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THE LIFE
AND
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POETRY
OF
OSWALD VON WOLKENSTEIN

Thesis submitted to the
University of Durham
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Alan Thomas Robertshaw, B.A.

Exeter,
March, 1973

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ABSTRACT

Although Germanists are indebted to the writer and dilettante historian Beda Weber for initiating research into Oswald von Wolkenstein, Weber's biography of Oswald (1850), more a historical novel than a work of scholarship, has impeded the task of establishing a true picture of the poet's life and personality by creating what Karl Kurt Klein has called the 'myth of Oswald'. This thesis sets out to contribute to the reappraisal of Weber's popularly accepted image of Oswald, paying particular attention to his life and political career in Tyrol and his service of the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund.

Chapter I, after giving a brief survey of Oswald research to date, outlines Weber's picture of the poet as an idealist devoted to chivalry, Minne and service of the Empire. Oswald's life and personality are considered in the next two chapters, which correspond to the two principal sources of information. Chapter II investigates the documentary evidence (including some hitherto unpublished material) of Oswald's life at home and his political activities. Chapter III attempts a reassessment of the poems which reflect his involvement in, and attitude towards,

political events. A shift of emphasis is observed from the lighthearted tone of the songs composed during his travels in Sigismund's service to the more serious mood of those inspired by experiences in his conflict with the Prince of Tyrol. These poems confirm the impression gained from historical documents that Oswald's main preoccupation was not with imperial politics, but with local affairs which affected him personally and materially. This third chapter also offers a reinterpretation of those poems in which Oswald refers to his love affair with his neighbour Sabina Jäger, who eventually became an ally of his enemies in Tyrol. All the poems dealt with in Chapter III are submitted to stylistic and linguistic analysis.

The conclusion (Chapter IV) lists the amendments to Oswald's biography which the thesis has proposed, outlines his personality as it has emerged from the discussion of documents and poetry, and attempts a brief assessment of him as a man and a poet.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Klein; K: Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein, unter Mitwirkung von Walter Weiss und Notburga Wolf hg. von Karl Kurt Klein; Musikanhang von Walter Salmen (Alt-deutsche Textbibliothek, Nr. 55), Tübingen, 1962. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from Oswald's poems refer to this edition; e.g. K2 = Klein, No. 2.
- Schatz 1902: Oswald von Wolkenstein. Geistliche und weltliche Lieder, bearbeitet von Josef Schatz (Text), Oswald Koller (Musik) (Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, IX, i, 18), Vienna, 1902; reprinted: Graz, 1959.
- Schatz 1904: Die Gedichte Oswalds von Wolkenstein, 2. verbesserte Ausgabe, hg. von Josef Schatz, Göttingen, 1904.
- Schatz, Sprache: Schatz, Josef, Sprache und Wortschatz der Gedichte Oswalds von Wolkenstein (Denkschriften der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, phil. -hist. Klasse, 69. Band, 2. Abhandlung), Vienna and Leipzig, 1930.
- Weber: Weber, Beda, Oswald von Wolkenstein und Friedrich mit der leeren Tasche, Innsbruck, 1850.
- W.-R.: Wolkenstein-Rodenegg, Arthur von, Oswald von Wolkenstein (Schlern-Schriften, 17), Innsbruck, 1930.
- Grimm: Grimm, J.L.C. and Grimm, W., Deutsches Wörterbuch, Leipzig, 1854-1954.
- Lexer: Lexer, Matthias, Mittelhochdeutsches Handwörterbuch, 3 vols., Leipzig, 1872-1878.
- Lexer, TWb.: Lexer, Matthias, Mittelhochdeutsches Taschenwörterbuch, 29. Auflage, Leipzig, 1959.

<u>Zs. Ferd.:</u>	Zeitschrift des Ferdinandeums (Innsbruck).
<u>Zs. f. dt. Phil.:</u>	Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie.
<u>Zs. f. dt. Alt.:</u>	Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum.
<u>Dt. Vjs.:</u>	Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistes- geschichte.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Summary of Research¹

The subject of this study is the late medieval poet Oswald von Wolkenstein (1377?²-1445). Oswald remained virtually unknown until he was rediscovered at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Josef von Hormayr.³ Since then his life in particular has attracted much attention. This is not surprising, as Wolkenstein's travels, which took him to almost every corner of the then known world,⁴ as well as to the scene of many famous historical events, have captured the imagination of all those who have read of them. Much of interest is to be found also in his varied political activities, both in his Tyrolean homeland and at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, Sigismund. Oswald's political career is well documented, and in addition his poetry gives a personal view of many events of his life, including matters which leave no trace in historical records, such as his more distant travels and his love affairs. And yet there has

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1. The survey of literature in this introduction is selective. A list of all the books and articles on Oswald known to the author is given in the bibliography, section 1,ii. There is only one critical bibliography of Oswald, which is as yet incomplete, by Francesco Delbono, 'Premesse critico-bibliografiche per uno studio della personalità e dell' opera di Oswald von Wolkenstein', Siculorum Gymnasium, 18 (Catania, 1965), pp. 213-248.
 2. Josef Schatz calculated the approximate year of Oswald's birth from information in his poetry; see Schatz 1902, p. 100.
 3. 'Über Oswald von Wolkenstein und sein Geschlecht', Tiroler Almanach, 2 (1803), pp. 85-125; 3 (1804), pp. 127-159.
 4. This is especially clear from the map in Alfred Englmann, Oswald von Wolkenstein (Typewritten Dissertation, Munich, 1951), p. 64.

been considerable disagreement among scholars about the man and the poet Wolkenstein. In particular the problem of correlating the historical and poetic material has complicated the task of clarifying his many-sided personality.

The first monograph on Oswald was Beda Weber's Oswald von Wolkenstein und Friedrich mit der leeren Tasche,¹ to which we shall return shortly. The other important biography is that by Artur von Wolkenstein-Rodenegg, a descendant of Oswald himself.² This writer acknowledges his debt to the Innsbruck historian Anton Noggler, who accomplished much valuable spadework in his investigation and publication of original documents on Oswald's life.³ Wolkenstein-Rodenegg continued this work by publishing further material from the family archives, but his biography falls far short of the comprehensive reappraisal of the poet's life and personality which is needed to replace Weber.⁴ There are two reliable biographical

1. Innsbruck, 1850.

2. Oswald von Wolkenstein, Innsbruck, 1930 (Schlern-Schriften 17).

3. See especially 'Der Wolkenstein-Hauensteinische Erbschaftsstreit und dessen Austragung unter Oswald von Wolkenstein', Zs. Ferd., 26. Heft (1882), pp. 99-180.

4. See the review of W.-R. by Friedrich Ranke in Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, 57 (1932), pp. 398 f.

sketches, one by Josef Schatz, published in both his editions of Oswald's poetry (1902 and 1904), being a revised version of the same scholar's account in the Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie (1898), and another by Werner Marold in the introduction to his commentary on Oswald's poems.¹ Both of these are summaries intended to provide the necessary background to a reading of Oswald's poetry. The biography by Linda Villari is worthy of interest as the only monograph on Oswald in English.² Among the general descriptions of his life and work the most notable are by Gustav Roethe,³ Fritz Karg,⁴ Ferruccio Bravi,⁵ Friedrich Neumann,⁶ and especially Burghart Wachinger.⁷

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1. Kommentar zu den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein, Göttingen, 1927. This publication contains only Marold's introduction to his dissertation.
 2. Oswald von Wolkenstein, Memoir of the last Minnesinger of Tirol, London, 1901.
 3. 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Deutsche Rundschau, 197 (1923), pp. 143-158, reprinted in Deutsche Reden von Gustav Roethe, 1927, pp. 108-133.
 4. 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Zeitschrift für Deutsche-kunde, 40 (1926), pp. 458-467.
 5. 'La vita di Osvaldo Wolkenstein, poeta atesino del Quattrocento', Archivio per l'Alto Adige, 49 (1955), pp. 337-383; 50 (1956), pp. 385-455.
 6. 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', in Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon, hg. von Karl Langosch, Band V (Nachträge), Sp. 817-830, Berlin, 1965.
 7. In the appendix to his edition with translations, Oswald von Wolkenstein, eine Auswahl aus seinen Liedern, Ebenhausen, 1964. Reprinted as Reclams Universal-Bibliothek Nr. 2839/40 (1967).

Research into the poet Oswald is regrettably still in its infancy. Only recently have the poems themselves again become available, in the edition by Karl Kurt Klein and his Innsbruck colleagues,¹ based on manuscript B, the second of two collections made under the poet's own supervision. The first critical edition, by Schatz, based on the earlier manuscript A, had long been out of print.² Before this scholars had to make do with the text published

1. Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein, unter Mitwirkung von Walter Weiss und Notburga Wolf herausgegeben von Karl Kurt Klein (Altdeutsche Textbibliothek Nr. 55), Tübingen, 1962. See also the detailed review by Burghart Wachinger in Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum, 74 (1963), pp. 25-37.
2. J. Schatz, Die Gedichte Oswalds von Wolkenstein, 2. verbesserte Ausgabe, Göttingen, 1904. This was a revised version, in a handier format, of Schatz's contribution to the 'Grossausgabe', Oswald von Wolkenstein. Geistliche und weltliche Lieder. Bearbeitet: Der Text von Josef Schatz. Die Musik von Oswald Koller (Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, IX/1, Band 18), Vienna, 1902. This earlier edition was reprinted in 1959 (Graz). For a detailed description of the MSS. see Schatz 1902, pp. 1-13, revised in Schatz 1904, pp. 22-57. Cf. also Klein, pp. X-XVI.

by the dilettante Beda Weber,¹ as the edition planned by the most notable nineteenth-century Wolkenstein scholar, I.V. Zingerle, did not appear.²

In addition to the scarcity of texts a problem has been posed by the language of Oswald's poetry. Lexer's dictionary is rarely helpful, often relying on the glossary appended to Weber's edition, in which the author showed much imagination but too little sound knowledge of fifteenth-century German. But Weber was by no means the only one who was thus handicapped. It is perhaps significant that Schatz's authoritative survey of Oswald's language was first promised in 1902, but did not appear until 1930!³ Even then Eduard Schröder, reviewing this work, was able to say that it rarely offered help in the real difficulties.⁴

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1. Die Gedichte Oswalds von Wolkenstein, mit Einleitung, Wortbuch und Varianten hg. von Beda Weber, Innsbruck, 1847.
 2. Oswald Zingerle reported in 1880 that this edition was then almost ready for the press: Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum, 24 (1880), p. 272, note 1. Cf. also I.V. Zingerle, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse, Band 64, Vienna, 1870, pp. 619 ff.
 3. J. Schatz, Sprache und Wortschatz der Gedichte Oswalds von Wolkenstein (Denkschriften der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, phil.-hist. Klasse, Band 69, 2. Abhandlung), Leipzig and Vienna, 1930.
 4. Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum, 49 (1930), p. 180.

Almost all the attempts to produce translations of Oswald - those by Schrott,¹ Passarge,² Schmied³ - have been unsatisfactory. One outstanding exception is the edition by Wachinger, who, being fully aware of the difficulties involved in translating Oswald, offers his renderings as a guide to the meaning of the original text and succeeds in clarifying many obscure passages. Some of his translations will no doubt have been taken from Marold, whose complete, unpublished dissertation Wachinger was able to consult.⁴

The first scholar who faced the obstacles of inadequate texts and dictionaries and attempted a general appraisal of Wolkenstein's poetry was Otto Ladendorf.⁵ After the publication of Schatz's edition others were encouraged to examine the poems in more

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1. J. Schrott, Gedichte Oswalds von Wolkenstein, des letzten Minnesängers, Stuttgart, 1886.
 2. L. Passarge, Dichtungen von Oswald von Wolkenstein (Reclams Universal-Bibliothek 2839/40), Leipzig, n.d. (1891).
 3. Oswald von Wolkenstein, der mit dem einen Auge, übertragen, ausgewählt und eingeleitet von Wieland Schmied (Stiasny-Bücherei, Band 70), Graz/Vienna, 1960.
 4. See Wachinger (Reclam edition), pp. 123, 124. The full text of Marold's commentary has still not been published, despite rumours that it was to appear in 1965. See the note in Christoph Petzsch's article in the Dt. Vjs. 38 (1964), p. 494, note 17.
 5. 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum, Geschichte und deutsche Literatur, 4 (1901), pp. 133-159.

detail. Johannes Beyrich¹ and Wilhelm Türler² examined individual features of Oswald's style. Beyrich's survey includes an interesting list of quotations from other contemporary poets, revealing how Oswald drew on a common stock of themes and phrases.³ Alfred Englmann approached Wolkenstein through his vocabulary, showing how this reflects social and intellectual currents of his time.⁴ The complex problem of Oswald's position between the Middle Ages and modern times has produced a range of often apparently contradictory views. He has been called the 'last pillar of the age of chivalry',⁵ and a Renaissancemensch.⁶ Fritz Martini wisely avoids such descriptions in his stimulating article on Oswald, in

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1. Untersuchung über den Stil Oswalds von Wolkenstein (Dissertation, Leipzig, 1910).
 2. Stilistische Studien zu Oswald von Wolkenstein (Dissertation, Bern, 1919; published in Heidelberg, 1920).
 3. Beyrich, pp. 83-134.
 4. Oswald von Wolkenstein (Typewritten Dissertation, Munich, 1951).
 5. By Fritz Karg, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde, 40 (1926), p. 459: 'diesen letzten Eckpfeiler der ritterlichen Zeit'.
 6. Ibid., p. 467; cf. also Hubert Mumelter, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Der Schlern, 21 (1947), p. 2, and Conrad Lester, who takes 'Renaissance' as his main theme in Zur literarischen Bedeutung Oswalds von Wolkenstein, Vienna, 1949, especially pp. 85 ff.

which he analyses the so-called realism of his style.¹ This is the most convincing attempt to interpret the poet Oswald as a phenomenon of the declining Middle Ages. There are good observations on Oswald's style also in two articles by Otto Mann, who examines the poet's treatment of on the one hand the familiar environment of his home,² and on the other the alien world of his travels.³ But the problem to which Ladendorf first drew attention, that of putting Oswald into the perspective of contemporary literature and of sifting the various influences at work in his poetry, still remains, as is clear from Friedrich Neumann's more recent comment that for an adequate understanding of his poems

bedarf [es] deren vorsichtiger Einfügung in das Denken und Schaffen des 15. Jahrhunderts und umsichtiger Vergleiche von besonders originellen Liedern⁴ mit vorausgehender und späterer Liedkunst.

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1. 'Dichtung und Wirklichkeit bei Oswald von Wolkenstein', Dichtung und Volkstum, Neue Folge des Euphorion, 39 (1938), pp. 390-411.
 2. 'Oswald von Wolkensteins Natur- und Heimatdichtung', Zs. f. dt. Phil., 57 (1932), pp. 243-261.
 3. 'Oswald von Wolkenstein und die Fremde', in Deutschkundliches: Festschrift für Friedrich Panzer, Heidelberg, 1930, pp. 44-60.
 4. Verfasserlexikon, Band V, Sp. 829 f.

