

The Narratives of Jörg Wickram: Early Examples of Petrarch's Reception in Germany

Cordula Politis

This study examines the concept of *Fortuna* in Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, published between 1360 and 1366, and translated into German in 1532 as *Von der Artzney beyder Glück, des guten und widerwertigen*. Thus, the word *Glück* became the equivalent of Petrarch's *Fortuna* and appeared several times in the narratives by Jörg Wickram (1505–c.1560).¹ We will argue that Petrarch's innovative representation of *Fortuna* as a psychological force was consciously adopted in Wickram's narratives, examples of the German reception of Italian Renaissance ideas.

The importance which Petrarch's treatise *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, published between 1360 and 1366, held for the Italian Renaissance has long been recognized, and since Konrad Burdach's work describing Petrarch's influence on *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen* by Johannes von Tepl (1401), *De remediis* is called a "Grundbuch der werdenden Renaissance."² Petrarch's treatise offers a new approach to *Fortuna*, previously regarded as an external, superhuman force of a willful and uncontrollable nature:³ for Petrarch, *Fortuna* (good fortune as well as adversity) is potentially controllable by man's inner resources.

In Germany, selected passages from *De remediis* appeared in translation toward the end of the fifteenth century: scholars such as Heinrich Steinhöwel, at one time rector of the University of Padua, and Niklas von Wyle, once a student in Pavia, rendered some parts of the treatise in German. In 1517, the Augsburg publishers Grimm and Wirsung decided to print a complete edition in German and contracted Peter Stahel, of Nürnberg, as translator, and the eminent author Sebastian Brant as editor and consultant.⁴ When Stahel died in 1521, Georg Spalatin took over, and by September 1521 the translation was complete; unfortunately, Grimm and Wirsung went bankrupt in 1522, so that the book did not appear before 1532, brought out by another Augsburg publisher named Steiner. Thus the German version made its appearance almost two centuries after the original, as *Von der Artzney beyder Glück, des guten und widerwertigen*, establishing the term *Glück* as the German equivalent of the Petrarchan *Fortuna*.

Although close geographically to Strassburg and Basel, strongholds of German humanism, which nurtured exchange with Italian culture, the Alsatian writer Wickram was not able to benefit from this proximity. As an illegitimate child he was denied access to traditional institutions of higher education and remained ignorant of Latin, not to mention Italian.⁵ Throughout his life, Wickram held lowly positions within the municipalities of small provincial towns in a predominantly Protestant area, first serving as *Ratsdiener* in Colmar, then as town scribe in Burkheim. His cultural life was re-

stricted to several institutions in Colmar, of which he was in charge, the most prominent being the *Meistersängergesellschaft*, which he founded in 1549: for this group he bought the *Kolmarer Liederhandschrift*, the main source for Mastersinger poetry.⁶ Wickram never traveled beyond the vicinity of Colmar, except for a single trip to Frankfurt and Speyer; his educational and social credentials cannot be compared to those of a Niklas von Wyle or a Heinrich Steinhöwel. Yet, he may be considered a Renaissance man of sorts, albeit on a small scale, for he had a variety of artistic talents all of which he put to use in the public arena. Not only did his writing explore several realms, worldly and religious, he also painted and made woodcuts to illustrate his texts and those of others; in addition, he composed hymns for the use of the *Meistersängergesellschaft*. However, the impact of his artistic achievements was mostly felt within a regional scope, and therefore his profile is distinct from that of scholars and artists typically associated with the reception of the Italian Renaissance in Germany.

In spite of Wickram's limited education, the author was familiar with passages from Petrarch's *Von der Artzney beyder Glück*. Thus, in his collection of *exempla*, *Die Sieben Hauptlaster*, Wickram refers to the Italian's treatise, and chapter fifteen of *Hauptlaster* is entitled "Etliche nutzbare sprüch aus . . . Francisco Petrarcha gezogen."⁷ This chapter discusses questions of education drawn from Petrarch's advice as expressed in chapters twenty-three and forty-six of his "büch von dem widerwertigen glück" [Book about Adversity]. Hence Wickram must have had access to the important Renaissance treatise on fortune, and it is possible that a copy was made available to him by his Strassburg publisher, Jacob Frölich. Wickram's knowledge of *Von der Artzney* will be of great importance when we evaluate the parallels between his concept of *Glück* and that of Petrarch.

