

Reinhard Lamp

Thomas Frowyk, d.17.2.1448, & Wife Elizabeth South Mimms, Hertfordshire

Biographical

Thomas Frowyk was born into a highly respectable and affluent family of craftsmen, men-about-town, landowners, with a tradition of serving the community as aldermen, in South Mimms, at the time in Middlesex.¹ "The pedigree of this family ... starts with one Thomas de Frowyke of Old Fold, who had married the daughter and heiress of John Adrian of Brockham manor in Surrey. Cass in his comprehensive account of South Mimms says that a moated site on the edge of Hadley Green² is supposed to have been the place of the manor house of Old Fold. It remained the country seat for several generations of the family who were active in the City of London."³

Thomas, who is here commemorated, was the eldest son of Henry de Frowyk and Alice, daughter and heiress of John Cornwall of Willesden. His father died in 1386 and has his tomb in South Mimms church, with a simple brass consisting of four shields at the corners bearing the Frowyk arms: Azure a chevron between three lion's heads or, and a short inscription in Norman French:

Henri frowyk gift icy dieu de salme eit mey

"Henry Frowyk lies here, God have mercy on his soul."⁴

Henry's eldest son Thomas "seems to have become a prominent and active resident and justice of the peace in South Mimms and its

1 South Mimms used to be in Middlesex, but was incorporated into Hertfordshire in 1965.

2 Hadley Green is a small agglomeration near High Barnet, now on the outskirts of London.

3 H. K. CAMERON, *The Brasses of Middlesex, Part 23: South Mimms*, in: Transactions of the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, Vol. 34, 1938, Museum of London, London Wall, p. 213

4 op. cit., p. 214

neighbourhood."⁵ He married Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of William Ashe of Weld in Hertfordshire, and died 17th February 1448.⁶ In his will he left a life interest to his widow Elizabeth in the manors of Brokham and Oldfold, "provided she made no claim on the manor of Willesden and the estate called Gloucester, both in the county of Middlesex 'lately given'

as a marriage portion to his son Henry and Joan Lewknor..."⁷ The number of properties witnesses to the wealth assembled in the hands of Thomas de Frowyk.

Description of the brass

The brass to Thomas Frowyk is now laid into the floor of the side-chapel, together with other family-monuments, after having for a long time lain on the floor of the tower. His own effigy is gone; there is only the empty indent of a man in arms. A (rough) 19th-century rubbing⁸ shows what remained of the male figure at that time: a man, praying, in complete plate-armour.



Fig. 1: 19th c. rubbing.
From: CAMERON 1938, p. 218

5 op. cit., p. 213

6 op. cit., p. 215

7 op. cit., p. 219

8 Rubbing by Haines, now in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries, London, Burlington House, printed op. cit., p. 218

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His head is high-shaven and reclines on a long tournament-helmet, the visor being pushed up. The strange thing about this brass is that Frowyk's sword stands against his thigh, without the sign of a belt by which it might be attached to the body. Heart-shaped flanges decorate the elbow-guards, and long pauldrons cover not only the armpits but also the shoulders and the upper arm. The lames of his skirt are scalloped.

On his left is the effigy of his wife Elizabeth.⁹ Her figure, worn, shows her in kirtle and mantle, wimpled, her head under a kerchief, below which her hair seems to be done up in side-cauls. A miniature dog at her feet looks up at his mistress. Above, and between, the two figures of Thomas and Alice are empty indents of three shields, probably originally bearing the same arms as on his father's tomb. And below their feet was a foot-inscription, now missing also, but from an earlier record¹⁰ we know that the information contained Frowyk's date of death and the couple's names. It said:

Hic iacet Thomas Frowyk Armig. qui obiit 17 Mens. Februar. 1448 & Elisabetha uxor eius, que ob. 14 ac pueri eorundem quorum animabus propitietur altissimus. Amen.

Here lies Thomas Frowyk, Esquire, who died on February 17th, 1448, and ... Elizabeth, his wife, who died ... 14 ..., and their children. On their souls may the Almighty show mercy. Amen.

9 Cf. Illustrations in ERNEST R. SUFFLING, p. 74. The brasses of Walter Grene, 1423, from Hayes, and the knight of Isleworth (c. 1430), both again Middlesex, have almost identical figures with that of Frowyk. CAMERON adds John Gainsford, of Crowhurst, Surrey, and Thomas Reynes and his wife at Marston Mortaine, Beds., to the group, op. cit., p. 218. These brasses may well all of them have come from the same workshop.

