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## ON NEUTRAL AND FALLEN ANGELS

*A text from the Codex Karlsruhe 408 and  
its source in Enikel's 'Weltchronik'*

In his edition of Jansen Enikel's *Weltchronik*, which first appeared in 1891, Philipp Strauch briefly noted the similarity between a detail in Enikel's creation story and a couplet in a short verse narrative printed in a collection by Adelbert von Keller.<sup>1</sup> Strauch never elaborated on this parallel, and subsequent scholarship has not pursued it, but the manuscript from which von Keller's material was drawn, now known as Codex Karlsruhe 408<sup>2</sup>, is an important document and the relationship between it and Jansen Enikel deserves to be explored. Enikel's *Weltchronik* (Vienna, c. 1272) is a 30,000-line history of the world from the creation to the death of the Emperor Frederick II. Immediately after his prologue, Enikel tells of the creation of the angels and their subsequent rebellion and fall, and only then comes the Biblical story of the creation of the world and of Adam and Eve. Most of this is standard material for the 13th century, but Enikel's narrative has one striking and rather unusual feature. While some of the angels rebelled against God and others stood by him, there was a third group who refused to show their colours:

sümlîch gedâchten in irem muot: swer under in daz beste tuot, dâ süll wir mit belîben. wer mac uns dann vertrîben? die selben wârñ zwîflær. dâ von wârñ si unmær dem vil hôhgelobten got.	230
dâ von sô liten si grôzen spot.	235

However, far from remaining in good standing with both sides, the neutral angels fell out of favour with everyone. As a result, when the rebel angels were cast out, they too became the recipients of God's wrath. Rejected by both Hell and Heaven they wander the Earth, where they are a menace to human beings:

und ouch die zwîfelære die sint got gar unmære, wan si sint ouch verstôzen von andern irm genôzen. ich mein, die zwîflær wâren, die selben siht man varen noch hiut in die liute zwischen fleisch und hiute. dâ mit wellent si gûften. si varent in den lûften.	270
	275

Although unusual, this passage is by no means unique. It has been pointed out that the neutral angels are a familiar feature in the folklore of northern Europe, especially of the Celtic and

Scandinavian lands, but also in Switzerland and the Tyrol, where they are frequently brought into association with the origins of fairies, a striking example of pre-Christian ideas being incorporated into a Christian world-view.<sup>3</sup> The neutral angels are found in a number of other MHG works, most importantly in Wolfram's *Parzival*, but also in the *Altdeutsche (Wiener) Genesis*, the *Mitteldeutsche Brandan*, the *Christherre Chronik*, Heinrich von München's *Weltchronik*, *Salman und Morolf*, the *Wartburgkrieg* and Albrecht's *Tituel*. Outside German literature, the most important reference is in Dante. However, apart from Heinrich von München, who copied these verses almost verbatim from Enikel<sup>4</sup>, no other account comes as close to Enikel's text as the passage from the Karlsruhe codex. The manuscript, which on watermark evidence can be dated 1430–35, contains a collection of short narratives, some rather boisterous and worldly, others dealing with sacred themes. Among these are two separate creation-fall narratives.<sup>5</sup> We are concerned here with that on folios 116<sup>ra</sup>–120<sup>rb</sup>, now known as *Von Luzifers und Adams Fall*.<sup>6</sup> This is in fact a series of five cameos, each of which bears a separate title in the manuscript, although they are clearly meant to be read together. In the first of these, *Das got die engel magt*, we find the neutral angels. As in Enikel's text, they are dealt with in a brief passage between Lucifer's rebellion and God's judgement:

Do sprachen die zweffler,	
Die woren go<t> vnmer:	
“Wor wollen wir sweylich	
Sich truben die reich?	50
Wer es beßer gewinne,	
Bey dem bleyben wir hinne.”	
Do sprach der engel gut	
Auß weyblichem mut:	
“Fart hin, ir zweyffler,	55
Wann ir seit got vnmer.”	

The similarity between these two texts cannot be mistaken. The most obvious point, to which Strauch was referring in his footnote, is the word *zwifelare/zweffler* as a term for the neutral angels. We may wonder about its appropriateness, since these angels did not vacillate; their actions as narrated in both of the present texts were cold and calculating.<sup>7</sup> But at any rate, it is not a word commonly used for them. Also significant is the fact that this word appears in both passages in rhyme position linked with *unmære/vnmer*, and indeed that this rhyme occurs twice in each text. A further point at which the parallel is striking lies in the words which are placed in the mouths of the neutral angels. In particular, lines 230f in Enikel's text are identical in content to lines 51f in the Karlsruhe narrative, and they are even similar in their wording (*das beste/beßer; beliben/bleyben*). The question in the Karlsruhe manuscript's 49f, depending on what we think it means<sup>8</sup>, may possibly echo that in Enikel's 232. The fascinating detail of the neutral angels entering people and living *zwischen fleisch und hiute* is missing in the Karlsruhe manuscript, but this is consistent with the fact that *Von Luzifers und Adams Fall* is generally more concise than Enikel's sprawling narratives.