Glück is indeed a central idea in Wickram's narratives, and we may raise the issue of whether the author deliberately employed Petrarch's concept or adopted it 'unconsciously' as a result of its presence in contemporary discourse. Although some critics acknowledge the German's acquaintance with selected elements of humanist and Renaissance tradition, no one has as yet evaluated Wickram's specific adaptation of Petrarch's ideas and the differences remaining in both authors' perspectives of *Fortuna*. In fact, we will show that ultimately the German Reformation influenced the form of *Glück* in the Colmar author's narratives.⁸ I will argue then that Wickram may have adopted Petrarch's concept deliberately and systematically. Yet, the German author's representation of *Glück* is remarkably innovative when considered against the background of German sixteenth-c. literature: *Glück*, in Wickram, is internal to the human mind and may be considered a psychological force, and Petrarch's account of *Glück*, as found in *Von der Artzney*, is the only source that could have provided a model for this specific concept in Wickram.

Our comparison therefore examines not only the adaptation of a text central to the Italian Renaissance (albeit in its German translation) as a German work of literature, but also reevaluates Wickram's position in the sixteenth-c. history of ideas and illustrates the impact of the Reformation upon the German author's treatment of *Glück*. Hence, we will characterize the concept of *Glück* in Petrarch's *Von der Artzney bayder Glück* with special regard to the idea's psychological dimension; then compare specific examples from the Italian's treatise with corresponding passages in Wickram's narratives; and, finally, suggest that Wickram's use of Petrarch's ideas may be considered indicative of other important changes of renescent ideas in the climate of the German Reformation.

Petrarch's Concept of Fortune

Von der Artzney bayder Glück suggests that *Glück* appears in positive as well as negative manifestations, whereby positive *Glück* is eventually considered to be a greater threat than its negative counterpart. Examples of good fortune include material luck, such as one's possession of wealth, or a thriving family, as well as varying mental states such as hope or joy, all of which are equally conducive to complacency, but may have harmful psychological consequences (Boethius). Positive *Glück* may cause one to forget one's station in society. In the words of the treatise,

Als pald so sich das Glück senffter od' milter erzaigt,
so hept vnser gemüt an waich zû werden
vn geschwellen,
vn empfahen mit der glückseligkait ein vergessung seines stands.⁹

The negative type of *Glück* is manifest in incidents such as loss of possessions or loved ones, or mental states like anger and depression. The danger inherent in negative fortune lies not so much in the material losses wrought by it, but rather in the mental devastation which it may trigger, and thus, the frailty of the human mind plays a major role in the destruction caused by fortune. Hence, the basic remedy for each type of *Glück* is as follows:

Das güt Glück bedarff allweg eins zaumbs
vnnd das widerwertig aines trosts.
In jhenem ist die erhebungge des gemüts nider zu trucken
vnnd inn disem ist die schwachait zu bestercken vnnd auff zu
hebenn (I, 5-6).¹⁰

The psychological dimensions of *Glück* become even more obvious when we consider that their manifestations are characterized as "geprechen des gemüts" (I, 8), ailments of the mind. Petrarch seems to identify as the real con-

stituents of *Glück* certain deficiencies inherent in a person's character, rather than an external power. The manifestations of fortune are described as:

die vier vermerten vñ angepornen anfechtunng
 leyden vñnd anmütigkeyt des menschlichenn gemüts
 zu allen theylen gegenn einander allzeyt kriegeng;
 das ist Hoffnung oder die begir
 vñnd die freüde,
 die forcht,
 dye beküernus oder der schmerzen.¹¹

Here, the four affects — hope or desire, joy, fear, and distress or pain — are named as the main consequences of fortune, constituting the 'good' and 'bad' outcomes mentioned in the treatise's title. How exactly are the affects related to *Glück*? According to the text, the immoderate, uncontrolled way in which the emotions react to certain incidents causes these events to be experienced as either completely devastating, should fear or pain be involved, or excessively exhilarating, should hope or joy be at work. To the extent that both devastation and exhilaration are ultimately destructive on a psychological level, the affects themselves might be said to constitute fortune by granting such incidents an (unnecessarily) severe effect on a person's life. In this sense, fortune consists in the affective reaction to certain events rather than in the incidents themselves; hence the area in which *Glück* operates, according to Petrarch, is the human mind and its affectivity.