10 JOHN WEEVER, *Ancient Funeral Monuments*, 1631, quoted by GOUGH, who reported the inscription already missing.

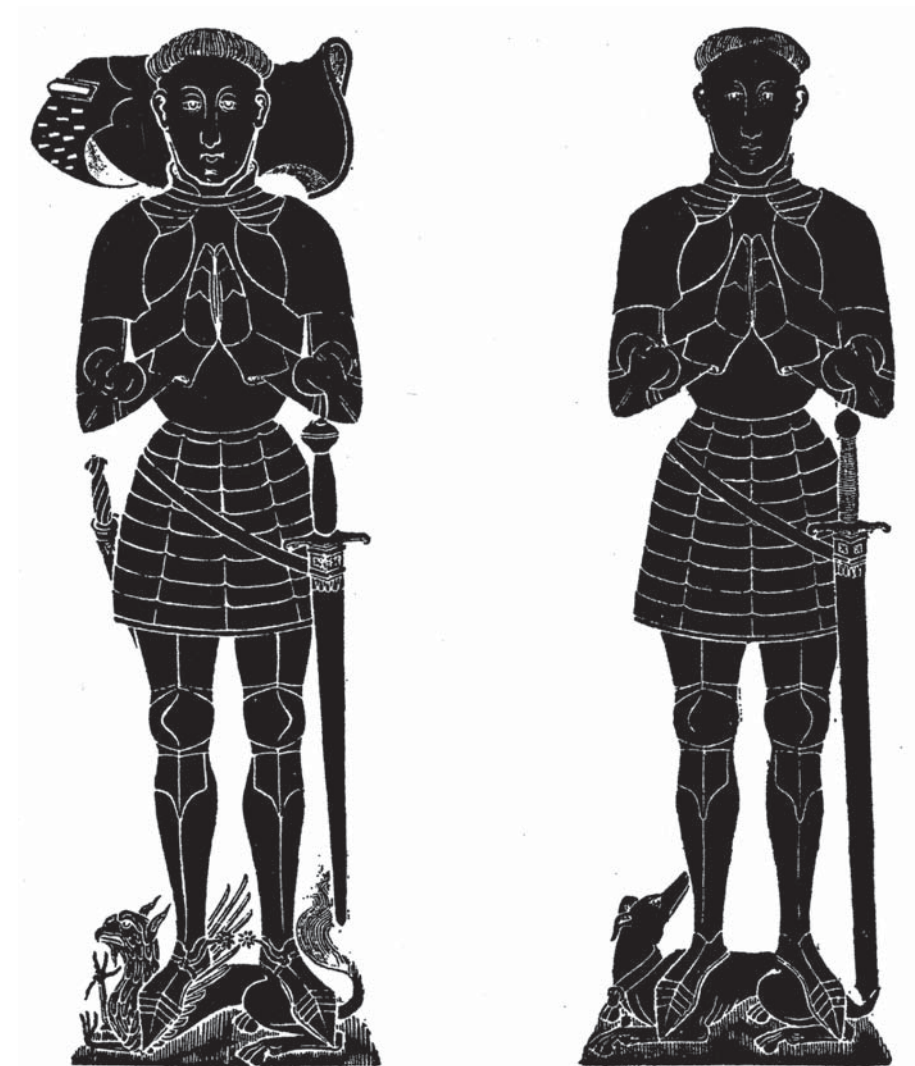
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Fig. 2: Similar depiction of two knights. From: SUFFLING 1910, p. 74

Below the adult figures is the brass of their children, a group of six sons and thirteen daughters, repetitive and stereotype. And underneath is a foot-inscription of six double-lines of Latin verse, which is the object of the present study.

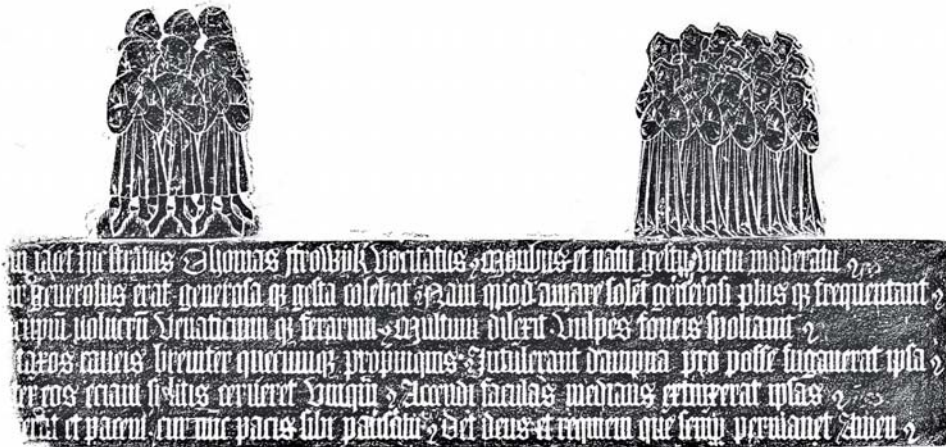


Fig. 3: Rubbing of the foot inscription
(rubbing and photograph: Kevin Herring, Shalford / Essex).

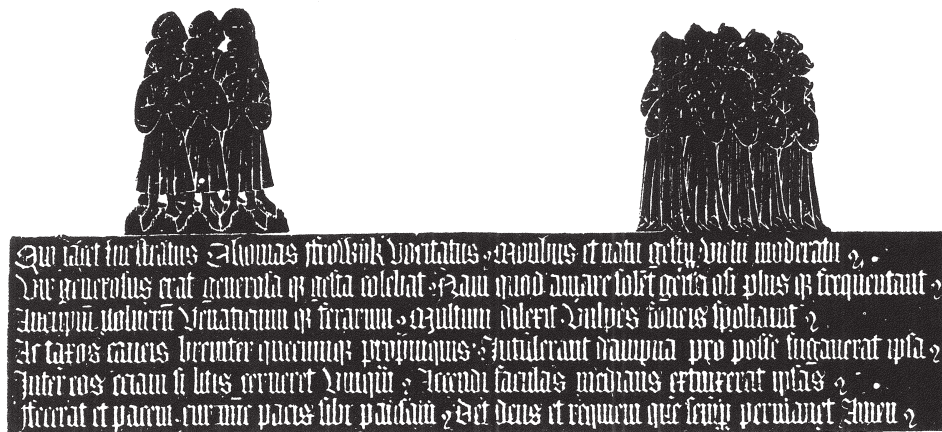


Fig. 4: Earlier rubbing of the foot inscription.
From: CAMERON 1938, p. 217.