The similarity in the reporting of such an unusual detail points to a direct textual

dependency, and invites us to look for further points of convergence elsewhere in the narratives. Here, of course, we must be wary. Apart from the detail of the neutral angels, the creation-fall material found in these two texts was so widely distributed that most of the motifs here are common-place. A single detail appearing in both texts is therefore often of little significance, but a recurring pattern of details may well be important. With this caution in mind, we now take a broader look at our two texts. When we lay out a synopsis of the first Karlsruhe story side by side with one of Enikel we find a striking structural similarity:

Enikel's Weltchronik

Das got die engel magt

First (*des êrsten*) God creates Heaven and Earth, then the angels.

First (*des êrsten*) God creates the angels.

Lucifer is the leading angel; also mentioned are Sathael, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael

Lucifer is the leading angel. Michael is also mentioned, but only a little later.

The angels praise God; God commends Lucifer.

Lucifer addresses the other angels. He speaks of his throne, which is called Aquilon, and says:

Lucifer considers to himself, then addresses the other angels. He speaks of his crown, and says:

des wil ich got gelîch sîn.  
daz himelrîch daz ist mîn. 193-4

Dem hochsten bin ich gleich  
Vnd daß hymelreich

He adds a promise that whoever stands by him will wear a higher crown than before.

Sol mir wesen vndertan. 17-19  
He adds a promise that whoever stands by him will receive a share of the spoils.

The loyal angels refuse to join him.

The rebel angels agree to join him.

The neutral angels take no stance.

Lucifer repeats his promise.

Lucifer repeats his promise.

God condemns Lucifer for *hochfart*.  
God condemns the rebel angels.

Michael condemns Lucifer for *hoffart*.  
Michael praises the loyal angels.

The neutral angels fall.

The neutral angels take no stance.  
The neutral angels fall.

The rebels in Hell lament their plight.

God addresses Lucifer; Michael is given Lucifer's throne; Lucifer is cast out.

There is, then, an almost exact structural parallel between this first story in the Karlsruhe cycle and the corresponding text in Enikel. Despite the occasional substitution and change of order, we find that the elements of the two narratives match one another closely. A few details from Enikel's text are missing in the shorter Karlsruhe narrative, but virtually every detail in the Karlsruhe text finds its equivalent in Enikel. The only exception here is the rôle

of Michael and the name of his (previously Lucifer's) throne, Aquilon. These however can be understood as belonging to the second story in the cycle.

This short second narrative, *Von dem engel michahel*, tells how Michael is elevated and how God discusses with him his plans to create humankind. This material is not found in Enikel and presumably has a separate history. However it does have one point of contact with the *Weltchronik*. After the fall of angels, Enikel offers a speech spoken by Lucifer in Hell:

ê was ich lieht und schœn,	305
nû bin ich krump und hæen	
unde trag ouch krumbiu horn	
und bin êwîclîch verlorn.	
ich stink als ein vûler hunt,	
daz was mir ê vil unkunt.	310

*Von dem engel michahel* has a very similar speech:

E was ich ein engel klar	
Also licht vnd offenbar.	
Von vberingem schallen	25
Bin ich tieff gevallen	
Aus dem fron himelrich.	
Wem bin ich worden gleich?	
Mir stet naß vnd der munt	
Krummer dan einem hellehunt.	30

