. Victor Junk (1905/1967); cf. also *Dichter über Dichter in mittelhochdeutscher Literatur*, ed. Günther Schweikle (1970), 22–28.

11. For a most helpful, though by now somewhat dated, summary of what we know about Rudolf von Ems, with brief synopses of his works, see Helmut de Boor, *Die höfische Literatur* (1953/ 1969), 176–92.

12. For a solid introduction and discussion of the relevant research positions, see Wolfgang Walliczek, "Rudolf von Ems" (1992).

13. Rudolf von Ems, *Der guote Gêrhart*, ed. John A. Asher (1962).

14. Zöller, *Kaiser, Kaufmann und die Macht des Geldes* (1993), 345–53; esp. 351. See also my comments in note 44 of the translation.

15. These and similar questions, though mostly pertaining to the late Middle Ages, are discussed by the contributors to *Reichtum im späten Mittelalter. Politische Theorie-Ethische Norm-Soziale Akzeptanz*, ed. Petra Schulte und Peter Hesse (2015).

16. Joachim Heinzle, *Wandlungen und Neuansätze im 13. Jahrhundert (1220/30–1280/90* (1994), 115: "Die Kaufmannsrolle ist vielmehr eine Funktion der Adelslehre: diese demonstriert, was adlig-christliches Verhalten bedeutet, indem sie dem kaufmännisch denkenden und handelnden Kaiser die genaue Kontrastfigur des kaiserlich denkenden und handelnden Kaufmanns gegenüberstellt" (The role of the merchant is rather the function of teaching nobles:

it demonstrates what noble-Christian behavior would have to be, and this by contrasting the emperor, who thinks and acts like a merchant, with the merchant who thinks and acts like an emperor).

17. Wolfgang Walliczek, *Rudolf von Ems, 'Der guote Gêrhart'* (1973), 141ff., and Ursula Peters, *Literatur in der Stadt* (1983), 36–48. Cf. also Bernd Sprenger, *Das Geld der Deutschen* (1991), esp. 61–73.

18. Peters, *Literatur in der Stadt* (1983), 58–59; Kurt Ruh, "Versuch einer Begriffsbestimmung von 'städtischer' Literatur im deutschen Spätmittelalter" (1980), 325. He emphasizes rightly that the courtly romance essentially treats the values of *sælde* and *êre*, while Rudolf does not aspire to bring to light the ideals of the merchant class; his Gerhart fully represents the true values of aristocratic society.

19. Daniel Rocher, "Un couronnement ambigu" (1977); Michel Huby, "'Le bon Gêrard' ou 'Comment faire son salut sans trop de peine" (1977); Reinhard Bleck, *Keiser Otte und Künic Willehalm* (1985).

20. Older socio-historical concepts as developed in the 1950s continue to hold sway even in most recent research; see, for instance, William Crooke, "Der guote Gêrhart: The Power of Mobility in the Medieval Mediterranean" (2013); Jost Hermand, "Der erste deutsche Kaufmannsroman" (2015).

21. http://www.handschriftencensus.de/2744 (last accessed on Aug. 31, 2016).

22. Neudeck, *Erzählen von Kaiser Otto* (2003), 192.

23. Franz-Josef Pensel, "Zur DTM-Edition einer Prosaversion des 'Guoten Gêrhart' von Rudolf von Ems" (1997).

24. *Der gute Gerhart Rudolfs von Ems in einer anonymen Prosaauflösung* (2001).

25. *Der gute Gerhart Rudolfs von Ems in einer anonymen Prosaauflösung* (2001), 3–5.

26. I have discussed many of these points in the introduction and my own contribution "Bestsellers in the European Middle Ages?" (2016). I do not, however, address the case of Rudolf von Ems in that context.

27. Alois Brandstetter, *Prosaauflösungen* (1971); Veronika Straub, *Entstehung und Entwicklung des frühneuhochdeutschen Prosaromans* (1974); Judith Schönhoff, *Von 'werden degen' und 'edelen vrouwen' zu 'tugentlichen helden' und 'eelichen hausfrawen'* (2008).

28. Xenja von Ertzdorff, *Rudolf von Ems* (1967), 67–70. There are many towns in the German-speaking lands with the name 'Steinach.' Most probably, Rudolf von Steinach can be associated with the community of Steinach near St. Gall, Switzerland, which in turn is not far away from Hohenems, where our poet originated from.

29. Joachim Bumke, *Mäzene im Mittelalter* (1979), 274ff. As to Rudolf von Ems's connection with the Counts of Montfort, see Edward Schröder, "Rudolf von Ems und sein Literaturkreis" (1930).

30. Zöller, *Kaiser, Kaufmann und die Macht des Geldes* (1993), 379; *Der gute Gerhart Rudolfs von Ems in einer anonymen Prosaauflösung* (2001), 5.

31. Joseph Patrick Huffman, "Richard the Lionheart and Otto IV" (2000); Steffen Krieb, *Vermitteln und Versöhnen* (2000); Bernd Ulrich Hucker, *Otto IV., der wiederentdeckte Kaiser* (2003); Gerd Biegel, "Der Traum vom welfischen Kaisertum" (2009); Gerd Althoff, "Otto IV. – Woran scheiterte der welfische Traum vom Kaisertum?" (2009). For the decisive and final battle which was the nail in the coffin of Otto's political efforts, see now the contributions to Pierre Monnet, ed., *Bouvines 1214–2014* (2016).

32. For more information on the historical background, especially the range of sources that Rudolf might have drawn from, his allusions to various political personalities, and his deliberate collusion of Otto I and Otto IV, see Sonja Zöller, *Kaiser, Kaufmann und die Macht des Geldes* (1993).

33. Neudeck, *Erzählen von Kaiser Otto* (2003), 200–07, summarizes the various position and especially the arguments by Zöller, *Kaiser, Kaufmann und die Macht des Geldes* (1993), 203–04, 336ff.; cf. also Sonja Zöller, "'Sus zierte keiserlîche/sîn naeme roemische rîche'" (1993).

34. Will Hasty, *The Medieval Risk-Reward Society* (2016), offers, quite innovatively, the notion of courtly literature reflecting a modern form of individualization through risk-taking, personal investments, and bankrolling of one's own strategy. While this might not be fully applicable to the examples discussed by Hasty, Gerhart's performance certainly indicates how much he is taking a huge risk in buying the freedom of the princess and her company with all of his merchandise, which he himself estimates to be of the highest possible value.

35. Albrecht Classen, "Medieval Transculturality in the Mediterranean" (forthcoming).

36. For parallel cases in Aragon, see Jarbel Rodriguez, *Captives and Their Saviors in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (2007); see also James W. Brodman, *Ransoming Captives in Crusader Spain* (1986).

37. Here I draw from *Romane des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Jan-Dirk Müller (1990); for critical studies on Elisabeth, see the contributions to *Zwischen Deutschland und Frankreich*, ed. Wolfgang Haubrichs, Hans-Walter Herrmann, and Gerhard Sauder (2002). The manuscript and many other sources are available now online at:

https://www.uni-potsdam.de/elisabeth-prosa-portal/huge-scheppel.html

(last accessed Aug. 31, 2016).

38. See now the contributions to *Multilingualism in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen (2016).