The Italian's remedy against the workings of fortune must therefore be understood against the background of the internal, that is psychological, impact of this force; *Glück* and the affects that constitute it may be controlled by reason, *ratio* or *Vernunft*, however:

die Vernunft die das menschlich gemüth regieret
 wirdt denen [den Anfechtungen des Glücks, i.e. the affects] allenn
 mit einander antworten
 mit jrem schildt vñnd helm
 auch mit jhrer kunst
 vñnd aignem gewalt (I, 8).¹²

Reason may suppress the affects and hence preserve or reestablish mental stability; it may check false hopes and unfounded expectations, thus safeguarding a person against the consequences of good fortune which are hidden beneath false contentment. Likewise, reason may counteract the effects of negative *Glück* by holding despair at bay. In short, reason provides the composure necessary to establish an even mind, which (according to Petrarch) is essential in a confrontation with fortune, whether good or bad.

Thus *Von der Artney* proposes equanimity as the ideal state of mind on the grounds that it is unassailable by fortune and may counteract its blows. In this

sense Petrarch's *Glück* is operating internally, a fact which distinguishes it from the traditional, external concept of fortune as a superhuman force, and this feature is most productive for our comparison of Petrarch with Wickram. At the same time, we should note that Petrarch's demand for humans' mental detachment from all incidents is close to Stoicism. As we shall see, this extreme position distinguishes the Italian's concept from that of Wickram.

Comparison of Petrarch's and Wickram's Concepts of Fortune

As a starting-point, let us consider two parallels between each writer's representation of *Glück*. Chapter thirty-one of Petrarch's *Das ander Büch / von artzney des boesen Glücks* is entitled "Von den beschwerlichen nachbaren," illustrated (by the "Petrarca Meister") by means of a picture of a woman pouring dishwater out of her window and onto her neighbor's head. Likewise, at the beginning of Wickram's narrative *Von guoten und boesen Nachbaurn*, bad neighbors are causing (the same) serious trouble for the protagonists, ill fortune by the very act depicted in *Von der Artzney*. While one might realize that such an incident must be considered a typical nuisance of day-to-day life in an early modern town, the fact that this occurrence is related by both writers to the manifestation of *Glück* suggests that the resemblance is more than mere coincidence.

What advice is offered by Petrarch and Wickram for coping with the situation, and what are the similarities between the two texts? In *Von der Artzney*, the voice of reason recommends patience; as a last resort, however, "flucht," flight, is advised, reasoning that "[m]an soll kain weg zü der still und rüwe des gemüths für schwere achten," that is, the preservation of mental stability is considered vital. Notably, the protagonist of Wickram's *Nachbaurn*, Robertus, is shown to cope with the disruption caused by his neighbors in a way that follows Petrarch's treatise to the letter. When patience fails to bear fruit, Robertus and his family leave their hometown for another place, an act in accordance with Petrarch's *flucht*, thereby reclaiming the calm state of mind advocated in order to overcome *Glück*. In fact one might, as it were, be led to believe that Robertus studied the treatise, so remarkably close to the behavior recommended by Petrarch is the protagonist's reaction. While there is no explicit reference to *Von der Artzney* in Wickram's narrative, further analysis will show that his approach relies on the position recommended by Petrarch.

Another specific case of *Glück* in Petrarch's treatise appears in book II, chapter forty-four, entitled "Von einem ungehorsamen sun," in which the complaints of a person stricken with a wayward son are described. *Vernunfft* replies as follows:

Ist es ain laster der jugent unnd zeyt,
 so wirt es mit der zeyt abgehenn . . . erbarmung
 ist man dem verpflichtet
 dem die natur am wenigsten hilft;¹³

if all else fails, reason advises that one banish such delinquent children from the home. A corresponding situation occurs in Wickram's *Der Knabenspiegel*, where Ritter Gottlieb attributes his son's disobedience to fortune. However, unlike Robertus's reaction in *Nachbaurn*, Gottlieb's subsequent behavior does not follow the Petrarchan advice: the father's attempts to discipline his son Wilbaldus fail, for the youngster stabs his teacher and, before Gottlieb gets a chance to banish him, runs off with a friend of comparably evil disposition. Gottlieb's measures for coping with his son's behavior are not only insufficient, they also show scant evidence of the *erbarmung*, or mercy, advocated in *Von der Artzney*. While one might argue that leniency would have been futile in the face of Wilbaldus's waywardness, one must consider the effect which the incident had on Gottlieb. The main thrust of Petrarch's advice is the mental well-being of the person affected by ill fortune, but Gottlieb does not attain the detachment advocated by the Italian and is emotionally devastated, while his wife dies of a broken heart because she cannot endure her son's misbehavior, this outcome reinforcing Gottlieb's misery. Such parental grief seems especially tragic when, on Wilbaldus's return, the son proves to be a reformed man. Had Gottlieb and his wife shown greater self-control in their emotional reactions, the situation would have taken a turn for the better all by itself, a possibility implied by the guarded optimism which Petrarch reserves regarding the outcomes of adverse fortune.