Appreciation of the script

The text is in Gothic minuscule, incised in a somewhat elongated, even and regular, pleasing hand. The 'y' is never dotted. Initial 'v' and 'u' are the same letter, but not consistently so. The minims of 'u', 'n', 'm' are indistinct, which causes some difficulty of deciphering. Verse-ends are marked by means of a simple scroll.

Legend:	Is in the inscription:	Signifies:
small script	text needing treatment	author's intervention
(...)	text needing treatment	author's intervention
[...]	text needing treatment	author's alteration or correction
underlining	superscript-bar	author's expansion of abbreviation
italics	ligature	
[/]		interstice or letter deleted

Transliteration

(based on a rubbing by Kevin Herring)

- 1a Qui iacet hic stratus Thomas Frowyk vocitatus
 b Moribus et natu gestu victu moderatu
 2a Vir generosus erat generosa qz gesta colebat
 b Nam quod amare solet generosi plus qz frequentant
 3a Aucupiu uolueru venaticum qz ferarum
 b Multum dilexit vulpes foueis spoliavit
 4a Ne taxos canis breuiter quecumqz propinquus
 b Intulerant dampna pro posse fugauerat ipsa
 5a Inter eos etiam si litis cerueret vinguu
 b Accendi faculas medianis extinxerat ipsas
 6a Secerat et pacem cur uix pacis sibi pansom
 b Det deus et requiem qui sem p_o permanet Amen

Transcription

- 1a Qui iacet hic stratus Thomas Frowyk vocitatus
 b Moribus et natu gestu victu moderatu
 2a Vir generosus erat generosaque gesta colebat
 b Nam quod amare sole(n)t generosi plus[ue] frequentant
 3a Aucupi(um) volucrum venaticium[que] ferarum
 b Multum dilexit vulpes foveis spoliavit
 4a Ac taxos caveis breviter quæcumque propinquis
 b Intulerant damna pro posse fugaverat ipsa
 5a Inter eos etiam si litis cerneret umquam
 b Accendi faculas medians extinxerat ipsas
 6a Fecerat et pacem cur nunc pacis sibi pausam?
 b Det deus et requiem quæ semper permanet Amen

Clear text

(with appropriate punctuation added)

- 1a Qui iacet hic stratus, Thomas Frowyk vocitatus,
 b Moribus et natu, gestu, victu, moderatu
 2a Vir generosus erat, generosaque gesta colebat.
 b Nam quod amare solent generosi plusque frequentant –
 3a Aucupium volucrum, venaticiumque ferarum –
 b Multum dilexit. Vulpes foveis spoliavit,
 4a Ac taxos caveis. Breviter quæcumque propinquis
 b Intulerant damna (pro posse) fugaverat ipsa.
 5a Inter eos etiam, si litis cerneret umquam
 b Accendi faculas, medians extinxerat ipsas.
 6a Fecerat et pacem. Cur nunc pacis sibi pausam?!
 b Det deus et requiem quæ semper permanet! Amen.

Translation

- 1a He who lies stretched out here, Thomas Frowyk by name,
 b Was in his ways, by birth, in behaviour, feeding-habits, and in his sense of proportion
 2a A gentleman, and gentlemanly and generous activities he pursued.
 b For, what high-minded gentlefolk tend to love and quite frequently practise,
 3a Namely fowling of wild birds and hunting game,
 b He much delighted in. Foxes he despoiled of their pelts by means of trap-holes,
 4a/b And badgers using cages. Anything that was detrimental to those close to him, he shortly dispelled, as well as that lay within his power.
 5a/b Also, whenever he perceived among them the torches of quarrel lit, he stepped between, and extinguished these.
 6a And made also peace. Why should now God order an end of peace for him?
 b May He grant also to him the rest and quiet that lasts forever. Amen.

Commentary

1b *victus* may mean “life-style”, but the first meaning is “nutrition”. As Frowyk’s life-style was commented on before, the latter seems to be intended here primarily.

1b *moderatu*: *moderatus* is normally an adjective, and is here used as a noun. It is the poet’s well-contrived coinage, needed for the parallelism of the line, and for prosody, and stands for *moderatio*, meaning “moderation, self-control, a sense of proportion”.

2a *gesta* normally means “accounts of high deeds, exploits”, and is here probably used for “activities, pursuits, hobbies”.

2b *plus*: the word here is not used as a comparative, because the correlate of comparison is missing. It comes here in an absolute meaning, as can be done to adjectives and adverbs, and says "rather often, quite a lot".

3a *venaticium* is yet again a nonce word. The normal word for "hunt" is *venatio*. Here it would be *venationem*, but that would not fit the prosody. Again a good coinage.

3b *spoliare*: the principal meaning is "to deprive the fallen enemy of his clothing, or armour, in triumph".

fovea means "a trap-hole". So here one would interpret that Frowyk "despoiled the foxes of their pelts, by means of traps".

4a *taxus*, also *taxanus* is the badger, this Latin word interestingly having been created in medieval times, modelled on the Germanic, cf. German "Dachs".

cavea is "a cage".