An attempt to come to grips with this difficult task has been made recently by Ulrich Müller, whose dissertation is the most detailed commentary on Oswald's poems and his style published so far.¹

Recent research inspired and led by Karl Kurt Klein has concentrated on the detailed examination of the historical background of Oswald's life, as a necessary basis for a full understanding of his personality and poetry. The expressed aim of this school is to destroy once and for all the romanticised 'myth of Oswald', the product of enthusiasm for the poet in the early nineteenth century.² Norbert Mayr has re-examined Oswald's travels and his travel-poetry,³ Alois Dejori, less successfully, his life

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1. 'Dichtung' und 'Wahrheit' in den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein: Die autobiographischen Lieder von den Reisen, published as Nr. 1 of Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, Göttingen, 1968. Müller has also consulted Marold's unpublished commentary (see p. X). Müller's book came into my hands when I had almost completed this thesis. I have revised the chapters to which his findings were relevant.
 2. See Karl Kurt Klein, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein, ein Dichter, Komponist und Sänger des Spätmittelalters. Forschungsergebnisse und Aufgaben', Wirkendes Wort, 13 (1963), pp. 1-12.
 3. Die Reiselieder und Reisen Oswalds von Wolkenstein (Typewritten Dissertation, Innsbruck, 1959, published as Schlern-Schriften 215, Innsbruck, 1961).

at home and his so-called Heimatlieder.¹

This thesis will attempt to contribute to the de-romanticising of the 'mythical' image of Oswald, by reconsidering certain aspects of his life and his poetry. Klein names as the creator of the myth the Tyrolean writer Beda Weber, who first brought the life and work of Oswald into the light of day. Weber's biography is a very readable book, and is recommended by Karl Goedeke as 'eine der lesenswertesten Monographien zur Geschichte der Literatur'.² Goedeke does not, however, point out its deficiencies. A consideration of the methods and findings of Oswald's first biographer, whose book has largely determined the popular image of the poet, will be the starting-point of the present study.

2. Beda Weber and the 'Myth of Oswald'.

Weber's aims seem to be twofold. He wishes first to describe the life and personality of Oswald von Wolkenstein, and secondly to write a history of Tyrol in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The events of these years culminated in a conflict between the ruling Prince of Tyrol, Duke Frederick IV of Habsburg,³

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1. Heimatempfinden und Heimatlieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein (Typewritten Dissertation, Innsbruck, 1961).
 2. Grundriss zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung, 2. Auflage, Band 1, Dresden, 1884, p. 305.
 3. The County and Principality of Tyrol had become part of Austria in 1364; see J. Egger, Geschichte Tirols, vol. 1, Innsbruck, 1872, pp. 395 ff.

and the Tyrolean nobility, a struggle in which Oswald himself was a key figure.

Weber considered himself, and was considered by his contemporaries, to be a historian. In his introduction he claims to be writing not for 'die Menge der Leser', but for 'Liebhaber des Strenggeschichtlichen' (p. III).¹ Yet historians have had good reason to be dissatisfied with Weber. It is known that the composition of his book was spread over a long period of time, and that he often wrote from memory without using notes.² It is therefore scarcely surprising that inconsistencies are to be found in his dating of events in Oswald's life. For example, we read that the poet set out on his travels in 1377 as a boy of ten (p. 111), and returned home after taking part in the battle of Nicopolis in 1396, when he was twenty-five (p. 122). Weber's references to his sources, when he chooses to make any, are usually very vague,³ and his knowledge of historical records and their evaluation can

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1. In this chapter the page numbers in brackets refer to Weber's Oswald von Wolkenstein und Friedrich mit der leeren Tasche, Innsbruck, 1850.
 2. See J.E. Wackernell, Beda Weber (1798-1858) und die tirolische Literatur 1800-1846, Innsbruck, 1903, p. 295. Weber's method of working was by no means unusual at this time: cf. the article on Oswald's earlier biographer, Josef von Hormayr, in the Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon, vol. 2, Graz/Köln, 1959, p. 420.
 3. Cf. his references to various old documents in the archives of Trostburg Castle (which belonged to the Wolkensteins): 'geschichtliche Anmerkungen zu Trostburg' (p. 141); 'Anmerkungen in Trostburg' (p. 355); 'eine alte Aufschreibung' (pp. 97, 105, 130); 'ein altes Blatt' (p. 116).

scarcely have been adequate. Many of the documents he cites have not since been traced, in particular the so-called Reisenotate - 'kurze Schlagwörter mit Jahreszahl' (p. 108) - supposedly made by Oswald himself, which no one but Weber has seen.¹ It is difficult to ascertain also how far Weber followed earlier historians, though he seems to have had great faith in Engelhard Dietrich von Wolkenstein (1563-1647), who collected information on his family's history.² Although Weber may have used genuine sources which have since been lost, it seems certain that he also drew freely on his own imagination in reconstructing obscure periods of Oswald's life. This applies especially to his version of the poet's youth and his travels until the death of his father in 1400, for which there is no documentary evidence. Weber relied here on free interpretation of Oswald's poems and on the mysterious Reisenotate.³

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1. On the content of these notes and the question of their authenticity, see Norbert Mayr, Die Reiselieder und Reisen Oswalds von Wolkenstein, Innsbruck, 1961, pp. 15-29; E.J. Morrall, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein and Mandeville's Travels', Mediaeval German Studies presented to Frederick Norman, London, 1965, pp. 265 ff.
 2. See Weber, pp. 105, 107, and passim. The reader's trust in Weber's competence is further undermined when he refers to Engelhard Dietrich first as a contemporary of Oswald (p. 135) and later (correctly) as a sixteenth-century writer (pp. 459 ff.).
 3. Weber, pp. 109 ff. Cf. Mayr, pp. 15 ff.

From his study of the life and work of Oswald, Weber formed a quite distinct view of the poet's personality. He saw him as a romantic Schwärmer (see p. 112), passionately devoted to chivalrous adventure, Minnedienst and the service of the German Empire. In his account of Oswald's youth he explains how the seeds of his hero's ideals were sown. The young Wolkenstein was completely captivated by the exaggerated tales of chivalry in his childhood reading, from which originated his 'fantastischer Sinn' (p. 107), and which led him to run away from home at the age of ten with the desire to travel about 'in allerlei Fährlichkeiten nach dem Muster seiner Buchhelden'.¹ Oswald then appears at various places where Weber fancied a young adventurer might be found, for example at the battles of Otterburn (pp. 116 f.), Falköping, where he fought for Margaret of Denmark 'aus phantastischer Vorliebe für sie' (p. 115), and at Nicopolis with King Sigismund of Hungary in 1396 (p. 121). Soon after this he undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land at the bidding of a woman whom he hoped to marry; but on his return home two years later she rejected him (pp. 123 ff.). Weber mentions early in his story Oswald's enthusiasm for the German Empire, which left no place for any feeling of allegiance to the Prince of Tyrol (p. 108). He was influenced further in this way of thinking, we are

1. Weber, Gedichte Oswalds, 1847, p. 3.

told, by his admiration for Giovanni Galeazzo Visconti of Milan, who also had a grand political design; the unification of Italy under one ruler (pp. 138 f.).¹ The poet soon chose as the most worthy champion of his ideals the young Hungarian prince Sigismund, whom he had befriended during his travels as a boy (p. 112). Oswald's role in the later conflict between the Tyrolean nobility, assisted by Sigismund, who became Holy Roman Emperor, and Frederick IV of Habsburg, was therefore determined, according to Weber, by his loyalty to his boyhood friend and by his supposed political idealism. For all this we have only the biographer's word.

Beda Weber was himself a poet, and it is clear that he projected much of his own personality into his picture of Oswald, attributing to his hero some of his own interests and passions. In the early part of his book the young Oswald resembles very much what Weber once called himself, a 'romantischer Liedernarr';² but one looks in vain through Weber's writings for some critical

1. Weber seems to have confused two of the Visconti, Gian Galeazzo, who ruled from 1378 to 1402, and his successor Giovanni Maria (1402-1412); see Italy, Mediaeval and Modern, a History, by E.M. Jamison, C.M. Ady, K.D. Vernon and C. Sanford Terry, Oxford, 1919, p. 535. But it was certainly Gian Galeazzo whom Weber had in mind.

2. Quoted by J.E. Wackernell, op. cit., p. 155.

appreciation of Oswald's own songs.¹ He quite failed to see the discrepancy between his picture of a romantic who travels about collecting fairy tales and legends,² and the poetry he actually quotes or paraphrases,³ which often reveals biographical detail and a realistic style quite foreign to the kind of literature which Oswald supposedly admired. Weber also interpreted literally some of Oswald's less personal poems. For example, he seems to have deduced his idea of what he calls the poet's 'starre aristokratische Idealismus', based on 'die ursprüngliche Idee des Kaiserreichs', from two of Oswald's songs, Mich fragt ain ritter (K112) and Ir bäbst, ir kaiser (K113).⁴ Neither of these can be interpreted as the confession of a personal political creed. The first is a tract on the abuse of judicial power, for which the poet drew freely

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1. In the introduction to his edition he does not discuss the poems at all; he says only that he has divided them 'nach ihrem Inhalte in historische, erotische und religiösmoralische ...' (Weber, Gedichte Oswalds, p. 18).
 2. Weber, pp. 114, 119, 123, 129.
 3. E.g., p. 111, where he retells, though without referring to it, part of Es fügt sich (K18, 1-32).
 4. Weber, pp. 151 ff. He also claims to be using another source, 'eine Vorarbeit zum Entwurf seiner Ansichten, von ihm (Oswald) selbst in Trostburg, leider sehr unleserlich und zerfetzt'. The authenticity of this document must be, to say the least, doubtful.

on the leges imperiales, or Schwabenspiegel.¹ The second, also composed towards the end of Oswald's life,² is a conventional moralising poem, which instructs knight, priest and peasant to be mindful of their station and duties.

Whereas Weber's view of Oswald's personality was based largely on a reading of his poems, the nineteenth-century biographer's sternest critic, Karl Kurt Klein, makes it clear that for him 'personality' means the man as he appears in historical records.³ To Klein this historical evidence shows Oswald to be not a romantic and an adventurer but a political realist, whose 'beherrschend formende Kraft' is 'nicht der Zug zur Fremde, sondern der Drang zur Heimat'.⁴ He finds support for his view in Oswald's songs, in which the poet reveals himself to be, above all, a 'Heimatkünstler':⁵ 'Tirol ist die Quelle seiner Kraft und

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1. See Otto Ladendorf, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum . . ., 4 (1901), p. 151.
 2. K112 is dated 1438, by a note in MS. B; it is followed immediately in the MS. by K113. See Klein, p. 285.
 3. Klein, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Wirkendes Wort, 13 (1963), pp. 2 ff. It is difficult, says Klein, to obtain 'Persönlichkeitsbilder' of earlier poets such as Walther because of the lack of historical evidence about their lives.
 4. Ibid., p. 10. See also Klein, 'Der "Minnesänger" Oswald von Wolkenstein in der Politik seiner Zeit', in Die Brennerstrasse (Jahrbuch des Südtiroler Kulturinstituts, 1), Bozen, 1961, pp. 215-243, and reprinted in a Sonderdruck.
 5. Klein, Wirkendes Wort, 13 (1963), p. 11.

seiner Kunst'.¹

Business letters and documents cannot be expected to reveal personal traits in the same way as lyric poetry. Weber made the politician Oswald consistent with the idealist he pictured from his poems. Klein, whilst stressing that one should distinguish between the 'dichterische und historische Sichtebeenen',² would have us see Oswald's attachment to his home, his 'tirolischer Wesenskern',³ as the key to both. Bearing in mind the different approaches and conclusions of Weber and Klein, I wish to examine in the following chapters the 'myth of Oswald', with special reference to the poet's life at home and his political activities. In the first section (II) I shall review his family background, his involvement in local politics, his service of the German King Sigismund, and his feud with the Prince of Tyrol; this discussion will be based mainly on a reappraisal of the documentary evidence about Oswald's life, especially the letters and documents published by Anton Noggler⁴ and Artur von Wolkenstein-

1. Ibid. This comment is quoted by Klein from Otto Mann, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein und die Fremde', in Deutschkundliches: Festschrift für F. Panzer, Heidelberg, 1930, p. 46.

2. Klein, Wirkendes Wort, 13 (1963), p. 5.

3. Ibid., p. 10.

4. Reference will be made frequently to Noggler's articles in the Zs. Ferd. (vols. 26, 27; 1882, 1883). Details of all his publications are given in the bibliography.

Rodenegg,¹ with some additional material from the archives of the Wolkenstein family;² where Oswald's poems are cited in this section, it will normally be for the sake of filling gaps in the historical evidence. In the second part (III) I shall examine Oswald's treatment in his poems of the political affairs in which he was involved; I shall include here also a chapter on those poems which have been associated with the daughter of his neighbour Martin Jäger, a woman who became a key figure in Oswald's feud with Prince Frederick. In conclusion I shall ask how, if at all, these two views of his life complement each other, and what each contributes to our understanding of the personality of Oswald von Wolkenstein.

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1. Wolkenstein=Rodenegg includes 158 abstracts of documents in his Regestenverzeichnis, pp. 99-121.
 2. See Appendices, pp. 363 ff.

II. LIFE

1. The Landed Nobleman

i. Family Background

Norbert Mayr's illuminating study of Oswald's travels and travel poetry has dispelled any remaining notions that the many journeys which the poet undertook were simply those of a soldier of fortune or a chivalrous adventurer.¹ Nor was he a professional singer like Walther von der Vogelweide, earning his living from the favour of patrons. Oswald appears in historical documents nowhere as cantor, but usually as nobilis or miles, titles which indicate a secure footing in the social order of his time. His life was firmly rooted in the home of the Wolkenstein family, Tyrol, where he was born around the year 1377.

The marriage of Oswald's parents, Friedrich von Wolkenstein and Katharina von Villanders, must have been a cause of great rejoicing for both parties concerned, for it joined together two branches of the illustrious Villanders family. In the fourteenth century several members of this family were appointed to high offices by the ruling Counts of Tyrol, and were quick to exploit any weaknesses in their over-

1. Mayr, Die Reiselieder und Reisen Oswalds von Wolkenstein, Innsbruck, 1961. See especially the chapters on Oswald's journeys to Portugal (pp. 70 ff.) and to Hungary and Germany (pp. 87 ff.).

lords in order to fill the family coffers.¹ One of the most successful was Eckhard von Villanders, who also called himself von Trostburg after the splendid castle which still dominates the Eisack valley above Waidbruck. Eckhard's only child was Katharina, who thus brought to Friedrich von Wolkenstein the great wealth and estates of her father. Her husband was the first member of his line of the family to adopt the name from Castle Wolkenstein, situated deep in the Grödnertal, which had been acquired by his grandfather Randolt von Villanders in 1293.²

As a child of Friedrich and Katharina, Oswald would appear to have been born under a very favourable constellation. Biographical summaries usually refer to the eminence of his family as an important factor in his life. This is true, though not in the sense that it provided him with an exalted social position and financial security. It is clear from even a cursory glance at his life that Oswald was no gentleman of leisure who spent all his time seeking adventure and composing poetry. On the contrary, one sometimes

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1. J. Egger, Geschichte Tirols, I, Innsbruck, 1872, pp. 375 ff.
 2. Georg Töchterle, 'Zu Oswald von Wolkenstein', Der Schlern, 16 (1935), p. 440.

wonders how he found time for such pursuits, for he was so often preoccupied with domestic troubles. The importance of his splendid heritage lies rather in the example it set him: he was clearly determined to uphold the interests of his family, and, more especially, to attain for himself a position in the land worthy of the name Wolkenstein. This ambition he finally achieved, but it cost him a long and hard struggle.