These cases of *Glück* in Wickram's *Knabenspiegel* and *Nachbaurn* echo passages of *Von der Artzney* and validate Petrarch's advice, as we have seen, either by demonstrating cases of conformity or highlighting the consequences of transgression. In what follows we shall compare Wickram's concept of *Glück* to that in Petrarch's treatise.

The Italian's approach to *Glück* aims at its aspects operating internally, by forces within the human mind; certain adjustments of the mind are necessary, namely, exercising self-control and reason to manipulate or even suppress the affects. This concept is present almost consistently in Wickram's narratives, as shown in *Gabriotto und Reinhart* (1551) and *Der Goldfaden* (1557). The protagonists of both tales are engaged in illicit love-affairs, placing the lovers in serious danger; in *Goldfaden*, the characters' well-being is subsequently restored, while *Gabriotto und Reinhart* ends in tragedy. The discoveries of the young people's romantic attachments are attributed to fortune.

In order to establish that *Glück* is effective internally for Wickram just as in Petrarch, we need to determine the protagonists' reactions to the intrusion of fortune. The ill manifestations of Wickram's *Glück* are the consequence of the

characters' own actions, hence within their own control; thus, the fact that the protagonists perform certain decisive acts is related to the particular state of mind they are in at the time of a specific incident, these proclivities corresponding to the affects which Petrarch regards as constituents of fortune.

In *Gabriotto und Reinhart*, the discoveries of illicit love, attributed to ill fortune, clearly result from the lovers' carelessness. Advised explicitly to exercise extreme caution, Reinhart and Rosamunda ignore the fact that they belong to two different social classes; when aristocratic Rosamunda had the armor of lowly Reinhart decorated with roses, armature worn at a public event, the king's suspicion is aroused.¹⁴ A similar negligence occurs by the actions of another couple, Gabriotto and Philomena: Gabriotto has the audacity to wear in public a ring given to him by Philomena. Since her mother had initially bestowed the ring on Philomena, the older woman immediately recognizes it and informs the king; in addition, Gabriotto pours out his heart to a newly arrived jester later revealed to be the king's spy. Thus, the protagonists themselves are responsible for causing mishaps which they attribute to *Glück*, and Gabriotto says:

wer mag doch [uns] also schandtlich verrahten haben?
 O du schandtliches glück,
 wer soll auff dich hoffen?
 wer soll dir vertrauwen?
 fürwar nyemandts.¹⁵

The events attributed to *Glück*, however, turn out to be the result of the characters' own mistakes resulting from gross negligence, and could well have been avoided. To this extent, fortune operates in an internal way.

How, then, may this concept of *Glück* be related to the one described in Petrarch's *Von der Artzney*? Seen superficially, the two notions seem to differ: while in Wickram, the internal nature of *Glück* is the consequence of the characters' (potentially avoidable) practical mistakes, for Petrarch, fortune consists mainly in their psychological reactions to certain incidents. On closer inspection, however, the naiveté and carelessness leading Wickram's characters to make their mistakes are indeed related to the affects forming a crucial part of Petrarch's psychological interpretation of *Glück*. In order to appreciate this parallel, we need to determine whether the instances of fortune in Wickram fit into Petrarch's categories of 'good' or 'bad' fortune. At first sight, negative *Glück* seems to affect *Gabriotto und Reinhart*'s protagonists; however, when considering the context in which the incidents leading to the lovers' discoveries happen, we should interpret the actions as instances of good fortune in the Petrarchan sense. According to the Italian (as stated above), positive fortune may lull the mind into a state of false security on which adversity may have a devastating effect or which may even invite

such disastrous experiences. In Gabriotto's and Reinhart's cases, initial success in the pursuit of love, interpreted by the characters and the narrator as a manifestation of positive *Glück*, causes the protagonists to abandon self-control, and the emotional consequences are particularly disastrous since they are unexpected. In Petrarchan terms, Gabriotto's and Reinhart's predicaments may be explained by an excess of the affects hope and desire, whose predominance leads to the abandonment of reason.