After the verb *spoliare*, the spoils that are carried away in triumph appear in the ablative. Formally, both *foveis* and *caveis* might look like this element. The English version offered by Dr CAMERON's translator¹¹ supposes just this when it runs: "He deprived foxes of their holes and badgers of their sets." But what is the sense in Frowyk "despoiling the foxes of their holes"? Surely the hunter did not carry away their holes. And what about robbing the poor badgers of their cages? The translation in this instance raises eye-brows. Neither *foveis* nor *caveis* can be the object of *spoliare*; their function is rather to indicate the means of the hunter's action.

11 The translation is not CAMERON's personally. Here it is in full. He begins with an acknowledgement:

'I am indebted to colleagues in Cambridge for a translation of this interesting and unusual epitaph: – "He who lies buried here was called Thomas Frowyk. He was a noble man in character and in birth, bearing, life-style and moderation, and cultivated noble pursuits; for he greatly delighted in what noble men are accustomed to like and pursue with relish; that is catching birds and hunting wild beasts. He deprived foxes of their holes and badgers of their sets; in short whatever creatures had brought damage to his neighbours, he put to flight to the best of his ability. Moreover if he ever saw the torches of strife (litigation) being kindled among those neighbours he acted as mediator and extinguished them and so restored the peace. May God now grant him the peace and rest which endures forever. Amen.'" CAMERON, op. cit., p. 217

6a *sibi* instead of *ei* is so often seen on English medieval inscriptions that it must not be accounted a mistake, but the effect of linguistic change.

Stylistic appreciation

The text consists of twelve hexameters, arranged in six double lines read consecutively. The verses scan beautifully, perfectly, without any exception, which in itself is a sensation – the author is an immaculate versificator.

The following shows the verse-arrangement and the complex rhyme-scheme. The double arrows in the left and right margins (↔) indicate the rhyme-linkage within the respective left or right hemistich; in the middle they show the consonance between the two hemistichs of a verse. Arrows (↑,↓) demonstrate the relation (upward or downward) between the lines. Underlining, bold face, and colour are used to show the coupling of rhyme and sonority.

1a		Qui iacet hic stratus	↔	Thomas Frowyk vocit atus .	
b		Moribus et natu ,	↔	gestu, victu, moder atu	↔
2a		Vir generosus erat ,	↔↔	generosa que gesta colebat.	
b		Nam quod amare solent		generosi plusque frequentant,	
3a	↔↓	Aucup ium voluc rum ,	↔↔	venatic ium que fer rum ,	↔
b	↑	Multu m dilex it .	↔↓	Vulpes fove is spoliavit,	
4a		Ac taxos cave is .	↔↑	Breviter quæcumque propinquis	
b		Intulerant damna	↔	– pro posse – fugaverat ipsa	
5a		Inter eos etiam	↔	si litis cerneret umquam	
b		Accendi faculas,	↔	medians extinxerat ipsas.	
6a		Fecerat et pacem .	↔↓	Cur nunc pacis sibi pausam ?	
b		Det deus et requiem	↑	quæ semper permanet! Amen.	

The system is for leonine rhymes, but generally the concordance of sounds is meagre, consisting mostly of monosyllabic declension-endings. V. 4b has just the last vowel rhyming. The last verse-pair has cæsura-rhyme, but no end-rhyme. V. 2b even has no rhyme at all. Rhyme there-

fore is not one of the triumphs of this poem. The poet has great merits, though, in the domains of syntax, vocabulary, and imagery.

Repetition is used as a rhetoric means of style, such as the triple *generosus* in vv. 2a/b. The word's principal meaning is "high-born, genteel", but the secondary meaning, "generous, high-minded" is surely intended to overlie it, thus allowing for a delicate overtone, which the translation ought not to leave out. Another such repetition is for the word "peace" (*pax*) in the same verse 6a. At first it means "concord among men", but then "the soul's peace in Heaven" (*requies*). The importance of such virtue cannot be underrated in the Christian religion – we remember how Christ blessed the peaceful and the peace-makers. Repetition, therefore, is not only rhetorically impressive, but words repeated make an important addition to the message.

Reiteration or parallelism is another stylistic effect employed, producing verses of great impact. Thus, v. 1b has the substantives *natu, gestu, victu, moderatu* magnificently arranged in a rising line, beginning with the word for "birth", which is something that one cannot avoid, and in which there is no merit, and ending with "moderation", one of the greatest virtues (particularly appreciated in Renaissance-times), and which is a thing that a man must strive hard after to acquire.

In order to amplify meaning, v. 3a twice uses two different words for the same idea¹²: *aucupium volucrum* and then *venaticium ferarum*. *Aucupium* means "fowling" by itself, and *volucrum*, "of birds", adds no new information. *Venaticium* means "hunting game", and could stand without the supplement of *ferarum*, "of wild animals". By such parallelism and amplification of words, and by the richness of their consonance also, the poet insists on the pleasure inherent in hunting, and the importance this activity had for the deceased. Vv. 3b and 4a show another such parallelism of syntax in *Vulpes foveis spoliavit, Ac taxos caveis*.

Quite a number of verses are not automatically syntactical units. Vv. 1b and 2a constitute one sentence, running across the line-end. The following sentence is particularly long and complex, covering vv. 2b, 3a, and

12 Such a device is called "hendiadys", from the Greek ἓν διὰ δύοῖν, "one thing expressed) by two".

half of 3b. A new sentence begins in the second hemistich each of vv. 3b and 4a, running on into the next verse. The next sentence occupies two full verses (5a/b).

And the height of complexity is attained in vv. 6a/b:

6a Fecerat et pacem. Cur nunc pacis sibi pausam?
6b Det deus et requiem ...