The explanation for this is to be found in the political and social conditions of his time. The fortunes of the noble families were always liable to a sudden change for the worse, which they often brought upon themselves by injudicious management of their affairs. The dangers arising from this were present at all levels of the landowning aristocracy and were recognised, for example, by the founder of the great Habsburg dynasty, Rudolf I. In 1282 he ordained that the family's domains should be governed always as a whole, that brothers could rule jointly or in turn but should not divide the territories among themselves, a policy which was confirmed by the decrees of Albrecht II in 1355, and Rudolf IV in 1364.¹ The kind of situation

1. A. Jäger, Geschichte der landständischen Verfassung Tirols, Innsbruck, 1881-5, II, i, pp. 191 ff.

which the Habsburgs sought to avoid brought about the downfall of the family of Hauenstein, one of the oldest in Tyrol, when in the course of the fourteenth century its estates were divided up amongst several members. One of its greatest losses was sustained when Ulrich von Hauenstein was forced by financial circumstances to sell his share of the family's estates, including the ancestral castle Hauenstein itself, to Eckhard von Trostburg in 1367.¹ It was this castle which eventually fell to Oswald von Wolkenstein as his inheritance, and which was to have such a fateful influence on his life.

Political events, such as the arrival in the land of a new prince, could also bring about unforeseen changes in the fortunes of the noble lords, and often it was the mightiest who fell hardest. The history of the Villanders family had already provided one example of this. Englmar von Villanders, Eckhard's uncle, had been one of the most powerful men in Tyrol under the rule of the Luxemburgs (1335-1341), but his power was regarded by the Bavarian governor appointed by their successors, the Wittelsbachs, as a threat to his authority, and Englmar was executed on a charge of

1. Anton Noggler, 'Der Wolkenstein-Hauensteinische Erbschaftsstreit', Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 108.

treason.¹

It was to such vicissitudes of fortune as these that the life of a nobleman like Oswald von Wolkenstein was subject. And although the Wolkensteins seemed to be at the height of their power at the time of Friedrich's marriage, this was soon to be followed by period of crisis, arising both from internal disputes and from political events in Tyrol. Oswald himself was soon to learn that the wealth and influence of his ancestors were no guarantee for his own security and prosperity.

ii. Early Life

Although we have more biographical information about Oswald von Wolkenstein than about any other major German poet of the Middle Ages, the documents and poems often do little more than throw a spotlight on to isolated events, leaving the scholar to peer uncertainly into the shadows between. The only knowledge we have of the first twenty-three years or so of Oswald's life is derived from his own recollections in his poetry. Some years later he looked back over his life in his long autobiographical poem Es fügt sich (K18), and described how he spent his youth travelling the world, visiting places as far

1. A. Jäger, II, i, pp. 99 ff.

apart as Prussia and Turkey, Lithuania and Crete (Kandia, line 15).¹ He tells us that he left home at the age of ten - probably to receive instruction as a squire - and remembers the years which followed as a time when he was without means, unable to afford an expensive possession such as a horse:

Ich loff ze füz mit swerer büsz, bis das mir starb
mein vatter zwar, wol vierzen jar, nie rosß erwarb ...
(K18, 9-10)

So he remained in poor financial circumstances at least until the death of his father, which occurred in 1400.² After this his life may have become rather more settled, but he was still not financially secure, for in 1401 he was obliged to borrow a sum of money from one Kaspar von Schlandersberg, according to an entry in the Schlandersberg account books. This is the earliest reliable record of Oswald's name, and seems so far to have escaped notice.³

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1. For a detailed discussion of these early travels, see Mayr, Die Reiselieder, pp. 30 ff.
 2. See W.-R., p. 7.
 3. See Emil von Ottenthal, 'Die ältesten Rechnungsbücher der Herren von Schlandersberg', Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung, 2 (1881), p. 558. The entry reads: 'Item dem Oswalden Wolkenstainer 91b. an sampztag vor oculi mei, daz hat im mein herr glichen'. The date is March 5th 1401.

In the following year Oswald again travelled abroad. This we know from two documents, dated October 31st and November 1st 1402, both of which mention that he was absent from Tyrol on these days.¹ According to most accounts he had left home in the previous March, having entrusted his possessions to the care of a neighbour, Jakob von Völs, for a period of three years. Weber relates how Oswald spent these years in Italy,² whilst Wolkenstein-Rodenegg dates his ancestor's pilgrimage to the Holy Land at this time.³ But both assumptions are based on false evidence. The roll which Wolkenstein-Rodenegg cites in support of his suggestion in fact names Oswald as the one who was given charge of Jakob's fortune for three years. The author assumes, surprisingly, that this is a mistake in the records. The key to this confusion is to be found in an article by Anton Emmert, who was the first to state that Oswald appointed a procurator in 1402, and quoted the source of his information as follows:⁴

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1. See W.-R., p. 12. (W.-R.'s note 23 should refer to Volume 26, not 36, of the Zs. Ferd. as his source for the first document.)
 2. Weber, p. 140.
 3. W.-R., pp. 12 ff. For a discussion of this pilgrimage and its possible date, see below, III, 3, ii.
 4. 'Beiträge zu Oswalds von Wolkenstein Lebensgeschichte', Bote für Tirol und Vorarlberg, 1833, p. 304. His unnamed source was probably the genealogy by A. Zybock, in Mscr. Codex No. 876, Universitätsbibliothek Innsbruck, p. 182.

Gewaltsamb¹ von Jakob von Völs, darin er Hern Oswald [sic] von Wolkenstein alle seine Güter auf 3 jare eingewaligt haben: Erbetten und gemacht versigelt 1402.

Emmert obviously misread the words he quoted, and Weber failed to notice his mistake, as also did Wolkenstein-Rodenegg, even though he had another abstract of the same document before him.²

As the procurator of his neighbour's property Oswald will probably not have travelled far from home in the next year or two. Meanwhile his own financial position did not improve, for in 1404 he again had to borrow money, this time from the Bishop of Brixen.³ Though some years had now passed since the death of Friedrich von Wolkenstein, the estates he had bequeathed still remained undivided. Oswald's elder brother Michael seems to have been reluctant to allow Oswald himself and the youngest of the three brothers, Leonhard, a share of the inheritance to which they had a right. Michael took charge of the affairs of the

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1. Gewaltsam: here in the sense of Vollmacht (Grimm, 4, 1, 3, 5215). Eingewaligt must be a misspelling of (ein)gewaltigen, i.e. to give someone possession of something (Grimm, 4, 1, 3, 5171).
 2. W.-R., p. 12, cites Archiv-Berichte aus Tirol, IV, Vienna, 1912, p. 403, No. 162: '1402 März 30. Jakob von Vels ernennt den Oswald von Wolkenstein für drei Jahre zu seinem Procurator und Vermögensverwalter und überantwortet ihm Gut und Geld.'
 3. W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis No. 5b.

family, putting his seal on official documents on behalf of his brothers.¹ Whether he acted from selfish motives or with the good of the family at heart is not clear, but there is little doubt about what was in Oswald's mind. The existing arrangement might be protecting the family's interests, but it was not making him very prosperous. He was resolved not to be denied his rights. This at any rate is the way in which Klein interprets the extraordinary document of 1430, recording an event which took place many years before and which has been called 'ein dunkler Punkt' in Oswald's life.² The document tells of the theft of money and jewels belonging to Michael's wife by Oswald and Leonhard in their brother's absence. Oswald also forced Michael's tenants to pay their dues to him. For this Oswald had been severely punished by his brother. Klein sees in this action an attempt by the two younger brothers to force Michael to give them their rightful inheritance.³

1. Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 122 f.

2. Noggler, 'Ein dunkler Punkt im Leben Oswalds von Wolkenstein', Bote für Tirol und Vorarlberg, 1893, p. 2213. The document is published by J. Schatz, Zs. Ferd., 45 (1901), pp. 190 f.

3. Klein, Die Brennerstrasse, Sonderdruck, pp. 6 f.

Although there is no reference to this circumstance in the document itself, it is an interpretation which fits in well with Oswald's situation at the time before he acquired his fief.

From the little we can discern of the poet's youth and early manhood certain features do emerge which are to recur. Firstly we see the unsettled nature of his life, reflected in his frequent travels away from Tyrol. The usual explanation of his wanderings, as the expression of a restless urge to travel, may well be correct, but concrete outward circumstances were also an important factor. In his life at home Oswald rarely enjoyed security for any length of time, which meant he often had to travel, either to earn money or to seek assistance in political disputes. Secondly his attitude to obstacles in the way of his ambitions is already clear: he was resolved to overcome them, by whatever means came to hand. Although Klein may be right in asserting that Oswald's act of robbery was justified,¹ it was not only on this occasion that his methods of obtaining what he considered to be his rights were less than scrupulous.

1. Klein, Wirkendes Wort, 13 (1963), p. 4.

iii. The Ministerialis of Brixen

In April 1407 Oswald's first main ambition was realised, when the Wolkenstein lands were finally divided up and he himself received the family's share of the Hauenstein estates, which included Castle Hauenstein. He now became a man of some wealth, with revenues from a number of holdings. The increase in his prosperity can be measured by comparing his agreement with the Bishop of Brixen in 1404, when he had to pledge all he possessed in return for a loan of 45 Marks,¹ with the record of a transaction in 1407, whereby Oswald received 64 Marks for the sale of a single farm.² But he was far from being 'the owner of four fine castles', as Salmen calls him, possibly thinking of St. Michelsburg and Neuhaus in the Pustertal, where Oswald later lived as custodian for the Counts of Görz.³ Michael von Wolkenstein kept the lion's share of the family's lands, including Castle Trostburg and the family seat of Wolkenstein. Oswald's new home was a small fortress, poised on an outcrop of rock beneath the mighty Schlern, where its

1. W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis No. 5b.

2. Ibid., No. 8.

3. Walter Salmen, 'Werdegang und Lebensfülle des Oswald von Wolkenstein', Musica Disciplina, 7 (1953), p. 150. Cf. Alois Dejori, Heimaterpfinden und Heimatlieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein (Type-written Dissertation, Innsbruck, 1961), pp. 226, 230.

ruin still stands. Life at Hauenstein must have been far from comfortable, especially during the winter, when the towering rock face of the Schlern shut out the sunlight completely for months on end - one reason perhaps why Oswald often ventured forth to warmer lands.

Hauenstein was a fief of the bishopric of Brixen, and from this time onwards Oswald's name appears frequently in the records of diocesan affairs. He was prominent among the contemporary benefactors of the cathedral, where, on becoming a man of means in 1407, he built a chapel dedicated to St. Oswald. The chapel was decorated with a scene from his travels, his shipwreck in the Black Sea, when Oswald reached the safety of the shore by clinging to a barrel, an event he mentions twice in his poetry.¹ In the following year he had a memorial stone made, carved in marble and depicting himself, and this was placed in the chapel. The stone was rediscovered in 1843² and

1. K18, 28 ff.; K23, 51 ff. The suggestion that the Black Sea was not yet known by this name in Oswald's time, and that his die swarzen see may mean simply 'das dunkle und tobende, unheilvolle Meer' (Ulrich Müller, 'Dichtung' und 'Wahrheit' in den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein, 1968, p. 22, note 4) is without foundation. There are several quite unequivocal references to das swartze mer in a contemporary work, Hans Schiltbergers Reisebuch, edited by V. Langmantel, 1885, pp. 44, 46, 54, 55, 63.

2. W.-R., p. 19.

now stands in the churchyard at Brixen; the chapel no longer exists, but was seen and described by Marx Sittich von Wolkenstein (1563-1620).¹ Oswald also made provision for two priests to say mass daily in his chapel. To pay for this he donated the revenues from no less than sixteen estates, including almost a third of those he received by the agreement of April 1407.² That Oswald kept up this endowment is clear from an addition he made to it twenty years later.³

As well as showing generosity to the cathedral at Brixen Oswald also renewed a traditional family link with the Augustinian priory at Neustift. Early in the fourteenth century Randolt von Villanders had made generous donations to this abbey, at the same time securing the right of burial there for his family.⁴ Oswald purchased a prebend at Neustift in 1411 and was granted the privilege of being buried there, which was duly fulfilled thirty-four years later.⁵

1. Ibid., p. 16.

2. Cf. the lists in W.-R., pp. 17 and 18.

3. F.A. Sinnacher, Beiträge zur Geschichte der bischöflichen Kirche Säben und Brixen, Band VI, Brixen, 1828, pp. 163 f.

4. Weber, Gedichte Oswalds, p. 2.

5. W.-R., p. 22. Cf. also A. Sparber, Das Chorherrenstift Neustift in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung, 1953, p. 107.

In 1419 he provided for an 'eternal light' to burn at Neustift cemetery, perhaps in honour of his wife, Margarete von Schwangau, as it was to be placed in the Margaret-chapel there.¹ Finally he bequeathed a sum of money to the priory on his death.²

Such records as these reveal Oswald to be a pious man, or at least one mindful of the duties of a loyal ministerialis of the Church.³ He was at first no less conscientious in his secular obligations to his lord. He had probably already done military service, for he refers in Es fügt sich to a visit to 'Lampart' and to a campaign with the German King Ruprecht (K18, 18, 20). It is very likely that these references are to the expedition by the newly-elected Ruprecht on which he hope to received the imperial crown from Pope Boniface IX in Rome in 1401.⁴ In this year Bishop Ulrich I of Brixen (1396-1418) levied a tax from his diocese to pay for a journey to Italy.⁵

1. W.-R., p. 42.

2. Karl M. Mayr, 'Zwei neue Urkunden zu Oswald von Wolkenstein', Der Schlern, 21 (1947), p. 7.

3. Wachinger (Reclam, p. 93) suggests Oswald may have cultivated a 'repräsentative Frömmigkeit' for the sake of his good name.

4. W.-R., pp. 11 f.; cf. also below, p. 50.

5. Sinnacher, VI, p. 14.

As Ulrich was the chancellor of the ruling Prince of Tyrol, Leopold IV of Habsburg,¹ who had promised to bring support for the king, it is very probable that the journey Ulrich wished to finance was in Ruprecht's train, and that Oswald accompanied him to Lombardy, where the campaign came to a premature end.

Oswald's main function as a vassal of the bishop was, however, in a judicial capacity. He would have the jurisdiction over the tenants on his estates, besides the duty of assisting at tribunals which settled disputes between his fellow-noblemen. These almost invariably concerned rival claims to property or revenues,² and came under the jurisdiction of the Brixen Hofgericht.³ Such cases were usually heard by a group of arbitrators presided over by an Obmann, a function which Oswald himself fulfilled on some occasions.⁴ Sometimes the ministeriales took it upon themselves to mediate informally in a dispute, as in a case when misshelung arose between Bishop Ulrich I and two members of the Gufedaun family over a claim by the latter for payment.