In addition, we observe an example of negative fortune in the Petrarchan sense in *Gabriotto und Reinhart*: following the discovery, Gabriotto is forced to leave Philomena, is overcome by despair, and eventually dies. In the narrative, this process is linked to the willfulness of fortune, but at the same time, the outcome is a consequence of the predominance of the affects pain and dejection in Gabriotto's mind. If we read the passage concerning Gabriotto's death in view of the advice given in *Von der Artzney*, we see that his death could have been avoided: like Reinhart, Gabriotto has failed to balance his passionate feelings with the help of reason and is completely overwhelmed. Hence, instances of both kinds of *Glück* in *Gabriotto und Reinhart* may be explained satisfactorily by analyzing the Petrarchan model.

Notably, the protagonists of this tale do not appear to be aware of their failure to avoid the ill manifestations of *Glück* and instead refer to fortune as a force external to all human actions. Their ignorance has to be understood in terms of the didactic intentions of the narrative, as indicated in the story's subtitle: Wickram wants to provide "ein gûte warnung" [a good warning] against passionate love. The fact that the internal dimension of *Glück* is hidden from the protagonists may well be a result of the peculiar delusions brought on by such passion, against which Wickram warns his readership. The didactic aspect of his work aligns Gabriotto und Reinhart even closer to that shown in Petrarch's treatise, which is explicitly designed to teach, a further parallel linking the two concepts of *Glück*, and one confirming Wickram's deliberate implementation of the Italian's ideas.

The representation of fortune in *Gabriotto und Reinhart* is paralleled by the theme's treatment in *Der Goldfaden (The Thread of Gold)*. Here, once more, the lovers' downfall may be explained by their indulgence in positive *Glück* against which Petrarch has warned: a sense of false optimism triggered by the raptures of young love leads to the affects joy, hope and desire, thus permitting the manifestation of *Glück*. Failure to control these affects and to subdue passionate emotions by employing reason results in disaster, both practical and emotional, for the protagonists concerned.

Following the discovery of an unlawful love-affair between Lewfrid and Angliana because of carelessness, Lewfrid (a peasant's son) is forced to leave the court and his beloved, a development again attributed to the workings of *Glück* by Wickram. Lewfried acquired his name from a tame lion which had

been at his side since the boy's conception (cf. *Iwein*); the golden thread, which Angliana had given to Lewfrid, symbolizes their love for one another. Lewfrid's situation closely resembles that of Gabriotto, but while the latter succumbs to the workings of *Glück*, Lewfrid does not despair, remains calm and patient, and first acquires the trust of Angliana's aristocratic father, and then secures her hand in marriage. Interpreted in Petrarchan terms, Lewfrid has managed to suppress the affects pain and dejection by reasoning in accordance with the Italian's expressed demand for cautious optimism shown in response to negative *Glück*. Displaying considerate, rational behavior in a critical situation, Lewfrid is able to compensate for his earlier carelessness when confronted with *Glück*, and thus is able to control fortune, thereafter rising to the upper strata of society.¹⁶

As the above examples from Wickram's narratives have shown, the German's and Petrarch's concepts of *Glück* share the feature of being indigenous within the human mind, and whether or not Wickram's characters adhere to the Petrarchan remedy determines the degree of their success. In fact, Gabriotto's and Reinhart's stories develop in a manner diametrically opposed to that of Lewfrid: one narrative represents the consequences of failing to apply the Petrarchan remedy, and the other tale shows success as the result of following it. The two narratives complement each other. However, while the parallels between the account of *Glück* in Wickram's tales and that in Petrarch's *Von der Artzney bayder Glück* are striking, important differences between the two concepts exist.

First, there is a significant variation in the way in which persons are supposed to respond to *Glück*. According to Petrarch, suppressing the affects is sufficient in order to control the consequences of fortune; for Wickram, this position does not suffice, as his advice extends to circumstances outside the human mind, and how these behavioral problems should be handled. In the cases of Gabriotto, Reinhart, and Lewfrid, there is a need for protagonists to exercise caution on a practical level, employing all the measures that the particular situation requires. While having a balanced state of mind is essential in negotiating adverse circumstances, Wickram is also concerned that the lovers heed practical matters, i.e., investigate how a situation might be managed in order to control negative external conditions. Thus Wickram's characters need to exercise practical skills and a certain worldly wisdom in order to secure long-term well-being. Therefore, the German writer's pragmatic concept of fortune is different from the purely internal form of Petrarch's.