6a "He also made peace. Why would God now make an end of such peace for him?"
6b May He give him the rest and quiet ...

This end of the poem is syntactically delicate, and especially interesting. The last five words of v. 6a (*Cur nunc pacis sibi pausam?*) are intended to constitute a phrase, which, however, is incomplete: it says "Why now an end (understood as an object) to him?" It is therefore a phrase that needs to be filled up with three elements: 1) a verb, 2) an explanatory attribute for its object *pausam*, telling us what kind of "a stop" is meant, and 3) its subject.

1. The verb must be understood as being elliptically present, as repeated from the previous line *fecerat*, "made". Another form of *facere*, would, however, have to be used here so that the meaning might be made to be what it needs must be. The morphologically correct ellipsis for the verb would therefore be *faceret* "why would (he, or someone) make an end?" – it would have a consonance conspicuously similar to the verb-form in its model *fecerat*, is therefore near enough to be understood automatically, and legitimately suppressed for euphonic reason.
2. Secondly, what kind of *pausa*, what "stop", is intended? The word surely harks back for completion to the word *pax*, if only by its consonance, so we must understand "an end of peace" – again an elliptical device is used here.
3. The missing subject must be seen in the following phrase in v. 6b, *deus*, "God". There, this word belongs to a request, and thus is part of a totally separate syntactic unit altogether, but elliptically works

also for the preceding sentence, which is a question – quite a complex structure.

Thus the heavily expanded sentence would run:

Cur nunc [Deus] [faceret] sibi pausam [paci]s?

“Why [would] [God] now [make] an end [of peace] for him?”

The next sentence – *Det Deus et requiem* etc – is again incomplete, and relies on the previous sentence for fullness, because “God give peace” is an insufficient sentence, the indirect object “(to) him” being missing. Again, there is ellipsis: the indirect object of the preceding sentence, *sibi*, is understood as being present here in the same function. Without this supposition of an ellipsis neither the one nor the other phrase were viable syntax, but seen in this light, all fits perfectly into shape. So we may read:

6b [sibi] [pausam] det deus et requiem

May God give [him] [rest] and peace.

It is interesting to see how by means of this ellipsis, *pausam* appears in a parallel with *requiem*, “rest”, and thus acquires a new touch, now meaning “an end of troubles”, and becoming a synonym.

Yet another element in that last phrase deserves our attention. It is the little word *et*. Here the superficial meaning is “also”, so the sentence runs: “God give him also His peace”. But at the same time *et* also means “and”, so it links the word *requiem* with *pausam* of the preceding verse: “rest and quiet”, both in the last resort meaning “peace”.¹³ These last sentences of the poem would then run:

“He also made peace. Why should God now make for him an end of his peace?

May He grant him also rest and His everlasting peace.”

13 *pacem et requiem*, although an elliptical formation, may be considered to be yet another hendiadys.

There are, then, really three sentences telescoped into each other, dowed together by the words *facere*, by *sibi*, by *pausa* and by *pax* on the one hand, and, in the other verse, by *det*, by *deus*, and by *et*, each element working additionally across their respective syntactic boundaries – a daring, imaginative, highly intricate, and most successful construction. Such syntactic ease in the present poem, therefore, such structural elasticity, produce a most elegant and winsome speech-flow. The sentences sometimes are quite short, impressively so (vv. 1a, 3b/4a), and just as powerful is the poet’s faculty of constructing extremely complex syntax. The sentence-structure of the last verse-pair, with its triple function – a confirmation, then a question, at last a plea – and telescoped syntax is a masterpiece, and much to be admired.

Yet another virtue of the poet’s is the wealth, creativity, and aptness of wording. He has a vast vocabulary at his command. He knows the technical terms of hunting (*taxus* is surely not a word known to outsiders), he coins words (*moderatus*, *venaticium*), adds overtones to words repeated (*generosus* is also “generous”, *pausa* becomes “peace”), or imprints particular meaning on expressions (by *victus* he means “food”). He is also capable of impressive imagery. In the word *spoliavit*, “he despoiled” (3b), we see the victorious warrior pulling the armour off his vanquished foe – perhaps there is even a certain irony, or droll effect, because we are led to consider the poor little fox, who had no chance of escaping the huge hunting-apparatus set in motion against him, and the silly delight of the triumphant victor.

Another instance of imagery is the word *fugaverat*, “he put to flight”, again a term connected with war and strife, here used in the sense of “chasing away sorrows”. In *accendi faculas litis* we see the arsonist, purposefully and insidiously setting human relations on fire – a most convincing and meaningful image.

The language of this poem is an education to contemplate. It reveals the author as a sovereign master of his profession, a linguistic strategist, a great poet. We have here before us a wonderful piece of poetry.

Investigation

This text is clear and straightforward, but vv. 4a/b call for deeper reflection.

- 4a Breviter quæcumque propinquis
b Intulerant damna fugaverat ipsa,

Almost certainly the translation that first comes to mind is “Whatever evils they inflicted on those near him, he banished them.” This would mean that the afore-mentioned animals caused Frowyk’s friends harm and that he dispelled such discomfort. *quæcumque*¹⁴ thus is seen in concord with *damna* and as accusative-object of the verb *intulerant* (“whatever damages they inflicted”), the reader automatically understanding the foxes and badgers, or more generally the wild animals, as being the authors of such evil. The commemorated is therefore presented as a man who acted in the interest of his neighbours and friends by killing the animals and preventing harm. This follows the received translations of WEEVER, GOUGH, NEWMAN, CAMERON. Grammatically, it holds an impregnable position, not offering any fulcrum for unsettling it. It is technically correct, makes sense, is sound.