1. Ibid., p. 8.

2. See W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis Nos. 33, 35, 78, 81.

3. Dejori, Heimatlieder Oswalds, 1961, pp. 201 f.

4. W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis Nos. 21, 75.

Oswald, his brother Michael and two others declared that they had

(uns) derselben misshelung stözz und zuspruch
... an genomen ... freuntleich uberain
zebringen und zeberichten.¹

In view of Oswald's active role in legal affairs and of the proximity of his home to the great law-schools of Northern Italy, one wonders whether he might in fact have received some formal education in law. But the turbulent picture he draws of the period from his tenth to his twenty-fourth year scarcely leaves room for a spell of study, especially as he had no means of financing it.² Also there is no doubt that had Oswald obtained an academic degree, he himself, proud as he was of his achievements, would have mentioned this, either in his poetry or with his official signature. As late as 1432, when he travelled as an ambassador of King Sigismund with a learned

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1. Landesregierungsarchiv für Tirol, Urkunde Nr. 3653. The abstract of this document published by W.-R. (Regestenverzeichnis No. 19) is inaccurate. It should begin: '1412 Juni 14 (Ertag nach Gots-leichnamtag). Brixen. Michael und Oswald von Wolkenstein, Hans von Villanders und Hans Stempfl von Gufidaun vergleichen den Bischof Ulrich von Brixen und Bartholomäus und Sigmund von Gufidaun ...'
 2. It was very expensive, especially at an Italian university. See Otto Brunner, Adeliges Leben und Europäischer Geist, Salzburg, 1949, p. 16.

companion, a Dr. Niklas Stock, the letters they carried gave Stock the title honorabilem magistrum, decretorum doctorem, whilst Oswald was simply nobilis vir.¹ And at the end of his poem Mich fragt ain ritter (K112), a commentary on contemporary judicial affairs cast in the form of a reply by the poet to the inquiry of a fellow knight about corruption in the courts, Oswald signs himself miles. Here he asserts that the sword of justice should be wielded by 'ritter und knecht' or 'adel' (lines 146, 161). Though he later modifies this to 'ain gewandert güter knecht oder ain gelarter, weiser man' (lines 282-3), the evidence of this poem suggests that Oswald counted himself as one of the former category, thus confirming the impression given by historical documents that his activities as a judge represent the usual duties of a knight, with whom the exercise of judicial functions was by tradition closely associated,² rather than the occupation of a man educated for a career in the legal profession. Indeed the nobility in Southern Tyrol was the class least interested in education at this time, or so it would appear from the records of the

1. Quoted by Max Herrmann in 'Die letzte Fahrt Oswalds von Wolkenstein', Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturgeschichte, III (1890), p. 603.

2. Marc Bloch, Feudal Society (translated by L.A. Manyon), London, 1965, p. 303.

University of Vienna. Of the many students there from the Bozen area in the first half of the fifteenth century only four were members of the aristocracy.¹ And yet among those few more enlightened Tyrolean noblemen who sent their sons to be educated with their social inferiors at Vienna we find Oswald von Wolkenstein. Two of the four students mentioned above were Wolkensteins.² One, named Theobald, was a nephew of Oswald. He studied also at Padua, where he graduated in 1442 with the title doctor decretorum. Two years later he was elected Bishop of Trent, an office he held until 1446.³ The second Wolkenstein who studied with Theobald at Vienna was his cousin Michael, Oswald's own son. He became a canon of Brixen cathedral in 1440, after the poet had successfully overcome opposition to the appointment from the chapter.⁴

This coexistence of old and new in his attitude to education is characteristic of Oswald's outlook. As a nobleman qualified by birth and by

1. Leo Amjoch, 'Deutsch-Südtiroler an mittelalterlichen Universitäten', Der Schlern, 1 (1920), p. 295.

2. Ibid.

3. Leo Santifaller, Das Brixener Domkapitel in seiner persönlichen Zusammensetzung im Mittelalter (Schlern-Schriften 7), Innsbruck, 1924-25, p. 517.

4. Ibid., p. 520; W.-R., pp. 85, 88.

experience of the world to be a guardian of law and order, he was faithful to the knightly class and its traditions. But in sending his son to a university he showed also that he was well able to adapt his conservative way of life to take account of the changing world of his time. We shall meet further examples, both in Oswald's life and in his poetry, of this adherence to tradition combined with openness to the world around him.

iv. 'Hauptmann des Gotteshauses'

Having successfully demanded his inheritance in 1407 Oswald was able to pursue more rapidly his personal and political ambitions, in his capacity as a church ministerialis. His earliest recorded appearance as an official at legal proceedings was in 1408, though here he was only a witness.¹ Soon he began to play a more prominent part in judicial affairs. In the same year we find him already at the side of the bishop, with whom he settled a dispute over a dowry on the occasion of the marriage of his cousin, Hans von Villanders.² On May 25th of the following year Oswald set his seal on a document which is of especial interest, because here he acted

1. W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis No. 10.

2. Ibid., No. 12.

as Hauptmann des Gotteshauses Brixen.¹ There has so far been no satisfactory explanation of just what this office was. It is a disputed question whether or not Oswald was at this time already prominent in Tyrolean political affairs, as the information we have about his activities before his visit to the Council of Constance in 1415 is very sparse.² Alois Dejori, the only scholar who has discussed the significance of Oswald's position as Hauptmann des Gotteshauses, concluded that this was the title of a vassal appointed by the bishop to take charge of the Hofgericht, the court which dealt with the affairs of the Brixen ministeriales.³ Dejori links the above-mentioned document of May 1409 with two others of 1413, one dated October 9th, the other six days later, which both refer to a claim by Oswald for remuneration in respect of certain unspecified services rendered to the bishop.⁴ The second document of 1413 mentions ten years as the duration of this service,

1. W.-R., p. 20.

2. See Klein, Die Brennerstrasse, Sonderdruck, pp. 6 ff.

3. A. Dejori, Heimatempfinden und Heimatlieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein, 1961, pp. 181-204.

4. W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis Nos. 22, 23.

der drew jar vergangen sind und die anderen
ich willig war noch aufzedienenen.¹

Thus, Dejori argues, Oswald is now in the fourth year of his captaincy, which would fit in well with the document of May 1409, if this was made out shortly after he was appointed. A closer examination of the dates involved here, however, reveals that the time elapsing between the documents of 1409 and 1413 was four years and five months. Oswald would hardly have reckoned in complete calendar years, the only method by which this calculation can be made to fit the dates. He did not do so, for example, when he signed himself 'des allerdurchleuchtigsten Römischen künigs Sigmund etc. Rat iar 18' in August 1432, less than eighteen years after he had been taken into the king's service.² So Dejori fails to prove the relevance of the records of the year 1413 for the office Oswald held in 1409.

What kind of post was this then? The most common use of the word Hauptmann in Tyrol at this time was to designate those vassals of the bishops who were entrusted with the protection of areas of their diocese. Friedrich von Wolkenstein had been captain of Castle Schöneck in the Pustertal, and his nephew Hans von

1. Quoted by Dejori, p. 196.

2. Quoted in Schatz 1904, p. 35. The original appointment was made in February 1415: see below, II, 2.

Villanders is recorded as Hauptmann von Bruneck.¹ An office which carried much greater responsibility was that of Hauptmann an der Etsch, a governor appointed by the ruling Prince of Tyrol to take full authority when the prince himself was not in the land.² This circumstance provides a clue to the possible role of Oswald as Bishop Ulrich's captain, for he is called Hauptmann not of a particular castle, but of the Gotteshaus. This word refers not just to the Hofgericht, as Dejori assumes, but to the whole bishopric as a territorial domain.³ Could Oswald's office be that of the bishop's representative in all the secular affairs of the diocese, perhaps in his overlord's absence? Is there any evidence that the bishop was in the habit of appointing such a deputy? Sinnacher is able to provide this, in the chapter of his history of the Brixen church where he describes the accession of Ulrich I in 1396. The arrival of the new bishop, a Viennese, to take up office was delayed, and he issued a decree in Innsbruck, which began as follows:

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1. W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis Nos. 3, 4; 12.
 2. See P.J. Ladurner, 'Die Landeshauptleute von Tirol', in Archiv für Geschichte und Altertumskunde Tirols, II, 1865, p. 2.
 3. Grimm, 4, 1, 5, 1255. One reference here is to Sinnacher, Bistum Brixen (see n. 1, p. 41), VI, p. 198: 'vesten und geslosz in seinem gotshaus'.

Wir Ulreich von gots gnaden Bestätter Bischof
ze Brichsen ... Tun kunt Als wir yetz mit dem
genanten unsern Herrn [Duke Leopold IV of
Habsburg] aus dem Lande reiten und in unser
Bistum noch nicht gesessen sein, daz wir dem
edeln herrn Jorgen von Gufidaun die weil wir
aus sein, dasselb unser Bistum in all weg ze
versorgen ze versprechen, und auszerichten
empholhen und (ihn) ze Haubmann des Gotshaus
gemacht haben ...¹

Here we find the exact title later attributed to Oswald
von Wolkenstein used to designate a ministerialis²
nominated by the bishop to represent him in the govern-
ment of his diocese. Another document made out by the
same bishop in 1405, before he set out on a journey to
Burgundy, provides a further example of such an
appointment:

Also haben wir nach Rat unsers Capitels, und
andere [sic] unserr lieben getrewen, dem edeln
unser besunder lieben und getrewen, hern
Bartholome von Gufedawn, unser Gotshaus und die
Hauptmannschaft desselben unsers Gotshauses
empholhen.³

Here we have more details of just how extensive the
powers of this deputy were. The mandate continues:

... unser Stet Brichsen, Prawnegg [Bruneck]
Chlausen und alle unsere Gericht mit Richtern
ze besetzen und entsetzen, und auch alle unser
Gotshausleut, es sein Ritter oder Knecht, ob

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1. F.A. Sinnacher, Geschichte der bischöflichen Kirche Brixen, VI, Brixen, 1828, p. 8.
 2. The Gufidauns were amongst the oldest Brixen ministeriales: see Leo Santifaller, Das Brixner Domkapitel, 1924, p. 38.
 3. Published by Sinnacher, VI, pp. 32 f.

die icht stössig wurden, ze verhöörn und in all
weg auszerichten, ze versorgen, und ze ver-
sprechen ze allen zeiten, nachdem und das den
notdurftig ist, mit vollem gwalt nach rate
untz auf die egenannt unser kunft ... Were
auch daz gross und merklich Sachen auferstunden
under den Gotshausleuten, als oft das zu
schulden kompt, So sol der egen(annt) Gufe-
dawner denn das Hofgericht selber besitzen,¹
und das verhöören und ausrichten one geverd.

The supervision of the Hofgericht was just one of the
important duties of this captain, whose position was
obviously one of great authority. The bishop's
instructions to the Gufedauns do however make it clear
that this was only a temporary appointment. The
captain was in charge 'die weil wir aus sein', and
'untz auf die egenannt unser kunft'. In the light of
this the wording of the document Oswald sealed in May
1409 becomes significant, for he is called 'die zeit
Hauptman des Erbbirdigen Gotshaws ze Brichsen'.² How
long then did Oswald hold this office? Obviously not
for ten years, as Dejori suggests, but probably only
for a few months, whilst the bishop was absent. I can
find no note of Ulrich's presence in Tyrol from May
10th 1409, two weeks before the only record of
Oswald's activity as his deputy, to October 19th,

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1. Ibid. Published also by C.W. Brandis, Tirol unter
Friedrich von Österreich, 1823, pp. 250 f.
 2. Quoted by Dejori, p. 181. The original document
is in the Wolkenstein Archive in the Germanisches
Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg.

when he was at Schwaz, in the Inn valley.¹ This was the year of the Council of Pisa (March 25th-August 7th), to which Frederick of Tyrol had promised to send representatives.² We might therefore expect to find Ulrich there, as he was Frederick's chancellor.³ But it appears that the bishop also failed to attend the Council, for he was represented at Pisa by delegates from Brixen.⁴ The duke was in Tyrol in April 1409,⁵ and again in the following September.⁶ But in June he was away in Wyl,⁷ and thereafter in Vienna.⁸ It is possible that Ulrich accompanied him

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1. E.M. Fürst von Lichnowsky, Geschichte des Hauses Habsburg, V, Vienna, 1841, p. CIII.
 2. See Frederick's letter, published in J.D. Mansi, Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, Vol. 27, 1759, cols. 199 f. ('... nostrosque etiam procuratores ad generale Concilium per vos indictum Pisas, tantummodo si legitime impediti non fuerimus, transmittemus ...')
 3. Lichnowsky, V, p. C.
 4. Mansi, Vol. 27, col. 337: 'venerabiles viri D.D. Sebastianus decanus & Nicolaus Warat canonicus ecclesiae Brixienensis & Georgius Zihorandi secretarii ... Ulrici episcopi Brixienensis procuratores pro eodem' (March 28th).
 5. Lichnowsky, V, Regesten No. 1081.
 6. Ibid., No. 1110, and pp. 122 f.
 7. Ibid., No. 1094.
 8. Ibid., Nos. 1095, 1099, 1101, 1102, 1103.

on this journey, leaving the secular affairs of his diocese in the hands of a newly appointed Hauptmann des Gotteshauses, Oswald von Wolkenstein.

Within two years of securing his inheritance Oswald had attained a position of great responsibility and power, albeit a temporary one, at Brixen. This fact may well be significant for his role in the wider context of Tyrolean politics, for although he did not emerge clearly as a leading figure in the nobility's struggle against Duke Frederick until some years later, the bishop in whose administration he held such high office was often to be found amongst the ranks of the duke's enemies.¹ His duties as the bishop's deputy also provided Oswald with an opportunity to consolidate his financial position, which he was doubtless not slow to seize. Bishop Ulrich's document of 1405 empowered Bartlme von Gufedaun to collect all the

Penn, Sy sein gross oder klain, die in der vorgenannten zeit untz auf unser kunft gevallent, ... der Im der halb tail beleiben sol, den andern halb tail er uns raichen sol.²

So Oswald would also be able to keep half of all the fines he collected from the various courts. But this

1. C.W. Brandis, Tirol unter Friedrich, 1823, p. 130; A. Jäger, Geschichte der landständischen Verfassung Tirols, II, i, p. 323.

2. Sinnacher, VI, p. 33.

was not the only remuneration he received, for although the ten years' service mentioned in the agreement between Oswald and Bishop Ulrich in 1413 did not correspond to his term of office as captain, it is nevertheless almost certain that the two periods of service are connected. For a similar claim for payment to that made by Oswald in 1413 was issued in the previous year by two of the Gufedaun family against Bishop Ulrich, in respect of Bartlme von Gufedaun's 'dinst und hawbtmanschaft'. In the document recording the settlement of this dispute Bartlme agreed to serve the bishop for the next five years in return for a sum of one thousand ducats, to be paid to him in five annual instalments.¹ This agreement closely resembles the arrangement between the same bishop and Oswald von Wolkenstein in October 1413, whereby the poet was promised a thousand guilders for his ten years' service.² So both he and his predecessor Gufedaun demanded and obtained a considerable sum of money after their duties as captain were terminated, in addition to what they could amass whilst in office. If, as Mayr assumes,

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1. Landesregierungarchiv für Tirol, Urkunde Nr. 3653. See also above, p. 34.
 2. W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis No. 22. The guilder and the ducat were equal in value. See below, p. 102, note 2.

Oswald returned from a journey abroad in 1411,¹ this could well have emptied his coffers and made his claim for payment from the bishop more pressing. The first evidence of Oswald's presence in Tyrol in 1411 is in fact a record of a decision made by Duke Frederick in an unspecified dispute between the poet and Bishop Ulrich.² The matter in question was very probably Oswald's original demand for a thousand guilders.

It is clear from the transactions described above that although as a gotshausman³ Oswald was required to serve his liege-lord, the bishop, in return for his fief, in practice the terms of service were very much a matter for negotiation. At this time the Habsburg Princes of Tyrol were faced with a similar dilemma, whereby they were recognised formally as overlords by noblemen who in fact regarded themselves as the equals of a prince. Eventually Frederick IV was able to curb the ambitions of the aristocracy, and impose upon them the rule of prince over subject.⁴ Meanwhile the Bishops of Brixen had scarcely any control

1. Mayr, Die Reiselieder, p. 45.

2. Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 125, note 1.