Furthermore, the two approaches differ from one another by the way in which positive situations, that is, circumstances which are pleasant or beneficial to those who experience them, are regarded. Petrarch assumes that every positive condition may be potentially destructive, while Wickram does not share the concern with positive *Glück* to the same extent. The compari-

son between Gabriotto, Reinhart, and Lewfrid suggests that the impact of ill fortune upon anyone, and each character's way of coping with it, determine the protagonists' moral developments in the long run. The lovers' reaction to a crisis associated with bad fortune makes or breaks each protagonist in the course of the narratives; thus, contrary to Petrarch, Wickram investigates the manifestations of negative rather than of positive fortune. Moreover, in the German's stories, those characters who achieve material success as a result of their own endeavors enjoy enduring happiness.

Wickram's confidence in the relative security of wealth and social respectability, provided that these acquisitions are safeguarded by a person's virtue, is in stark contrast with Petrarch's pessimism regarding these issues.¹⁷ This difference may be explained by considering the long period of time which separates Wickram's text from that of Petrarch, and by examining the cultural background in which each author's writings were embedded. The Italian's treatise ushered in a new era, characterized by a belief in humankind's self-sufficiency, which, in particular, was supposed to extend to a person's mental capacities.¹⁸ Two hundred years later, during Wickram's time, an individual's control began to include one's material surroundings; one's ambition, determination, and necessary practical skills enabled entrepreneurs to rise to the upper strata of society. Thus the way in which a protagonist like Lewfrid handled *Glück* reflects values prevalent in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-c. society. The theme of the *Aufsteiger* (self-made person) is significant for Wickram's representation of *Glück* in a way in which it could not have been for Petrarch.

Finally, Wickram's concept of *Glück* is more pessimistic than that of Petrarch in one particular aspect. Although skeptical about material happiness, the Italian is confident in human ability to control *Glück* and in so doing secure mental well-being by employing reason to suppress love and other emotions. While this balance is achieved at the price of a person's material pleasures, complete inner stability is gained. Wickram, however, at times doubts the human potential to control *Glück*; Gabriotto's and Reinhart's stories show that the human mind may exhibit weaknesses. In Wickram, *Glück*, on occasion, also operates externally and should be met by humankind with a more guarded, and possibly more realistic, approach.

Wickram's skepticism may result from the generic difference between fictional narratives (Wickram's) and abstract treatises (Petrarch's). At the same time, the distinction between both authors may also have resulted from variant conditions in the literary markets. Petrarch's spiritual approach was possible because his connection with highly cultured benefactors afforded him certain liberties. By contrast, the commercial pressures of the market for which Wickram found himself producing may have forced him to curry favor with a relatively unsophisticated and uneducated lay readership, requir-

ing the down-to-earth approach he employs. However, the differences between Petrarch and Wickram go beyond genre demands and authorial situation and, as we shall see, relate to the characteristics of the respective time periods during which the authors wrote.

Italian Renaissance and German Reformation

Wickram's position is unique in the German literature of his time, because German fiction of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, such as *Melusine* (published 1474), or *Fortunatus* (1509), does not represent *Glück* as a force operating within the human mind. Instead, these narratives, in order to account for the protagonists' mishaps, rely on traditional concepts of *Glück* as an external, superhuman force, as shown in the German version of Boccaccio's "Guiscardo e Ghismonda." This story from *Decamerone* (IV, 1) was translated into German toward the end of the fifteenth century by Niklas von Wyle, whose other translation projects included passages from Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae*. "Guiscardo e Ghismonda" is of particular interest as it appears to have provided Wickram with the central motif for *Gabriotto und Reinhart*, but unlike the latter narrative, "Guiscardo" accounts for the lovers' demise by referring to the uncontrollable external impact of fortune. Wickram's departure from Petrarch's approach reveals his innovative way of narrating his tales; by the same token, the Colmar author's idea of *Glück*'s psychological impact goes beyond most theoretical accounts on the subject offered by late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-c. German writers. In the works of authors as diverse as Sebastian Brant and Hans Sachs, *Glück* becomes discernible as a force operating not only outside of the human mind, but also removed from the scope of human control.

Wickram's innovative treatment of *Glück* is all the more remarkable inasmuch as a full version of Petrarch's treatise did not become available in German until 1532. Although selected passages had been available since the late fifteenth century, this sampling did not fully reveal the nature of Petrarch's *Fortuna*. It may have taken some time for the Italian's approach to become understood in mainstream thought; on the other hand, the availability of the Italian's treatise with its concept of fortune might have been irrelevant to German readers had it not been for Wickram's literary courage to consider the impact of fortune's psychological consequences for humankind. As we may gather from the example of Niklas von Wyle, who presumably had first-hand access to *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, such an initiative on the part of Wickram testifies to his progressive tendencies, cancelling any attempt to evaluate him as parochial and narrow-minded, in spite of his own self-characterization (see above, note 5).