Or so it seems.

Because this version no longer looks so right when one probes into the meaning of vv. 4a/b, where several words need to be analyzed more closely, among them *propinquis*. CAMERON sticks to the centuries-old rendering by GOUGH, who wrote that Frowyk was a “gentleman who made his recreations for the good of his neighbours, as appears by his Epitaph”¹⁵.

14 But CAMERON’s translator says: “in short: whatever creatures had brought damage to his neighbours...” Therefore he introduces “creatures” as an explicit subject of the verb *intulerant*, i.e. his “creatures inflicted” (the damage). However, this addition of the (nonexistent, only conjectured) *creaturæ* as subject, to be accompanied by the (existing) *quæcumque* is not only arbitrary, but illegitimate. Formally, *quæcumque* could indeed also be a feminine plural, but there is no feminine noun near, neither singular nor plural, with which it could be seen in concord. *Ferarum* “of the wild beasts” in v. 3a would perhaps be considered too far away for a correlative. And also, *quæcumque* cannot stand alone, by itself to account for its feminine gender and plural number, for us obligingly to go searching for, and supplying, the missing corresponding noun of that form. So that rendering must be accounted wrong.

15 CAMERON quoting GOUGH, op. cit., p. 217

However, there is not much in the text to support the idea of such venatorial altruism, of such abnormal predilection for neighbours. Why should he only help his neighbours, and not friends living somewhere else? Surely, not all those near Frowyk’s heart, whom he so quickly helped out of trouble, were at the same time and automatically people living the other side of his fence. Woe betide the hungry men of the neighbourhood who were caught red-handed in the Squire’s chase. Let there be no doubt as to the punishment inflicted in those times on poachers. They never ate again. A passionate huntsman like our Squire Frowyk would have found no pity for them when making his verdict; there would have been no “dispelling of detriments for his neighbours” then.

No: *propinqui* are quite generally “the people close to him” – kinsfolk, friends, faithful followers, useful acquaintances, a good number of them probably being his hunting-companions. Neighbours among them, too, maybe – why not? The normal word for “neighbour” would, however, have been either *vicinus* or *confinis*, and these terms are significantly absent.¹⁶

What risk of damage from wild animals did this group run? True, landowners and farmers among his friends were exposed to damages (flooding, hail, drought, blight, wild animals¹⁷ etc), but when one considers what animals are specifically mentioned – foxes and badgers – one realizes that these are not seriously harmful. Foxes do make their occasional inroads on hen-houses, but mostly prey on mice and hares, even kill young roe and helpless deer. Badgers, however, did not harm the farmer at all in medieval times.¹⁸ They keep themselves to themselves, in their self-sufficient and silent way, feeding on anything small that comes their way. Badgers are omnivorous. They dig up roots, swedes, pick berries, enjoy fallen fruit. They scratch open rotting tree-trunks to look for larvæ. They eat mice, earthworms, insects, also the young of rabbits and hares. When happening across nests of ground-breeding birds such as par-

16 True, neither *vicinus* nor *confinis* could have been substituted for *propinquis* in the given prosodic context.

17 Rabies is not a reason for exterminating foxes in England, because the country was and is free of this pest.

18 In our days, badgers can ravage fields, finding potatoes and maize or sweet-corn tasty. In the Middle-Ages, they would not have done that damage, these crops having been imported later.

tridge, grouse, pheasant, quail, they will empty them, eating the eggs as well as the young. At any rate, in medieval times, losses which farmers incurred were considered bad luck and had to be borne patiently; there was no redress.

Our next query concerns the complex around the verb *fugaverat*. It literally means "put to flight". One wonders how "damages can be put to flight". One can repair them: *reparare*, *reficere*, the Latin alternative for *fugaverat* here would have been *refecerat*. One can make amends: *sarcire* would be the word, also with a convenient form: *sarsiverat*. Or clear them away: *purgaverat* might perhaps be used. All these verbs-forms would have been compatible with the poem's prosody. What can be put to flight is not the damage, not the effect, but the cause, the evil-doer. Therefore *damna* does not look like a possible object for *fugaverat*, as it was done in the received translation, which considered *damna* as the object for both verbs, for *intulerant* and *fugaverat*, saying "Whatever damages they inflicted on those close to him, he dispelled them."

The verb which takes *damna* for its object is undoubtedly *intulerant* "they inflicted damages". But if the animals did not do it, who did? Who and where is the subject working for the verb *intulerant*? The only word that is left for this function is *quæcumque*. This can – or rather must – therefore be seen as the subject, not as the object of the verb *intulerant*. *Quæcumque* does not go together in concord with *damna*. It need not be a determinant accompanying a noun, but can also appear as an independent pronoun, and as a nominative plural acting as subject it means "whatever (things / reasons / causes)". So we are not allowed to translate "whatever damages" etc.; the phrase must be seen to run: "Whatever inflicted damages to those close to him, he put that to flight", meaning "he gave chase to, hunted down, dispatched".

Is there yet more behind the pronoun *quæcumque*? The neuter pronoun is conveniently large to comprise many agents. It would, surely, not be intended to cover the destructive effects of hail and lightning, crop failure or fodder shortage, illness or loss of life within the family; those authorities are of course beyond the Squire's control. But *quæcumque* may comprise more than the neuter phenomena, it may include agents, living things. The subject is extended therefore. It still means the nox-

ious animals, true, but no longer exclusively so. From other sources may or rather must be coming the threats to Frowyk's hunting-friends.