3. See W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis No. 22.

4. See below, II, 3.

over their vassals, and there was little to prevent an ambitious retainer from seeking more profitable employment elsewhere. And this Oswald von Wolkenstein soon did, when in 1415 he entered the service of Sigismund, King of the Romans.

2. The Imperial Servant.

i. The Nicopolis Story

In the letter recording Oswald's appointment in Constance as an imperial servant, at an annual salary of three hundred Hungarian guilders, King Sigismund referred to

getrue, willige, unuerdrossne vnd anneme dienst,
die vns der veste Oswald von Wolkenstein,
vnser lieber getruen, oft nutzlich getan hat,
teglichen tut, vnd furbass tun sol vnd mag ...¹

As Schatz has pointed out,² this is probably only a formula, and does not imply that Oswald and Sigismund were already well acquainted. According to Beda Weber, however, they were old friends. Weber relates how Oswald first met the young Luxemburg prince during a campaign in Prussia, when they were both boys of the same age and full of 'ritterliche Schwärmerei'.³

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1. The document, dated February 16th 1415, is published by Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), p. 20.
 2. Schatz 1902, p. 102.
 3. Weber, pp. 111 ff. Weber gave the year of Oswald's birth as 1367, the date suggested by Hormayr, which conveniently made his hero almost exactly the same age as Sigismund, who was born in 1368. The year 1367 was generally accepted as the poet's date of birth until it was corrected by Schatz; see Schatz 1902, p. 100.

They met again, we are told, when Oswald, who had spent some years in Kandia (Crete), joined the army assembling under the banner of Sigismund, now king of Hungary, for a crusade against the Turks; he served under one of the king's generals, Hermann von Cilli, and was among the small group of men who escaped with Sigismund after the crushing defeat at Nicopolis in 1396.¹ The only authority that Weber cites for his story, Hammer's history of the Ottoman Empire,² provided him with the name of Hermann von Cilli, who commanded a contingent of Austrian knights, but does not mention Oswald himself.³ The second, unmentioned, source from which Weber derived his account of Oswald's participation in the Nicopolis expedition was almost certainly the following passage from Es fügt sich (K18):

auch an dem rüder zoch ich zu mir, das was swër,
in Kandia und anderswo, ouch widerhar,
vil manchen kittel was mein bestes klaide.

Gen Preussen, Littwan, Tartarei, Turkei uber mer,
gen Frankreich, Lampart, Ispanien mit zwai
kungen her

traib mich die minn auf meines aigen geldes wer;
Ruprecht, Sigmund, baid mit des adlers streiffen.
(K18, 14-20)

Weber probably linked Sigismund's name (l. 20) with the mention of Turkey (l. 17), and assumed that the

1. Weber, pp. 121 f.

2. Weber, p. 122, footnote.

3. See Joseph von Hammer, Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches, I, Pest, 1827, pp. 236-244.

poet was thinking of the crusade to Nicopolis. The fact that the only mention of Kandia in Oswald's poetry occurs immediately before this confirms that these lines were the basis of Weber's story. It is however unlikely that the campaign with Sigismund to which Oswald refers here took place in 1396, for this army marched under the imperial eagle - 'mit des adlers streiffen' - and it was not until 1410 that Sigismund was elected King of the Romans.¹ For a similar reason Marold is wrong to connect Oswald's mention of the Count Palatine Ruprecht with the latter's crusade to Prussia in 1386,² which was fourteen years before Ruprecht was empowered by the Electors to take up the imperial banner.³ But if we discount the first ^{four} lines of the above quotation as a reference to an earlier journey (or journeys), we can easily identify from the remaining lines the expeditions Oswald made under the two kings. We are left with three places - 'Frankreich, Lampart, Ispanien' - for two campaigns with Ruprecht and Sigismund. These are almost certainly two well-

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1. Cambridge Medieval History, VIII, 1936, p. 122.
 2. See Marold, Kommentar zu den Liedern Oswalds, 1927, pp. 23 f. This seems to be the only possible interpretation of Marold's comment here, where he refers the reader to a detailed discussion of Es fügt sich in a later (unpublished) section of his commentary.
 3. On August 20th 1400. See Cambridge Medieval History, VIII, 1936, pp. 119 f.

known journeys, of 1401 and 1415-16 respectively. On the first occasion Oswald travelled with Ruprecht to Lombardy, and on the second he accompanied Sigismund through France and Spain.¹ In the text of this poem in manuscript B, quoted above, the two journeys are confused by an alteration of the original wording of line 18; in the earlier manuscript A the line began: 'Gen lampart, frackreich, yspaniaz ...'² Here the two journeys are easier to distinguish: the sequence of place-names matches the 'Ruprecht, Sigmund' of line 20, so that both lines allude to the expeditions in their correct chronological order. When the poet (or a scribe) later altered line 18, he upset this original balance.

Opinions of later scholars as to whether Oswald really did take part in the battle of Nicopolis have varied. Wolkenstein-Rodenegg did not think so, as he

1. The campaign with Ruprecht was described above, pp. 32 f. The journey with Sigismund will be discussed below, pp. 52 and 144. Both kings did travel with an army ('kunes her'); see K.A.K. Höfler, Ruprecht von der Pfalz, römischer König 1400-1410, Freiburg, i. Br., 1861, pp. 224 ff, and J. Aschbach, Geschichte Kaiser Sigmunds, II, Hamburg, 1839, p. 137.

2. According to the variant given by Klein, p. 49. Schatz in his edition has 'gen Lampart, Frankreich, Ispanien', amended from MS. A. He demonstrates how MS. B was compiled on the basis of A: Schatz 1904, pp. 39 ff.

found no mention of the event in Oswald's poetry.¹ Marold inclined to the opposite view, on the evidence of the poem In Frankereich (K12), where the poet mentions a visit to 'Behem, Ungern' (l. 3).² But this poem could have been composed at any time between 1416 and 1425;³ if it was written after 1420,⁴ the journey to Hungary to which Oswald refers here could be the one he certainly made in the winter of 1419-1420.⁵ Schatz was sceptical about the Nicopolis story, because he knew of no documentary evidence that Oswald had taken part in the expedition with Sigismund. The evidence he required would seem to be provided by the French historian Delaville le Roulx, who compiled a list of the names of the Nicopolis crusaders: one of

1. W.-R., p. 7.

2. Marold, p. 24.

3. The poem contains a reference to the journey to Spain and France which Oswald made in 1415-16 (ll. 1-2), and it was copied into MS. A by the year 1425 (see Schatz 1904, pp. 22 ff.). Schatz gives very little evidence to support his more precise dating, 1416, which Marold accepts; see Schatz 1902, p. 114, and Marold, p. 21.

4. According to a note in MS. B this poem was set to the same melody as O snöde welt (K 11), which was certainly written after 1421; see Klein, p. 40, and Schatz 1902, p. 113.

5. It is described by Mayr, pp. 82 ff.

the names in this register is 'Oswald de Wolkenstein'.¹ But although Delaville le Roulx claims to have used mainly original documents and contemporary chronicles as his source for this list,² the passage in his description of the crusade where Oswald is mentioned has a footnote which refers to none other than Beda Weber.³ We are therefore still left with only Weber's word that Oswald and Sigismund knew each other long before 1415. Neither historical evidence nor Oswald's poems support him.

ii. Diplomatic Missions

Oswald von Wolkenstein was one of a number of noblemen appointed by King Sigismund in 1415 to assist him in mediating between conflicting ecclesiastical and political parties. It has been suggested by Mayr that the poet was engaged with a particular mission in view, an embassy to Henry V of England. With little to guide him beyond a few casual references in Oswald's poems, Mayr has reconstructed in a convincing manner the journey undertaken by the new imperial messenger. He went first to England, and thence by sea to Lisbon, where he joined the expedition which captured the

1. J. Delaville le Roulx, La France en Orient au XIV^e Siècle. Expéditions du Maréchal Boucicaut, Paris, 1886, vol. II, p. 86.

2. Ibid., p. 78, note 1.

3. Ibid., vol. I, p. 281, note 1.

fortress of Ceuta from the Moors in August 1415. Immediately afterwards he set off with the party which conveyed the news of this victory to the King of Aragon at Perpignan.¹ Here he rejoined Sigismund and travelled with him to Paris, where the royal party arrived on March 1st 1416. This last stage of Oswald's journey, from Perpignan to Paris, is described in some detail by the poet in Es ist ain altgesprochner rat (K19).²

Although we can roughly trace the course of Oswald's travels over these months, we have no precise information about what his business was. It was as a soldier that he sailed to Ceuta, if we accept his own word in a later poem:

Von Lizabon in Barbarei,
gen Septa [Ceuta], das ich weilent half
gewinnen,
da manger stolzer mor so frei
von seinem erb müsst hinden aus entrinnen.
(K26, 11-14)

He was well received by a Moorish king (K26, 16),³ and by at least two queens. One was Isabella, a Bavarian duchess and wife of Charles VI of France,⁴ whom Oswald calls Frau Elst von Frankreich and who decorated his beard with a diamond (K19, 190-92). The second was

1. Mayr, pp. 72 ff. His reconstruction is based mainly on K26, 1-16.

2. This poem will be discussed below, III, 1.

3. Der rotte kung, identified by Mayr (p. 74) as Jusuf III of Granada.

4. See W.-R., p. 30.

die schöne Margarith, widow of the Aragonese King Martin,¹ who initiated the poet into a custom of her land by piercing his ears, which she then adorned with earrings (K18, 37-40; K19, 153-60). Such honours as these were very probably bestowed in recognition of Oswald's offerings in song, for later he recalls:

... mein tichten und gesangk
von manger künigin schöne
(K9, 18 f.)

But the man who shared a dormitory with Sigismund's closest advisers, Count Ludwig of Ottingen, Master of the Royal Household, and Duke Ludwig of Brieg,² was doubtless not sent on an important mission simply in order to entertain his companions and his hosts. And yet in his poems Oswald leaves us to guess at what his serious business was. He tells us only that at the end he was rewarded with so much money that he could not carry it without the assistance of two others (K19, XXV).

In April 1416, over a year after his departure from Constance, Oswald returned there, whilst the king proceeded from Paris to England. But it was not long before the two were reunited, and the bond of service which had been joined remained intact through-

1. Mayr, p. 74.

2. As he tells us in K19, X-XI.

out Sigismund's reign. The contact between them, both personal and in correspondence, can be traced in documents and letters spanning a period of twenty years as well as in Oswald's poetry. After Sigismund's return from England in the winter of 1416, Oswald was for a number of years preoccupied with political and personal affairs in Tyrol. These events, in which the king played a very important role, will be described in the appropriate context below.¹ It was not until Oswald's domestic troubles were settled that he again appeared on the stage of international affairs. This was in the spring of 1431, when he attended a session of the Imperial Diet in Nürnberg. He had joined King Sigismund in the previous autumn and had accompanied him on a journey to Ulm, Constance and back to Nürnberg by way of Rotweil and Tübingen. Mayr has traced his itinerary in detail,² but here again it is not clear just why Oswald made this journey or what kind of services he performed. It may well be that he decided in the first place to visit the king in order to seek his assistance in a personal matter, for at this time the poet still had legal and financial troubles as a consequence of a long dispute with

1. See below, II, 3, ii.

2. Mayr, pp. 100-102.

Prince Frederick of Tyrol. This emerges from a letter Sigismund sent to the prince in August 1431,¹ appealing to him on Oswald's behalf. Two days after this letter was written the imperial army was humiliated by the Hussites at the battle of Taus. If, as Mayr supposes,² Oswald took part in this campaign, this could well have been a service rendered in return for the king's support against Frederick.

The poet returned to Hauenstein in the autumn of 1431,³ but very soon he was once more in the entourage of King Sigismund. On this occasion there is no doubt that Oswald was called to important diplomatic work. Sigismund was then on his way to Rome, where he hoped to receive the imperial crown from Pope Eugenius IV. In December 1431 he ran out of troops and money, and was stranded at Piacenza; it was here that Oswald joined him. Wolkenstein-Rodenegg assumed that Oswald did not leave Tyrol for Italy before January 23rd 1432, as the Bishop of Brixen addressed a letter to him on that day.⁴ Mayr on the other hand believes that this letter did not reach the

1. See Appendix No. 7.

2. Mayr, p. 102.

3. W.-R., p. 73.

4. Ibid.

poet, because he had probably already left Tyrol on receiving word from the king.¹ Mayr's guess is correct, for on January 10th 1432 Sigismund did in fact send a letter to Oswald, in which he summoned him to 'etlichen unsern sunderlichen geschefften' in Piacenza.² Unfortunately the letter does not specify any more exactly than this what the king required of his servant. In Italy Sigismund would need ambassadors to communicate with Rome and other states, as well as with the Church Council at Basle, which was now in session. In this situation Oswald's knowledge of the land and its language would be very useful to him.

Wolkenstein-Rodenegg believes that Oswald travelled to Rome at this time,³ and this could perhaps be read into a comment made by the poet in Mich fragt ain ritter (K112), composed some six years later; talking of the clergy's meddling in worldly affairs, Oswald says:

durch si das recht vil mer erkrumpt,
wann das von anders jemand kumpt.
das hab ich mer zu Rom ervaren
wann anderswo in kurzen jaren
(K112, 187-190)⁴

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1. Mayr, p. 102, note 7.
 2. I discovered this letter in the Wolkenstein Archive in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg. See Appendix No. 10.
 3. W.-R., p. 75.
 4. The date of this poem, 1438, is given in manuscript B. See Klein, p. 285.

On the day before he wrote to Oswald, Sigismund had informed the town of Frankfurt by letter that he was going to send envoys to Rome, in order to win the pope's support for the Basle Council.¹ As Mayr has noted, Oswald was not one of the three leaders of the main embassy sent to Rome shortly before February 20th 1432.² But it is quite possible that he was one of a number of other messengers the king claimed to have sent with requests to the pope to give up his opposition to the council.³ One would expect some familiarity with affairs in Rome on the part of Oswald, in view of the one task he was certainly given by Sigismund at this time, which was to convey news of these negotiations from Parma to the assembly at Basle; for the poet's companion on this journey was a Dr. Niklas Stock, one of the three members of the main delegation to the pope mentioned above. Stock was probably the more important of the two envoys to Basle, because on the

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1. W. Altmann, Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmunds (2 vols.), Innsbruck, 1898-1900, vol. II, p. 205, No. 9007.
 2. Mayr, p. 103, note 4. Cf. Altmann, II, p. 208, No. 9043.
 3. Sigismund refers to these messengers in a letter which he addressed to the University of Heidelberg from Piacenza on February 19th 1432; Altmann, II, p. 208, No. 9042.

day of their departure, May 18th 1432,¹ two letters were made out bearing his name only, the one to be presented to the fathers of the council, the other to its secular protector, Duke Wilhelm of Bavaria. Yet it would appear that Oswald was more than simply a travelling companion for Stock, because in addition to the two letters mentioned above two more were issued, which named both Stock and Oswald as the ambassadors who would bring the king's news by word of mouth. In his letter to the council fathers Sigismund wrote:

Mittimus ad presenciam vestrarum paternitatum honorabilem magistrum Stok, decretorum doctorem, ... adiuncto sibi nobili viro Oswaldo de Wolkenstein fideli nostro, qui vos de singulis rerum circumstanciis clarius informabunt: quorum relatibus vestre paternitates adhibere velint tamquam nobis per omnia credencie plenam fidem.²

The duplication of letters is puzzling, and the passage in the records of the proceedings at Basle which describes the delivery of Sigismund's message is also ambiguous:

Die sabbati vigilia Pentheconstes mensis iunii die VIIa fuit congregacio generalis, in qua domini ambassiatores domini Romanorum regis interfuerunt. Et presentatis per eosdem litteris credencialibus regie maiestatis et

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1. As this was five months after Oswald was summoned to Piacenza, it is hardly likely that it was the first task he was given in Italy. But there is no known record of any other.
 2. Quoted by Max Herrmann, in 'Die letzte Fahrt Oswalds von Wolkenstein', Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturgeschichte, III (1890), p. 603.

ipsis lectis, dominus N[icolaus] Stok alter
ambassiatorum de gestis per ambassiatores dicte
regie maiestatis erga dominum nostrum papam
suam fecerunt relacionem et credenciam
exposuerunt ...¹

The odd use of a plural verb after alter could be explained if the word et has been lost before this pronoun. If this is the case, then Oswald himself also reported personally to the assembly at Basle.