Wickram's reading and use of *De remediis utriusque fortunae* is an example of how a major work of the Italian Renaissance was received in sixteenth-c. Germany.¹⁹ Adjusting Petrarch's concept to the demands of the German readership, Wickram appropriated *De remediis* for the purposes of fiction in a way thoroughly convincing critics. At the same time, the process of adaptation is characterized by the presence of certain features which Petrarch did not include, such as Wickram's demonstration of the effect of *Glück* on the *material* level of human existence. In the Germany of the early 1500s, the reception of Italian Renaissance ideas was indeed tempered by the impact of the Reformation.

A major event in the German history of ideas, the Reformation had a crucial role beyond that within the area of religion, since the movement's intellectual message affected contemporary German literature profoundly. The Protestant ethos provided innovative concepts which gave an altogether different theological and cultural thrust to Wickram's work, compared to the general tenets upheld in fourteenth-c. Italy. Thus, the author's pessimistic view of the human mind's ability to control *Glück* must be understood as a response to the Reformation, in particular the Protestant debate about free will. While this dialogue relates to matters of faith and an individual's capacity to contribute to his or her own salvation, the debate also has a more worldly dimension: Luther's distrust of a human's ability to choose good over evil may be reflected in the way by which some of Wickram's characters contribute to their respective demises.

Likewise, the writer's departure from Petrarch's demand that humankind be detached from worldly success reflects a Protestant outlook. Thus, a major aim of early Protestant didactic thought was to educate the common man so as to control both his spiritual and his practical life; worldly success, in turn, became a measure of a person's faith and of divine grace, and it is in this context that Wickram's characters attempt to alter *Glück* in order to lead a more successful life on the material level.

Furthermore, the German's emphasis on material well-being must be explained by the economic changes occurring at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Triggered at least to some extent by early advocates of human free will such as Petrarch (and later Erasmus), these changes meant that individually acquired wealth began to challenge the established order of society. The possibility of moving beyond the confines of a lowly birth made a person's social position increasingly open to negotiation, becoming both an opportunity and a threat; in fact, the instability of these social developments was often blamed on the fickleness of *Glück!*

Thus, Wickram's adaptation of Petrarch's *Glück*, while determined by specifically German phenomena such as the economy in Central Europe, the Reformation, and the rise of Protestantism, can still be seen as an innovative

representation of *Glück* as a psychological force, remaining remarkably close to that of Petrarch's *Von der Artzney bayder Glück*, and suggesting deliberate adaptation.

Notes

¹ Franciscus Petrarca, *Von der Artzney bayder Glück, des guten und widerwertigen*, ed. Manfred Lemmer (Hamburg/Leipzig: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1984). Jörg Wickram, *Gabriotto und Reinhart*, ed. Hans-Gert Roloff (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967), *Der Goldfaden*, ed. Roloff (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968), and *Von guoten und boesen Nachbaum*, ed. Roloff (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969).

² *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*, ed. Konrad Burdach and Alois Bernt (Berlin: Weidmann, 1917), 302. See also: E. DuBruck, "Death and the Peasant: A Testimony on Fifteenth-Century Life and Thought by Johannes von Saaz," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 3 (1980), 55–70, and many articles by other scholars in what has become a long bibliography on von Saaz's work.

³ See: Peter Dinzelbacher, *Sachwörterbuch der Mediävistik* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1992), 254–55.

⁴ The heathen goddess and her wheel appear twice in Brant's *Narrenschiff* (1494), each time as the same woodcut believed to be by Albrecht Dürer (chs. 37 and 56).

⁵ Cf. "ich deß Lateins gar unkundig binn" (Jörg Wickram, *Ovids Metamorphosen*, ed. Hans-Gert Roloff [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990], 5); "So hab ich wenig Latein / Gstudieret" (Wickram, *Die Sieben Hauptplaster*, ed. Roloff [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972], 17).

⁶ For biographical detail, see Thomas Cramer, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur im späten Mittelalter* (Munich: dtv, 1990), 305.

⁷ *Die sieben Hauptplaster*, 66–68.