What is characteristic about the incriminated damages in this poem is that they are not of an agricultural kind, but relevant to hunters, as the animals named reduce the population of game, thereby curtailing Frowyk's and his friends' favourite pastime. Frowyk and his friends hunted them to prevent a diminution of their game, and hunted for their sport. They were not motivated by social responsibility. There is therefore sufficient ground to look askance at the hitherto published translations of this epigraph and at the charitable picture drawn of Frowyk.

It is highly probable that most of Frowyk's *propinqui* were men who, be they never so different in their walks of life and characters, were united by one overriding interest in life, namely the hunt, all being of one mind when it came to protecting their game. And the greatest danger to their chase arose, as we have seen, not from foxes and badgers, but from illicit hunting. It was imperious to put down poaching. A squire therefore employed gamekeepers to catch any poachers that they could lay their hands on. These men were given short shrift when taken. And seen from this angle, the puzzle-bits fit: "whatever inflicted damage" on Frowyk's friends seems to have been the crime of poaching, quite possibly rife among an impoverished population, and the Squire put an end to such outrage as quickly and as thoroughly as he could.

Perhaps a scrutiny of the meanings of *damna* will point to something else yet. The dictionaries list the meaning of "destruction" in second or third place only, the first entry being "costs incurred, penalty"; indeed, "material detriments ordained, payment" is its original meaning.¹⁹ Interestingly, and disturbingly, the inference would be that Frowyk shielded his friends from any branch of the public administration, or of the apparatus of justice, silencing institutions or private parties that claimed payment, i.e. damages, amends, or that laid on them fees or penalties.

¹⁹ Etymologically speaking, *damnum* is possibly "the costs of a banquet", the word being shaped after *daps* "banquet, meal". And by extension it means "a financial burden", "a detriment", also "a penalty". This meaning still obtains in the English word "damages" as money paid or claimed in compensation for detriments, loss, injury.

“Damages”, i.e. all kinds of financial claims now would constitute a stratum of meaning distinct from the previous one which concerned hunting-interests threatening Frowyk’s friends. That would imply that Frowyk used his office of a magistrate, his position of power, to advantage and protect friends, clearing away obstacles, deciding quarrels in their favour, or voiding punishments pronounced on them – a case of abuse of power. And it would put quite a different complexion on Frowyk’s character.

The dimension of such an accusation causes the critic to falter and to halt in order better to weigh his arguments and search himself. Maybe this new view is grammatically valid, but is it not too far-fetched? Is it not incompatible with the description of Frowyk the abnegating friend in need? Is the author’s theory perhaps undone by the poet’s insistence on the man’s heart-warming generosity, his desire to help others, his moderation, sense of proportion, and, most Christian of all, his urge to create peace among men?

Not necessarily so. Perhaps these two divergent perceptions of a soul do not contradict, perhaps even complete, each other. A human being is not explained in a sentence. A man’s social excellence would not necessarily be incompatible with the heavy reproach of dishonesty or ruthlessness in office. There is no reason not to believe that Frowyk was a reliable companion, an easy-going, rubicund, jovial man, a generous host, considerate to those close to him – really, an impressive character, a person one would like to have known. And at the same time he may well have been walking rough-shod over the law, a justice of the peace who contravened justice for the preferment of his friends, and who had no qualms about cutting off the lives of men who trampled his flowerbeds.

Moreover, one should not commit the serious error of gauging a period of the past by modern parameters. Frowyk did not have our modern state of consciousness; he was a man of the late Middle Ages. We have acquired a distaste for moral depravity, happily. Abuse of public office and power in the interest of personal profit we consider an abomination, even if such crimes are still, and continuously, being committed. But in medieval times people probably took a different view, holding it to be quite natural for a man to make good use of his position in life, and for the powers that be to act remorselessly against offenders. And

conversely, the men in authority did not have the feeling of being dishonourable when enjoying to the fullest the opportunities that were offered them. Fortune was smiling on them, and they were smiling back. They would have found it a crying shame to waste such goodness. They knew that the Great Wheel would at some point in time begin to turn, and that there would be occasion enough to reflect, and to regret, when they would be sitting in the dark. And at the time, and later, too, dispatching poachers caught in a chase was a generally accepted principle and applied without scruples. No squire had any moral hesitation about putting down a man, nor did society expect anything else, including the poacher himself who was conscious of the risk he was taking.

A pair of doubting questions must be borne, and answered, perhaps the most serious of all. Have we been considering the text too nicely, perhaps? Is everything in reality much more innocent? Ought we rather not to have suspected foul play? Are the animals really the only incriminated subjects after all? Was the surface-meaning true and must be taken at face-value, with no other depths needing to be sounded? Was Frowyk really after all the man who helped his friends out of calamity, committing no underhanded dealing at all?

And was the author of the poem perhaps simply ignorant about what damages were caused by wild animals? For example when he did not mention the wild pigs as the source of the real destruction done by wild animals to agricultural lands? It is of course the boar that wreak havoc among farming-lands, rooting up fields and meadows, annihilating crops, also preying on the young of hare, even occasionally of roe and deer, emptying the nests of pheasant and partridge, thus causing a tangible diminution among game, more serious than the small badger. Not naming the boar in the number of noxious animals is a patent omission.²⁰ No such way out. One may take it for granted that the author knew what he was about. A second look at the poem’s wording would make that

²⁰ The boar was common in medieval England, highly esteemed game, appearing as heraldic emblem, perhaps the most famous example being Richard III’s coat of arms. However, since the beginning of the 17th century, i.e. after Frowyk’s poem, and until recently, England was depleted of boar, due to intensive hunting and deforestation. However, the animals are reappearing in several regions now, such as Dorset and Kent.

clear. He used so many technical terms for the hunt, and therefore was familiar with this field of activity. Not many would know such details of fox-hunting, or the Latin word for "badgers" and trap-catching, for example.