The documents which Oswald carried on this last mission suggest that he was held in high esteem by King Sigismund. By what accomplishments, one wonders, did he earn such a position of trust? Wolkenstein-Rodenegg exaggerates when he talks of the poet's

Länderkenntnisse, womit zu jenen Zeiten wohl
kein Deutscher mit Ausnahme² des Johannes
Schiltberger messen konnte.

What he means is that these were the only two Germans who (to his knowledge) recorded their travels for posterity.³ Nevertheless, it was probably Oswald's

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1. Quoted from Johannes Haller, Concilium Basiliense, vol. II (Protokolle des Concils 1431-1433), Basle, 1897, p. 138. Haller (II, pp. 145 ff.) also records Oswald's presence as a witness at the fourth public session of the council on June 20th 1432.
 2. W.-R., p. 4. He is referring to Hans Schiltbergers Reisebuch, herausgegeben von Valentin Langmantel (Bibliothek des literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, 172), Tübingen, 1885.
 3. Cf. the list of travelogues in G. Ehrismann, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters, II. Teil, Schlussband, Munich, 1935, pp. 522-524. A near neighbour of Oswald also travelled widely: Oswald von Schlandersberg went off in 1411 to serve the King of Cyprus for five years; see Archiv-Berichte aus Tirol, edited by E. von Ottenthal and O. Redlich, vol. II, Vienna, 1896, p. 24, No. 140.

wide experience of travel and his knowledge of languages - he claimed to know ten¹ - which equipped him for his duties as an imperial servant. The king was not the only one who drew on Oswald's knowledge of the lands he had seen. The Count Palatine Ludwig III, Oswald's other main benefactor and his great favourite,² wrote to the poet requesting his company on the pilgrimage to the Holy Land which he undertook in 1426. In his reply Oswald regrets he cannot accept the invitation, which reached him too late, but offers advice to the count on how to guard against certain hazards of the journey.³ This letter may well be a key to Oswald's usual role on his diplomatic errands, as a man with a wide experience of foreign travel and, as Klein says, 'mehr in begleitender als eigentlich beratender Funktion'.⁴ One feature which his missions do have in common, and which may perhaps be significant, is a connection with ecclesiastical affairs. It was noted earlier how close his ties were with the cathedral

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1. See K18, 22 f. There is no need to assume from this that he knew more than a smattering of each.
 2. See the poem O phalzgraf Ludewig (K86), and also K41, 33 ff., 59 ff.; K26, 83 f.
 3. A draft of Oswald's reply is preserved and is published by J. Schatz, 'Zu Oswald von Wolkenstein', Zs. Ferd., 45 (1901), pp. 183 f.
 4. Die Brennerstrasse, Sonderdruck, p. 26.

at Brixen as a ministerialis of the bishop. He was apparently also on good terms with Archbishop Eberhard IV of Salzburg, whose name occurs in the poem Von Wolkenstein, where Oswald describes the warm hospitality he once received in Salzburg (K41, 9 ff.). Whether there is a link between Oswald's association with these prelates and his activities at the Councils of Constance and Basle, we can only guess. Further positive evidence is lacking.

iii. The Knight and the Empire

In Oswald's relationship with King Sigismund there is much that one traditionally associates with the way of life of the medieval knight. The knight's duties included fighting for the Christian cause, which in Oswald's case meant crusading against the Moors and the followers of the Czech heretic John Huss. He probably took part in two campaigns against the Bohemians, the one of 1431 mentioned already and an earlier expedition in 1420.¹ It was almost certainly in recognition of his valour on these occasions that he was awarded a special class of the Order of the Dragon, a society of knights founded by King Sigismund himself, whose task was the persecution of Turks,

1. Mayr, p. 85.

schismatics and heretics.¹ The king probably bestowed this order upon Oswald at Nürnberg in 1431.² Other chivalrous decorations acquired by the poet on his travels included the Aragonese Order of the Jar, which he received at Perpignan during his visit in 1415,³ and a coat of arms, der kolkorb, conferred upon him by Duke Przemko von Troppau in Hungary in 1419.⁴ In this year Duke Przemko, together with Oswald's former bed-fellow Ludwig von Ottingen, represented Sigismund in negotiations with the German Order in Prussia,⁵ and later also took part in the Bohemian campaign in 1420.⁶

That the poet was fond of the trappings of chivalry which he acquired on his travels is apparent from the portraits of himself in manuscripts A and B

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1. W.-R., pp. 76 f.; Klein, in Die Brennerstrasse, Sonderdruck, p. 25. This order was founded not in 1387 (as we read in W.-R. and Klein), but in December 1408, by Sigismund and his Queen, Barbara: see J. Caro, 'Aus der Kanzlei Kaiser Sigmunds. Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte des Konstanzer Konzils', Archiv für österreichische Geschichte, 59 (1879), p. 16.
 2. Mayr, pp. 77, 101.
 3. Ibid., p. 75.
 4. W.-R. describes this coat of arms (pp. 40 f.). It is not known why Duke Przemko honoured Oswald thus.
 5. W.-R., p. 41.
 6. See G. Biermann, Geschichte der Herzogtümer Troppau und Jägerndorf, Teschen, 1874, p. 189.

of his poetry, where he proudly displays his decorations.¹ But the glorious age of knighthood and of the empire was past, as the recent humiliating defeats of the knights by Swiss peasants at Sempach (1386) and by the Turks at Nicopolis (1396) had emphasised. Though Sigismund was anxious to restore the fortunes of his realm,² he himself recognised that it was in a lamentable condition:

... an allen enden zerrissen, virfallen ... und
alles, das es gehabt hat, so gar entwert ...,
das im widerbrengung sere not were.³

Most of the imperial undertakings in which Oswald took part turned out quite ingloriously: Ruprecht's abortive journey to Italy in 1401, Sigismund's unfortunate campaigns against the Hussites and his bungled expedition to Rome. We shall return later to the question of whether Oswald was preoccupied with the splendid heritage of chivalry and of the empire, in considering his imperial service as he recorded it in his poetry. But we shall turn first to the period between the two journeys of 1415 and 1431, during which the poet was preoccupied with personal and political affairs in his own corner of the decaying German Empire.

1. Reproduced in W.-R., pp. 81, 96.

2. See A. Main, The Emperor Sigismund (The Stanhope Essay), Oxford, 1903, p. 45.

3. In a circular issued after his election; published by J. Aschbach, Geschichte Kaiser Sigmunds, I, 1838, p. 430 (Beilage VII).

3. The Rebel

Like other noblemen of his time Oswald had been drawn to the court of a king, 'whence flowed so many of the good things of life, rich brides, valuable offices, ... titles and respect'.¹ But his bond of service to Sigismund was to assume a quite different function in Oswald's life. On returning from his journey across Western Europe in 1416 he became involved in the political upheavals which brought civil war to his homeland. The king himself played a leading role in these events, and for a number of years he was the poet's ally in a bitter feud with the ruling Prince of Tyrol, Duke Frederick IV of Habsburg, which became for Oswald a struggle for his very survival.

i. Prelude: Before 1415

The violent conflict between the Habsburg Duke Frederick IV and the Tyrolean knights was the culmination of a contest for power which had gone on for many decades. During the fourteenth century Tyrol, important as a military and trading route as well as for the wealth of its mines, attracted the keen interest of the families of Wittelsbach, Luxemburg

1. Denys Hay, Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, London, 1966, p. 66. The item included here that we have not mentioned, a rich bride, was probably also acquired by Oswald at the king's court in Constance. He married Margarete von Schwangau in 1417: see W.-R., p. 33; Mayr, p. 45.

and Habsburg, who each in turn held the reins of government there. In the competition amongst these rival dynasties for control of the little principality the local nobility played an important part. From each succeeding prince they secured the confirmation of their rights and privileges.¹ Though their immediate concern was the increase of their own wealth and their influence on affairs of State, this was not always to the disadvantage of the land itself. The presence of a strong body of ambitious noblemen placed an effective barrier in the way of any foreign prince who had designs on Tyrol. In 1335, when the Emperor Ludwig declared the principality a vacant fief and proceeded to divide it up between Bavaria and Austria, it was the Tyrolean nobility who acted to forestall this plan and rescued the sovereignty of the land.²

Among the select number of ministeriales who held high office at this time the name of Villanders occurs frequently. In 1363 the seal of Eckhard von Trostburg was among those affixed to one of the most important documents in Tyrol's history, which recorded the formal surrender of government to the

1. J. Egger, Geschichte Tirols, I, pp. 337 ff.

2. A. Jäger, Geschichte der landständischen Verfassung Tirols, Innsbruck, 1881-85, II, i, pp. 53 ff.

house of Habsburg.¹ Such political prominence could also be attended by great misfortune, as the family had learned to its cost in 1348, when Englmar von Villanders had been accused of treason and put to death by the new Bavarian governor Konrad Teck.² Two generations later Oswald von Wolkenstein himself narrowly escaped a fate very similar to that of Englmar. In the meantime an event had taken place which significantly altered the relationship between the Tyrolean aristocracy and their ruler: in 1406 Frederick IV of Habsburg, then twenty-four years old, arrived in the Inn valley to take over the government of Tyrol. One circumstance which had favoured the nobility throughout almost the whole of the fourteenth century had been the lack of a prince permanently resident in the land. But Frederick came from Vienna with the intention of ruling the lands on the Etsch and Inn as his own separate territory, an intention which was soon to cause considerable displeasure to some of his newly-acquired subjects.

By this time some of the Tyrolean barons had reached a status similar to that of many petty dynasts of Southern Germany. They had extensive lands which enable them to run households more

1. Published by A. Huber, Geschichte der Vereinigung Tirols mit Österreich, 1864, pp. 219-25.

2. Jäger, II, i, p. 102.

splendid than that of the prince himself. Having so long enjoyed undisturbed possession of their fiefs and of property pledged to them by earlier rulers, they came to regard these as their own. The prince, though he was formally recognised as head of State, was in their eyes little more than primus inter pares.¹ In order to safeguard its interests the nobility had adopted a practice which had sprung up already in other parts of Austria, that of forming leagues for mutual help. In August 1406 twenty-one noblemen formed the so-called Elephantenbund, whose main expressed aim was to protect its members against any action of their gnädige Herrschaft - the Habsburgs - which might injure their rights and privileges. This alliance was superseded in the following year by the much more powerful and numerous Falkenbund, with over a hundred members, formed ostensibly for the protection of Tyrol against its enemies.

On the documents recording the foundation of both these leagues there appears the name of Oswald

1. See Anton Noggler, 'Der Streit der beiden letzten Starkenberger mit Herzog Friedrich von Österreich', II. Teil, 34. Programm des K.-K. Staatsgymnasiums zu Innsbruck, 1883, pp. 24 ff.

von Wolkenstein.¹ Beyond this we have no positive information about Oswald's political activities before his appearance at the Council of Constance in 1415. Beda Weber nevertheless gives a confident account of the poet's leading role in the events of the early years of Frederick's reign. Here we read that Oswald was more than simply a prominent member of the opposition to Frederick; because of his idealistic political creed² he was 'gewissermassen die Theorie des Bundes',³ and the 'vorzüglichste Triebfeder der Vereinigung zerstreuter Kräfte'.⁴ Oswald's main function, according to Weber, was in giving an ideological basis to the movement against Frederick, and in maintaining the 'leisen, noch kaum merklichen Zusammenhang mit König Sigmund'.⁵ But the words 'noch kaum merklich' here give the author away. The connection was not yet visible because Weber was jumping ahead to a time when Oswald was indeed an

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1. The document of 1406 was published in J.A. von Brandis, Geschichte der Landeshauptleute von Tirol, 1850, pp. 151 ff. For the Falkenbund see E. von Schwind and A. Dopsch, Ausgewählte Urkunden zur Verfassungsgeschichte der deutsch-österreichischen Erblande im Mittelalter, Innsbruck, 1895, pp. 303 ff.
 2. See above, p. 13.
 3. Weber, p. 167.
 4. Ibid., p. 159.
 5. Ibid., p. 167.

important link between Sigismund and the Tyrolean nobility, after 1415. Weber produces no evidence of a connection between the Falkenbund and Sigismund, who as yet, though Weber, and more recently Wolkenstein-Rodenegg, overlooked this, was only King of Hungary, not of the Romans.¹ When Weber quotes verifiable documents naming the leaders of the nobles' party at this time, Oswald's name is always absent. In a long account of hostilities between Frederick and the nobility Oswald is not mentioned,² and yet, after describing the prince's victory, Weber assigns to Oswald the task, 'seine zersplitterte Kraft wieder zu sammeln und zur furchtbarsten Einheit zu bringen'.³

It is unlikely that Oswald was an important figure in the events of these early years. He seems to have been overshadowed by his elder brother Michael, who, having kept the greatest portion of the family's estates for himself, would have the resources necessary for effective opposition to the prince. As early as 1406 Frederick complained that Michael had been harassing his retainers on Castle Tyrol.⁴ Michael would be a more likely target for the young prince's

1. W.-R., p. 16; cf. above, p. 49.

2. Weber, pp. 196-235.

3. Ibid., p. 235.

4. Franz Kurz, Osterreich unter Albrecht dem Zweiten, Vienna, 1835, I, p. 46.

policy, which was to weed out the most powerful and arrogant of the barons one at a time by forcing them to give up important strongholds which had been pledged to them or their families at various times in the past. During the period of these first confrontations there is little trace of Michael's younger brother Oswald. He seems to have enjoyed the prince's favour in 1408, when Frederick supported him in a legal matter.¹ It may be that Oswald was at this time preoccupied with affairs at Hauenstein and Brixen, and had no inclination to arouse Frederick's hostility. One must therefore accept that the poet's relationship to the prince in the first seven or eight years of his reign is obscure.