After this, the two texts go their separate ways. Enikel tells of the six days of creation, then of the creation of Adam and Eve. The Karlsruhe codex in its third cameo *Wie got den menschen macht* goes straight into the Adam and Eve story, but with no particular closeness to Enikel. It focuses on angelic clothes, for example, which are absent in the *Weltchronik*. The two texts come briefly together again towards the end of this section, where both have a dialogue in Hell between Lucifer and another fallen angel (Enikel: Satan; Karlsruhe: Mathalyon) in which they lament the creation of Adam and Eve and undertake to do something about it. However, the fourth story in the Karlsruhe cycle, *Die slange Adam vnd Eva betrôge*, bears no relation to Enikel at all. It has a distinctive feature not found in the *Weltchronik*, in that the serpent attempts to deceive Adam first. On the other hand, Enikel's account of the reckoning between God and the protoplasts, based on the dialogue in Gen. 3.11–17, has an unusual order of events, and this is not reflected in the later codex. The final part of the Karlsruhe cycle, *Das teuffel buch*, finds no correspondence in Enikel whatsoever. We see then that the two texts, when they run parallel, are very close indeed, but that they only run parallel in those sequences where fallen and neutral angels are under discussion. This is easily understandable. Any medieval writer could have told the story of Adam and Eve from memory, or if need be by reference to the Bible or any standard exegetical text. But when it came to fallen angels, a special source was required for guidance.

On the basis of these considerations, the case for a direct line of borrowing seems to have been made. This can only mean that Enikel is a source for the later work. The other

possibility, that the Karlsruhe codex preserves an earlier text which was also Enikel's source, seems highly unlikely in view of the 160-year difference in dates, especially as the language of the Karlsruhe codex is clearly later than Enikel's. We know that Enikel was widely read in the centuries after his death. Strauch lists 39 *Weltchronik* manuscripts, roughly a third of which date from the 15th century. Parts of Enikel's text were incorporated into the Heinrich von München compilations, in which form they also became an important source for the *Historienbibeln* of the period<sup>9</sup>, and in the early 16th century a section of the *Weltchronik* appeared in print.<sup>10</sup> There is no reason to doubt that his text may have been available to a writer of *Schwänke* in the years before 1435.

If Enikel's *Weltchronik* provides a source for *Von Luzifers und Adams Fall*, this will have consequences for at least one interpretative problem on the Codex Karlsruhe 408. Several writers have found it necessary to address the question of how a single collection can comfortably contain both sacred history and bawdy anecdotes of sexual conquest in jarring juxtaposition.<sup>11</sup> However if the immediate sources of the biblical and apocryphal material are secularising works such as that of Enikel, then the dissonance is very much less surprising.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Philipp Strauch (ed.), MHG dt. chr. III, Hanover & Leipzig 1891–1900; reprinted Munich 1990; see esp. p. 5, nt. 1. Adalbert von Keller, *Erzählungen aus alideutschen Handschriften*, Stuttgart 1855, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ursula Schmid (ed.), *Codex Karlsruhe 408*, Berne and Munich 1974. Reference will be made to Schmid's line numbers.

<sup>3</sup> Josef Seeber, "Über die 'neutralen engel' bei Wolfram von Eschenbach und bei Dante", *ZfdPh* 24 (1892) 32–7; see also *ZfdPh* 25 (1893) 566; M. Dando, "Les anges neutres", *Cahiers d'études cathares*, II<sup>e</sup> Série N° 69 (1976), 3–28. Dando shows how the Christian fathers paved the way for the development of the idea by distinguishing two classes of fallen angels.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Gichtel, *Die Weltchronik Heinrichs von München in der Runkelsteiner Handschrift des Heinz Sentlinger* (= *Schriften zur bayrischen Landesgeschichte Band 28*), Munich 1937, 188–205.

<sup>5</sup> Discussed in: Brian Murdoch, "Genesis and Pseudo-Genesis in Late Mediæval German Poetry", *Medium Ævum* 45 (1976), 71–8.

<sup>6</sup> See Kurt Illing, *<sup>2</sup>VL* 5, col 1102.

<sup>7</sup> We may contrast this with Dante, who speaks of their cowardice, and the *Mitteldeutsche Brandan*, which simply describes apathy.

<sup>8</sup> Lines 49–50 are clearly corrupt. Schmid comments: "Sinn schwer verständlich, fehlt ein Verspaar?"

<sup>9</sup> Ute von Bloh, *Die illustrierten Historienbibeln* (= *Vestigia Bibliae Band 13/14*), Berne 1993; esp. 28, 37f, 60, 75.

<sup>10</sup> Frieder Schanze, "'Von Virgilio dem Zauberer': Ein unbekannter Druck Peter Wagners und seine Quellen. Enikels 'Weltchronik' und ein Lied in Klingsors Schwarzem Ton", *Gutenberg Jahrbuch* 63 (1988), 90.

<sup>11</sup> e.g. Heinz Rupp in his introduction to Reclam's *Der münch mit dem genflein*, Stuttgart 1972, a selection from the Codex Karlsruhe 408 which, however, does not include *Von Luzifers und Adams Fall*.

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