Had the poet wished that no doubt remained as to the wild animals being behind the damages, he might in the place of *breviter* have said *bestiæ*²¹ "the wild animals", or *dicti* "the aforesaid (subjects)", after referring to *vulpes* and *taxi*, and still keep within the boundaries of prosody. Rearranging the two verses, he might have introduced the wild pig, *sus*, the animal that does the most serious harm, thus making up at this moment for the lost occasion to name the principal culprit.²²

And if the poet had not meant *damna* to carry the meaning of "penalties", if he had not wanted to insinuate that Frowyk went against the law, he might have used *noxæ* instead, which has "injustice or injury inflicted, damage done" for principal meaning, again (as so often seen in this text) without infringing prosodic regulation, and he would have become unequivocally clear.

Evidently, unequivocal clarity was not aimed at; on the contrary, to all appearances, ambiguity was created on purpose. The first example is putting *quæcumque* in close proximity to *damna*, thereby producing the impression that it was the animals that caused the damages against his friends. Another instance is the misleading juxtaposition of the man's joy at hunting with his care for others, the second appearing as a result of the first. But these two propensities have really no notional connection one with the other, indeed, they are totally different: the first is a pleasure, the second a virtue, and virtue cannot be seen as a sum, or

- 21 *Bestiæ* has one syllable too many, it is true, but the 'i' in front of the long vowel 'æ' can be considered as pronounced 'j', so the word would fit into the prosodic system.
- 22 I can offer several alternatives for introducing the wild boar as the perpetrators of damages. Any of these would have avoided all doubt, and without committing a prosodic mistake. One of these five might be presumed also to have presented itself to the poet, had he so wished:
- Et taxos caveis. ...
 ... Bestias qui damna propinquis / Intulerint celeres caperent venatum euntes!
 ... Hæc sus qui damna propinquis / Intulerit breviter prostrata ab eo iacuisset.
 ... / Intulerit propere confecta ab eo iacuisset.
 ... / Intulerit ab eo confestim cæsa iaceret.
 ... / Intulerit paulo post certe ab eo caperetur.

result, of lust. However, they are not distinctly set off one from the other, as could be done by means of versification, for example by placing them on different lines. On the contrary, they appear side by side in the same verse, and are even more closely knit by the word *breviter*.

And this word *breviter* yet again demands closer study, for it is the pivot around which the ambiguity turns. It will appear as its crowning piece of strategy, achieved by a very clever device. *Breviter* is positioned directly after the enumeration of the animals, at the beginning of a new sentence, so that it seems to mean "in short, to say it briefly", like a summing-up of what was said before,²³ and the damages mentioned thus appear to be the working of the animals. But *breviter* can also mean "within a short time", at a pinch even where it is positioned here, and if understood in this sense, it would operate for the second notional complex, saying that poachers in the Squire's chase "were quickly dispatched". Or it would point to Frowyk's unlawful proceedings. Or cover both meanings.

Did the choice of the ambivalent *breviter* and its conspicuous position at the coupling-point of the two disparate notions come unintentionally, perhaps? That possibility can safely be excluded, seeing the author's phenomenal stylistic expertise. Therefore one can, or rather must, assume that there was a purpose, and that ambiguity was intended. Perhaps the poet disapproved of Frowyk's ways, but did not want to say so downright. Not on his tombstone.

These three different meanings of the two verses 4 a/b must be considered operative simultaneously. They are, however, of different degrees of concreteness. Where the first one – the traditional rendering – seems to have an irrefutably clear surface-meaning, the second one (aiming at the poachers) is arrived at by text-analysis. The last one – resulting from the study of the word *breviter* – is speculative, founded on stylistic appreciation entirely. Admittedly, the present analysis is not underpinned by biographical research. The result – the reproach of immorality – may therefore have gone wide of the mark, may have done grievous injustice to a potentially upright man, and must come accompanied by the author's apology – should he be found to be in the wrong.

23 Understandably, all previous translators have the meaning "to be brief" for *breviter*.

Authorship

The author was an admirably competent writer, wielding the Latin language at will, capable not only of expressing himself, but also of keeping his real intention veiled by using highly sophisticated stylistic devices, the truth to be yielded up only to close study. He is a consummate expert in versification, a creative spirit, a man with a sense of humour and of high intelligence. And above all, he is a fine poet, who produced splendid language, a charming, colourful poem, full of character, extraordinary.

Only a learned cleric seems to fit the rôle of authorship. WEEVER says the inscription below the children was "composed by John Whethamsted, Abbot of S. Albans". CAMERON writes that it is "supposedly composed by Abbot John of Wheathamstead (to whom is also attributed the inscription to his own parents on their brass in Wheathamstead)"²⁴. We would then here have one of the very few cases of known identity of the composer of a medieval inscription.

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Rubbing and photograph (fig. 3): Kevin Herring, Shalford (Essex)

Reinhard Lamp, Hamburg

24 CAMERON, pp. 213–219, also quotation of WEEVER, p. 215