As later events will reveal, a key to Oswald's role in political affairs in Tyrol is his connection with the Holy Roman Emperor, Sigismund. The first real evidence of a meeting between the two men is the document of February 16th 1415, which the king issued in Constance on taking the poet into his service. The possibility that Oswald was received by Sigismund at this time as an agent of the Tyrolean nobility is dismissed by Mayr on the grounds that Frederick was on good terms with the king and there was no hint as

1. W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis No. 11.

yet of the disaster which was soon to overtake him.¹ But in fact relations between Frederick and Sigismund were already very strained at the time of the Council of Constance. Some years earlier, shortly before Sigismund was elected in 1410, Frederick had been negotiating with the Venetians, Sigismund's enemies, who had promised the Habsburg duke their support in the event of his own candidature for the imperial crown.² Not long after, Frederick interfered in the war between the king and the Venetians, with the result that Sigismund encouraged the Dukes of Bavaria and the Counts of Görz to attack Tyrol. He also lent a favourable ear to all those who had any complaint to make against Frederick, including Bishop Ulrich of Brixen.³ In the light of this it seems more than probable that Sigismund made contact before 1415 with prince's enemies in Tyrol. A convenient occasion would have been the king's visit to Tyrol in 1413. At this time he had apparently put aside his differences with Frederick, but the cordial atmosphere between them was very soon disturbed again. Sigismund's contemporary biographer, Eberhard Windecke, records as the cause of

1. Mayr, p. 59.

2. Otto Stolz, Geschichte des Landes Tirol, Innsbruck, 1955, p. 483.

3. See J. Slokar, 'Die Ächtung Herzog Friedrichs', Forschungen und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte Tirols und Vorarlbergs, VIII (1911), pp. 197 ff, 293 ff.

ill-feeling the rape of an Innsbruck girl, of which the king was suspected.¹ Whatever the cause was, Sigismund at once began to show favour towards Frederick's enemies, especially Bishop Ulrich, whom he visited immediately afterwards and upon whom he bestowed great honours.² This would be an ideal opportunity for the nobility in Tyrol to seek a powerful ally against their prince. Although there is no record of a meeting between Sigismund and Oswald himself, there is evidence that other noblemen were in contact with the king. Sigismund first borrowed a considerable sum of money from Heinrich and Kaspar von Schlandersberg.³ A few days later he proceeded to entrust the protection of 'des hart bedrängten Bistums Brixen' to Peter von Spaur,⁴ and one may reasonably assume the 'oppression' to imply Frederick's hostility to the bishop. Ulrich von Starkenberg and his brother Wilhelm were also frequent companions of the king during his stay in Tyrol.⁵ The names of all these men

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1. Eberhard Windecke, Das Leben König Sigmunds, übersetzt von Dr. von Hagen, Leipzig, 1886, p. 31.
 2. Leo Santifaller, Das Brixener Domkapitel, 1924, p. 221.
 3. On August 5th 1413. See Altmann, Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmunds, I, p. 35, No. 604.
 4. Ibid., p. 36, No. 618 (August 8th).
 5. See Anton Noggler, 'Der Streit der beiden letzten Starkenberger mit Herzog Friedrich', 34. Programm des Gymnasiums zu Innsbruck, 1883, pp. 39 f.

were closely linked with that of Oswald von Wolkenstein in the opposition to Frederick not long after this time, as will be seen shortly. One of them at least, Heinrich von Schlandersberg, was a companion of the poet on his arrival in Constance in 1415.¹ It seems very likely therefore that Oswald himself also met the king in 1413 and in the company of his fellow-nobleman exchanged views on the situation in Tyrol.

Just as the evidence for exactly when Oswald became involved in the resistance to Frederick is only circumstantial, there is also uncertainty as to why this happened. Weber explained Oswald's actions by his supposed political ideals, and this view, which in its essentials has been generally accepted, will be discussed later. Another interpretation, equally dubious in origin but also surviving obstinately, has a woman at the heart of the matter. Wolkenstein-Rodenegg relates how a rumour reached the poet's ears on his return from a journey abroad in 1411 that his mistress Sabina Jäger, who had once rejected him to marry a burgher called Hausmann, had now, on the death of her husband, turned her affections towards the prince.² Klein also assumes this to be the cause of hostility between Frederick and Oswald before 1413.³

1. Egger, Geschichte Tirols, I, p. 477.

2. W.-R., p. 23.

3. In Die Brennerstrasse, Sonderdruck, p. 8.

This story dates back to Anton Noggler, who in turn probably followed Beda Weber.¹ It appears to be based on two references in Oswald's poetry, neither of which is unequivocal. The first is in a poem dated 1421 by Schatz,² where Oswald complains that, having been thrown in prison because of his mistress's treachery, he must now be a witness of her love for someone else, a person who has done him great harm:

Und ich den tratz müsst sehen an,
das si ain andern treuten kan,
der mir vil laides hett getän ...
(K59, 13-15)

This 'other man' may have been Frederick, but the rival whom Oswald mentions here could equally well be one of the allies of the prince and the Jägers, possibly Neidhart or Frei, two men about whom little is known except that they appear with Sabina as plaintiffs against Oswald.³ The second passage tells of Oswald's reconciliation in 1427 with Frederick and the Jäger family, with whom he had carried on a long feud:

mit meines bülen freund müsst ich mich ainen,
die mich vor jaren ouch beslüg
mit grossen eisen niden zu den bainen.
(K26, 112-114)

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1. Noggler, 'Der Wolkenstein-Hauensteinische Erbschaftsstreit', Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 124. W.-R. repeats this almost verbatim (p. 23). Cf. Weber, p. 355.
 2. Schatz 1902, p. 115.
 3. See below, pp. 99 ff.

Here the word freund does not mean 'lover', but 'relatives',¹ and refers to the Hausmann and Jäger families, with whom Oswald was forced to come to terms in 1427. Both these poems were in any case written in the 1420s, after Oswald and Sabina had finally parted,² and have no bearing on the events before 1413. There is no evidence that the love-affair between them was disturbed by any third person, apart from Oswald's wife Margarete, for whom he forsook Sabina, though not finally, when he married in 1417. The fact that Frederick later designated himself on one occasion as the heir to property of the deceased Sabina,³ which may also have contributed to the original notion of his liaison with her, carries little weight, as other lands fell to him on the death of their tenants.⁴

A further possible cause of hostility between Frederick and Oswald might be the above-mentioned feud between the Wolkensteins and the Jägers, a dispute over property round Hauenstein which had lasted for three generations. But Oswald himself did not take up the feud before about 1418, and Frederick's intervention

1. See J. Schatz, Sprache und Wortschatz der Gedichte Oswalds von Wolkenstein, 1930, p. 68.

2. See below, III, 2, ii; III, 3, iii.

3. In a letter to Oswald: see Appendix No. 5.

4. Cf. Sinnacher, Geschichte der Kirche Brixen, VI, p. 12.

was delayed for a further three years after this.¹

Yet even though Oswald might have no personal grievance against the prince before 1413, the situation at the time of Sigismund's visit to Tyrol was probably such that the poet had to take sides in anticipation of the trouble which was imminent. It is worth noting also that the Starkenberg brothers, who together with Oswald were later to be the most determined rebels, were also absent from the hostilities before 1413.² In Oswald's case the deciding factor may have been the attitude of his brother Michael and his liege-lord Bishop Ulrich, both of whom had already clashed with Frederick. But perhaps it is most likely that the ambitious Oswald, who had attained a position of importance in Brixen but who, as a second son, had been denied the prominence afforded by extensive lands, now saw a way to make his mark in Tyrol and the world at large - by attaching himself to the man who was, at least in name, the most powerful lord in Germany, Sigismund, King of the Romans.

1. Oswald's feud with the Jägers and his affair with Sabina will be discussed below, II, 3, iii; III, 3.

2. Noggler, 34. Programm des Gymnasiums zu Innsbruck, 1883, p. 39.

ii. The Struggle for Tyrol (1415-1418)

In the light of the events described above it seems very likely that the political situation in Tyrol was a subject of discussion when Oswald von Wolkenstein met King Sigismund at the Council of Constance in 1415. At this time there were however more urgent matters on hand, for soon after his appointment to the imperial service Oswald left Constance on the mission which took him to England, the Iberian peninsula and France. And so by chance he was far from his homeland in one of the most eventful years of its history. But the ferment which began at this time continued long after his return. Before considering Oswald's own role in these events I shall first summarise briefly the course they took.

Shortly after the poet's departure in 1415 the great Council of the Catholic Church was shaken by an unexpected and dramatic event. The schismatic Pope John XXIII, Baldassare Cossa, fled from Constance on March 20th and took refuge in Schaffhausen.¹ This was the beginning of a series of great misfortunes for Cossa's accomplice in his escape, Frederick IV of Habsburg, whom he had earlier appointed as his

1. Cambridge Medieval History, VIII, p. 6.

lieutenant.¹ Sigismund, the Protector of the Council, was thus presented with a perfect opportunity to crush his enemy, whilst at the same time punishing an act of defiance of the Council's authority. Frederick was at once excommunicated by the Church, declared an outlaw of the empire, and deprived of all his lands.² In May he returned to Constance to submit humbly before Sigismund, and was taken into the king's custody.

As a consequence of these events the land of Tyrol suddenly found itself without a head of State. Here was a chance for the nobility to free itself from the grip of the Habsburgs and become independent of all but the emperor, for Frederick was obliged to release his subjects from their oath of allegiance.³ Instead, however, they rejected the envoys sent by Sigismund in June 1415 to receive their fealty,⁴ and called in Frederick's elder brother Ernst, the ruler of Styria, to take over the government. At first

1. In October 1414: C.W. Brandis, Tirol unter Friedrich von Osterreich, 1823, pp. 388 f.

2. Stolz, Geschichte des Landes Tirol, 1955, p. 484.

3. Lichnowsky, Geschichte des Hauses Habsburg, V, p. CCCXC.

4. Stolz, p. 167.

Duke Ernst seemed to be acting in the best interests of Tyrol and of his brother, but soon his motives began to appear questionable. At the beginning of the following year he did not respond to a request from the captive Frederick for financial assistance,¹ and later, when his brother fled from Constance in April 1416 and returned to Tyrol, Ernst showed his true colours. On May 6th he became head of a league formed at Brixen, ostensibly supported by the whole populace, but in fact probably dominated by a group of Ernst's noble supporters.² Frederick objected to this alliance, and the consequence was a brief but bloody civil war until a truce was declared in July. On New Year's Day 1417 the dispute was finally settled and the two brothers agreed on a new division of the Habsburg lands, by which Frederick was reinstated as Prince of Tyrol.³

But the prince's troubles were by no means over. In March of the same year the Council of Constance, espousing the cause of an old enemy of Frederick, Bishop Georg of Trent, again issued a bull of excommunication against him, and Sigismund, who had

1. Egger, Geschichte Tirols, I, p. 483.

2. Jäger, Geschichte der Verfassung Tirols, II, i, pp. 323 ff.

3. Ibid., pp. 330 ff.

returned from his journey to England in the winter of 1416-17, followed this with the imperial ban.¹ The king now made plans to invade Tyrol, but failed to win support from the Swiss towns.² Further attempts, in the following autumn and in the spring of 1418, to persuade Tyrol's neighbours to invade her were also in vain, whereupon Sigismund changed his tactics and made peace with his enemy in April 1418. Frederick's lands were restored to him, though they cost him a great sum of money.³

The positive information about Oswald's movements during these three years is again only sparse, and yet is sufficient to give a clear impression of how deeply he was involved in the hostilities against Frederick. As has been mentioned already, we know from the poem Es ist ain altgesprochner rat (K19) that Oswald parted from Sigismund when the king left Paris for England in April 1416, soon after news had reached Paris of Frederick's flight from captivity in Constance.⁴ Where Oswald was during the remainder of this year we do not know. There is no documentary evidence that he was in Tyrol at this time, and so

1. Egger, I, p. 491.

2. J. Aschbach, Geschichte Kaiser Sigmunds, II, 1839, pp. 290 f.

3. Stolz, p. 485.

4. See K19, XXVI.

it is generally assumed that he was in Constance, taking part in the operations against Frederick from there.¹ It is not until March 1417, after a long absence from historical records, that Oswald appears again, and it is in a quite dramatic manner, in a document which provides indisputable proof of his part in the rebellion against Frederick. This is a letter sent by Oswald from Constance to his brother Michael in Tyrol, in which he first of all thanks Michael on behalf of the king for a recent communication. The letter to which Oswald is here replying is preserved only in the form of an abstract, which Noggler saw. In it Michael von Wolkenstein outlined the best means by which Sigismund might take possession of Tyrol. He promised the assistance of other men, whom he named, and requested the king to send his brother to Tyrol.² In his reply, dated March 14th 1417,³ Oswald assures Michael and his supporters that the king will not sleep peacefully 'alleweil er die Ettchtz nicht hab' and that he is therefore preparing to invade Tyrol.

1. Noggler, 'Versuch einer näheren Zeitbestimmung der ersten Belagerung Greifensteins', Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), pp. 38 and 41; W.-R., p. 32; Mayr, p. 61. Marold (p. 28) thinks Oswald rode to meet Sigismund on the king's return from England in the autumn of 1416.

2. Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), p. 44.

3. Published by R. Marsoner, 'Ein Brief Oswalds von Wolkenstein', Der Schlern, 9 (1928), pp. 104 f.

'zu sand Jorgen tag' (April 23rd). Oswald tells his brother to make sure that Peter von Spaur keeps possession of the two castles Visiaun and Clausen. He says that he is enclosing with his letter a copy of the panbrieff und ächtprief (against Frederick), and also a letter from the king by which his noble supporters in Tyrol are 'genädicleich aufgenommen'. Oswald promises the conspirators - the tone of the letter suggests this description of them - that Sigismund will not desert them.

Despite the assurances the Tyrolean lords received, however, this invasion did not take place that spring, but was postponed until the autumn. By then Oswald was back at home, for on September 28th Sigismund wrote to him from Constance,¹ assuring him that on the Sunday before Simon and Jude (October 24th 1417) he would advance to Feldkirch,

mit ritterschaft vnd allen des richs steten
vnd fuss folk ... Hernach wisse dich zurichten
vnd embeut das ouch, als du wol weist.²

Sigismund had clearly kept in close touch with Oswald during this year, but the negotiations between Frederick's subjects and Sigismund seem to have been conducted in secrecy, for there was no reaction from

1. W.-R. (p. 35) gives the date of this letter erroneously as '28 Feber, 1417'.

2. Published by Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), p. 63.

the prince until the autumn of 1417. Then Heinrich von Schlandersberg, no doubt trusting in the support of the king, took up arms against Frederick, who retaliated by capturing Heinrich's castles, Rotund and Calsaun.¹ But again Sigismund failed to appear, and the rebels took refuge in the impregnable fortress Greifenstein, where they were able to escape Frederick's wrath. According to Noggler it was at this time - early in the year 1418 - that the victorious sortie against Frederick's besieging army took place which Oswald celebrates in the famous Greifensteinlied.²

The king had proved a very unreliable ally for Oswald and his companions, but he did make some amends to them. In the treaty of May 12th 1418, when Sigismund and Frederick settled their differences, Oswald, 'his brother' (presumably Michael, who was taken into the king's service in March 1417³) and Heinrich von Schlandersberg received special mention. Frederick was to make good to them any losses they had suffered during the recent hostilities, and give back the 'grund und boden' of any of their castles

1. Ibid., pp. 52 f.

2. Ibid., p. 61; cf. K85 and below, III, 2, i.

3. See Altmann, Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmonds, I, p. 143, No. 2087.

he had broken or burnt down.¹ Wolkenstein-Rodenegg doubts whether any of the castles referred to here belonged to Oswald, as he knows of no record of the destruction of Hauenstein.² The castle of Calsaun was certainly meant, for a document of some twelve years later refers to a promise made long before by Sigismund of compensation for the late Heinrich von Schlandersberg and his cousin Sigmund, 'wegen des Schadens, den sie durch Zerstörung des Schlosses Cassaun durch Hrz. Friedrich erlitten haben,'³ Oswald will also have suffered considerable damage, for in a record of his property and accounts which he drew up in 1418 one entry reads as follows:

Item Mein herr der Römisch König beleibt mir
fur all züspruch pis auf den vergangen Sand
Jörgen tag iii tausent guldein. In dem virr-
zehn₄hünderstem Jar vnd dar nach in dem xviii
Jar.