⁸ Erich Kleinschmidt suggests that Wickram's narratives "spiegeln eine etablierte Literaturszene, in der die romanische und zum Teil auch frühhumanistische Erzählüberlieferung (Enca Silvio, Boccaccio u.a.) . . . geläufig ist" (Kleinschmidt, "Narratives Ordnungsdenken und urbane Bildungsdidaktik: Jörg Wickram," 238–61 [241] in *Stadt und Literatur in der frühen Neuzeit: Voraussetzungen und Entfaltung im südwestdeutschen, elsässischen und schweizerischen Städteraum* [Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1982]). Kleinschmidt also claims that Wickram did not write "aufgrund einer völlig eigenständigen 'Invention.' Er nutzte ihm bekannte Quellen gelehrter (und im Druck zugänglicher) wie dann auch mündlicher Provenienz. . . . Der Autodidakt Wickram zeichnete sich aber auch durch die Fähigkeit aus, Wissen und Stoffe überall aufzugreifen, wo sie sich ihm boten, um sie wieder zu verwerten" ("Jörg Wickram," 494–511 [499] in *Deutsche Dichter der frühen Neuzeit (1450–1600): ihr Leben und Werk*, ed. Stephan Füssel [Berlin: Schmidt, 1993]). The reception of Renaissance thought was facilitated by the geographical situation of Wickram's home town Colmar: "Die europäische Mittellage [des Elsass] eröffnete über die Handelswege eine rasche und intensive Teilnahme an den mentalen, vor allem von Italien ausgehenden Aufbruchprozessen des ausgehenden Mittelalters" (*ibid.*, 494). However, Kleinschmidt claims that Wickram's adaptation of humanist ideas was limited: "Wickram schrieb zwar im Einflusspektrum des oberrheinischen Humanismus, doch nahm er von ihm nur bedingt Impulse auf" (500). On the other hand, an attempt

was made by Dieter Kartschoke to point out Wickram's proximity to humanist rhetoric (Kartschoke, "Bald bracht Phebus seinen Wagen: Gattungsgeschichtliche Überlegungen zu Jörg Wickrams *Nachbarn*-Roman," *Daphnis* 11 [1982]: 717-41).

⁹ Lemmer (above, note 1), book I, 4-5. [(A)s soon as fortune shows herself in a gentler and milder light / our mind begins to soften / and to swell / and, through joyfulness, to become oblivious of one's station.] My translation, as well as of the following citations.

¹⁰ [Good fortune always needs to be checked / and bad fortune to be comforted; / in the former, the feeling of elation needs to be suppressed / and in the latter, weakness needs to be turned into strength and thus eradicated — *ibid.*, I, 8.]

¹¹ [(T)he four acquired or congenital afflictions and illnesses of the human heart / (who) all fight each other all the time / that is hope or desire / and joy / fear / distress or pain — *ibid.*]

¹² [(R)ea-son, which rules the human mind / will counter all of these [the affects] / with its shield and helmet / also with its skills / and its very own power.]

¹³ [If it is a vice of young age / then it will pass in time . . . mercy / one owes to him / whom nature supports the least — Lemmer, book II, ch. 44, p. 54.]

¹⁴ When Reinhart (later) hears of Gabriotto's death, Reinhart dies and triggers the demise of his beloved Rosamunda.

¹⁵ [Who may have betrayed us so disgracefully / Oh abominable fortune / who may put their hopes in you / who may trust you / indeed nobody — Roloff [above, note 1], 176.]

¹⁶ A new look at the development of love in *Goldfaden* is Armin Schulz's "Texte und Textilien. Zur Entstehung der Liebe in Georg Wickrams *Goldfaden* (1557)," in *Daphnis* 30 (2001), 53-70.

¹⁷ Eventual and enduring success is attributed not only to the characters' personal achievements, but also to God, and is accompanied by appropriate humility on the part of the characters; this is perhaps Wickram's way of circumventing the fragility attributed to positive situations by Petrarch.

¹⁸ A succinct characterization of the Italian Renaissance is given in Dinzelbacher, *Sachwörterbuch* (note 3, above), 695.

¹⁹ This fact weakens claims as, for example, that by Kleinschmidt with regard to Wickram's adaptation of Albrecht von Halberstadt's *Metamorphoses*: "Eine auch nur ansatzweise Überformung in Richtung auf ein humanistisch-gelehrtes Stilideal ist nicht zu erkennen. Der Sachverhalt verdeutlicht anschaulich die fehlende Existenz eines deutschen Vulgärhumanismus mit einem eigenen, selbstbewussten Gestaltungswillen, wie er in Italien oder Frankreich längst schon verfestigt war" (Kleinschmidt [above, note 8], 259). Wickram's successful adaptation of *De remediis* may well be regarded as an example of German "Vulgärhumanismus."

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