St. George's Day (April 23rd) was some two weeks before the settlement between Sigismund and Frederick in 1418, and so this entry probably refers to a claim by Oswald

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1. See the document published by J. von Hormayr, in the Tiroler Almanach, 1804, p. 135.
 2. W.-R., p. 36.
 3. Altmann, II, p. 110, No. 7590 (Pressburg, January 7th 1430).
 4. Manuscript in the Wolkenstein Archive, Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg, fol. 6v.

for losses he suffered at the hands of the prince as a result of Sigismund's failure to carry out his plan of invasion.

Such then is what historical records tell us about Oswald's political activities in these years. He was obviously an important link between the nobles in Tyrol and the king in Constance. But is it possible to be more precise about his role in the rebellion against Frederick, about his motives and his aims?

One frequently finds idealistic political principles attributed to Oswald. He has been called a man who strove 'ohne Rücksicht auf persönliches Wohl für eine gesunde soziale, konservative Idee'.¹ Wolkenstein-Rodenegg maintains that the poet fought all his life for the 'Unabhängigkeit und Freiheit seines Vaterlandes Tirol'.² The principle of which he has most commonly been regarded as a champion is that of 'immediacy', direct allegiance to the emperor and to no other prince besides. He is cast in the role of leader of an extremist party which would have preferred to hand over Tyrol to Sigismund after the submission of Frederick in 1415, rather than to call

1. Gustav Roethe, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Deutsche Rundschau, 197 (1923), p. 157.

2. W.-R., p. X.

in Ernst. Egger refers in his history of Tyrol to the activities of an 'extreme Adelspartei' headed by Oswald, which, he says, aimed at making the land an imperial fief. However, the authority he cites for this view is Beda Weber.¹ The most reliable biographer of Oswald, Anton Noggler, is of the opinion that the poet would have nothing to do with the noblemen who welcomed Duke Ernst, because their political ideas were totally at variance with his own. These others, who formed an alliance with Ernst in 1416, were not yet 'politisch reif ... für den Gedanken Oswalds, mit Hilfe Siegmunds die Reichsunmittelbarkeit anzustreben.'² But where did Noggler find evidence that Oswald had such a notion? In his letter to Michael of 1417 certainly, by which time Oswald's brother and his companions had presumably reached 'political maturity'. But before then? Is Noggler not jumping ahead like Weber, or even with Weber? One would not expect an uncritical attitude to Weber's findings from Noggler, who once stated plainly: 'Ich glaube gegen Webers Ausführungen aus guten Gründen stets eine ablehnende Haltung einnehmen zu müssen.'³ Yet when Noggler, in

1. Egger, Geschichte Tirols, I, pp. 482, 486.

2. Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), p. 40.

3. Ibid., p. 44, note 1.

discussing the poet's political views, talks of 'der phantastische Wolkensteiner', there is an unmistakable echo of Weber.¹ It seems that where Weber was dealing with events which could be verified by tracing historical documents, Noggler had little difficulty in correcting him. But the historian Noggler seems not to have troubled himself with a close examination of Oswald's poetry, which was the source from which Weber drew, or rather into which he read, his picture of Oswald the political idealist. Indeed this picture can be made to fit quite well most of the - relatively few - facts we possess about his role in events after 1415. It provides Noggler with a convenient explanation for the poet's absence from Tyrol in 1416, for, he says, Oswald could not possibly hope for the realisation of his 'far-reaching plans', whilst his fellow-noblemen were wasting opportunities, replacing one Habsburg prince with another.² It is true that Oswald did not play a major part in the struggle for Tyrol until the time of King Sigismund's threats, but he had become a paid servant of Sigismund in 1415; it is this fact, not any great political visions, which accounts for Oswald's close co-operation

1. Ibid., p. 39.

2. Ibid.

with the king in the next few years. It also explains why Oswald, like his brother Michael and Heinrich von Schlandersberg,¹ received special mention in the settlement between Sigismund and Frederick in 1418.

As the quotations from Noggler above indicate, a corollary of Oswald's supposed championing of immediacy was his refusal to support the acceptance of another Habsburg prince, Ernst, as ruler in place of his brother Frederick. When Ernst was initially welcomed by the Tyrolean lords in 1415, Oswald could not have protested against their action because at this time he was far away on a diplomatic mission and thus ignorant of events in Tyrol.² In fact no evidence has been adduced to show that Oswald opposed Ernst at any time. But there is, I believe, strong circumstantial evidence which suggests that the contrary is true. This is provided firstly by a letter dated October 27th 1417, addressed by Erasmus, Burggrave of Lienz, to four noblemen, and demanding from them the payment of a debt of 2,200 ducats, a sum he had lent to Duke Ernst of Austria and for which the four

1. Although Heinrich von Schlandersberg (unlike the two Wolkenstein brothers) is not recorded as a servant of the king, he seems to have been close to Sigismund in Constance: see Altmann, op. cit., I. p. 112, No. 1728; Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), p. 44.

2. See above, II, 2, ii.

men had stood surety. The guarantors for Ernst are named as Oswald von Wolkenstein, his brother Michael, their cousin Hans von Villanders, and Bartlme von Gufidaun.¹ The letter does not say when the loan was made, but the time for its repayment had expired on 'sand Jacobs tag' (July 25th) 1417. It was just a year before this that Ernst had been in Tyrol, at war with his brother. Shortly before hostilities broke out he had formed an alliance with Count Heinrich of Görz,² of whom the Burggrave of Lienz, where the Counts of Görz had their seat, was a vassal.³ This occurred some two weeks after the nobles' league had been formed at Brixen to support Frederick's brother. One of this league's five regional captains was Michael von Wolkenstein; his two aides were Hans von Villanders and Bartlme von Gufidaun.⁴ The evidence here points to a close association between Oswald and the most trusted confederates of Ernst among the nobles' party. This is borne out further by a

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1. The letter is published by Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), pp. 64 f.
 2. The documents recording this alliance are published by Arthur Steinwenter, 'Studien zur Geschichte der Leopoldiner', Archiv für österreichische Geschichte, 63 (1882), pp. 134 f. Both are dated May 19th 1416: one is signed by Ernst at Hall, the other by Heinrich at Lienz.
 3. J. Weingärtner, 'Die letzten Grafen von Görz', in Lienzer Buch, Innsbruck, 1952 (Schlern-Schriften 98), p. 112.
 4. Egger, Geschichte Tirols, I, p. 486.

comparison of the lists of noble leaders who supported Ernst in 1415 and 1416 with the conspirators mentioned by Michael von Wolkenstein in his promise of assistance to Sigismund in 1417. The recurrence of the outstanding names - Peter von Spaur, Ulrich von Starkenberg, Ulrich von Freundsberg, Bartlme von Gufidaun - precludes any possibility of two rival factions, the one seeking immediacy, the other remaining loyal to the Habsburgs.¹ The only important supporter of the king in 1417 missing from Ernst's allies in 1415 was Hans von Villanders; he had travelled to Constance in this year with his cousin, Oswald von Wolkenstein.² There is therefore no reason to doubt that Oswald's political aims coincided with those of many other Tyrolean noblemen, that is, to be rid of Frederick IV and to replace him with a ruler who would not try to impose his will upon them, or interfere with their jealously-guarded rights and privileges. To this end they sought to make use of the ambitions first of Duke Ernst, then of the king himself.

The actions of the Tyrolean nobility during the period of Frederick IV's misfortunes have much in

1. Cf. the list of Ernst's allies in Jäger, Geschichte der Verfassung Tirols, II, i, pp. 315, 325, with the supporters of Sigismund mentioned in Michael's letter, Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), p. 44. (This letter was cited above, p. 82.)

2. Egger, I, p. 477.

common with some of the political manoeuvres of their ancestors. When in 1415 they rejected Sigismund's overtures and called in Duke Ernst, they might seem to be acting in the interests of Tyrol, whatever they hoped to gain for themselves. Indeed the decree issued at the time seems to confirm this, as both they and Ernst stated that their intentions were to look after the welfare of the land until such time as Frederick should be released by Sigismund.¹ But when Frederick did return, neither his brother nor the barons welcomed him back. The latter knew that they could win greater concessions with regard to their privileges from Ernst, who in fact had at once agreed not to hand over the government to anyone without their consent.² And yet they could still justify on legal grounds their actions in plotting against Frederick and in organising an invasion by his enemy the king, because the letter of renunciation signed by Frederick on his submission in 1415, with which he surrendered his lands to the empire, remained in the king's hands until the peace of 1418. As was noted above, Oswald von Wolkenstein took care to enclose in his letter outlining Sigismund's invasion plan in the

1. Jäger, II, i, p. 314.

2. Ibid., pp. 315 ff.

spring of 1417 a copy of the writ of outlawry against Frederick. However, had the Tyrolean noblemen been concerned from the start with obeying the royal command, they should not have called in Ernst. Moreover at this time neither the legal position nor the nobles' own advantage coincided with the best interests of the land. The actions of Oswald as a member of the opposition to Frederick can scarcely be interpreted as being, consciously or otherwise, a defence of the freedom and independence of his homeland. Tyrol had a far healthier future in the hands of the strong and capable Frederick than as a possession either of the pliable Duke Ernst or of the fickle Sigismund. But Oswald might look forward to considerable personal gain as the main instrument in an action which could cause a rich prize to fall into the lap of his lord and master the king. And his hopes of this were perhaps still not completely abandoned.

iii. The Hauenstein Affair (1419-1427)

Oswald had escaped relatively lightly from the ruins of the rebellion against Frederick. Forced to accept the prince's supremacy, but protected by the agreement of 1418, he now retreated to take stock of the situation. In the register of his finances

drawn up in this year he notes as outstanding debts the claim of 3,000 ducats from Sigismund mentioned above,¹ and also his current salary and a palfrey:²

Item Mein herr der Römisch König tenet
mein jar lon vnd i zelten pfärd.

It is therefore not surprising that he soon paid a visit to his royal protector. On April 1st 1419 the king issued a safe-conduct in Pressburg,³

Quia nobilis Oswaldus de Wolkenstein,
familiaris et fidelis noster dilectus de
Curia nostra Imperiali versus propria
intendit dirigere gressus suos.

Whether Oswald had also been planning new resistance to Prince Frederick and sounding the king for possible assistance, we can only guess. It may be significant that in February of this year Ulrich von Starkenberg, an indomitable enemy of Frederick, had arrived in Vienna to receive from Duke Albrecht V of Habsburg the confirmation of the rights and privileges of certain Tyrolean fiefs. The prince had been obliged to pawn these lands to his cousin Albrecht in order to pay for reparations after the peace of 1418.⁴

1. P. 85.

2. Manuscript in the Wolkenstein Archive, Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg, fol. 2r.

3. Also in the Wolkenstein Archive. See Altmann, Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmunds, I, p. 268, No. 3830.

4. Jäger, II, i, pp. 347 ff.

Viewed in the light of Albrecht's subsequent support for the Starkenberges against his cousin in Tyrol,¹ Ulrich's appearance in Vienna seems a likely occasion from which to date the beginning of new plots against Frederick. Weber may well be right in his assumption that Oswald and Ulrich travelled eastwards together on their respective missions.² But if Oswald was seeking assistance from Sigismund in Tyrolean affairs, he probably found the king preoccupied with other matters. His chief concern at this time was with the Hussite insurrection in Bohemia, and in fact Oswald himself was almost certainly among those who answered his call in the autumn of 1420 to a crusade against the heretics, as Mayr has demonstrated.³ Perhaps Oswald was able in this way to assure himself of the continued favour of the king; and of this he was soon in dire need.

There is no record of any open resistance to Prince Frederick on the part of Oswald in the years immediately following the peace of 1418. At this time Frederick had given an undertaking not to carry out reprisals against those who had taken the king's

1. See Noggler, 'Die Starkenbergische Streitschrift gegen Herzog Friedrich von Osterreich', Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), pp. 78 ff.

2. Weber, pp. 336 f.

3. Mayr, pp. 85 f.

side against him,¹ but he would obviously be watchful for any signs of further defiance. He soon demonstrated his determination to stamp out opposition when, in the winter of 1419, he was challenged by Peter von Spaur, another of his arch-enemies, who had earlier sought assistance against him from all possible allies, including Sigismund, Duke Ernst, Bishop Georg of Trent and the Doge of Venice. Now without powerful friends, the Spaur family was soon subdued by Frederick.² The number of disobedient barons among his subjects was diminishing; Oswald von Wolkenstein was still at large, treading cautiously.

But Oswald was not careful enough. Although he did not trouble the prince himself, he did provoke outraged complaints from another quarter. The Wolkensteins had for many years carried on a feud over the property purchased by Oswald's grandfather, Eckhard von Trostburg, from Leonhard von Hauenstein. Eckhard's son Frederick was apparently guilty of infringing the rights of his neighbour, and this led to a series of lawsuits.³ After the Wolkensteins'

1. See the document in Tiroler Almanach, 1804, pp. 129-138.

2. Jäger, II, i, pp. 357 ff.

3. See Noggler, 'Der Wolkenstein-Hauensteinische Erbschaftsstreit und dessen Austragung unter Oswald von Wolkenstein', Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 99 ff.

share of the Hauenstein lands had been inherited by Oswald, little was heard of hostilities between the families until about the year 1418. From this time allegations were made continually by Martin Jäger, the husband of Barbara, last of the Hauensteins, that the poet was taking possession of neighbouring estates or forcing tenants of the Jägers to pay their dues into the Wolkenstein coffers. Noggler links Oswald's renewal of the feud with his marriage to Margarete von Schwangau in 1417, when he supposedly gave up thoughts of winning the hand of his neighbour's daughter, the widowed Sabina Hausmann.¹ A more likely explanation would be Oswald's desire to seek compensation for the losses he had recently suffered at Frederick's hands. But whatever his motives were, Oswald now provided Frederick with a perfect opportunity to disarm yet another old enemy, an opportunity the prince was not slow to seize.

Josef Schatz, the first scholar to produce a comprehensive and reliable sketch of Oswald's life, denied that what befell the poet from 1421 onwards was more than simply a just punishment for the wrongs he committed against the Jägers. There is no evidence, he says, that Frederick acted against Oswald for other reasons, as he did against the Starkenberg family.

1. Ibid., p. 127.

Schatz maintains that King Sigismund was misinformed when he later accused Frederick of taking revenge on Oswald for his disloyalty before 1418.¹ I believe, on the contrary, that the cases of Oswald von Wolkenstein and the Starkenbergs are not only similar, but also closely connected. Let us consider the events of these next few years.

In the autumn of 1421 Sabina Hausmann, Oswald's former mistress, invited him to go on a pilgrimage with her. He took the bait, and instead of the loving welcome he no doubt expected, found himself in a trap. He was put in chains and imprisoned at Vorst, a castle which Sabina's father, Martin Jäger, held in tenancy from the Starkenberg family. This we know from Oswald's own account of the incident in various poems, where he describes also the ill-treatment he received,² and also from a letter which Ursula, the wife of Ulrich von Starkenberg, sent to Prince Frederick protesting against it.³ On December 17th Jäger and his supporters handed over their prisoner to the prince, who took it upon himself to see that their claims against Oswald were suitably dealt with.⁴ This might

1. Schatz 1902, p. 105, especially note 1.

2. See below, III, 3, iii.

3. Published by Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 166-169. The exact date of this letter, and of Oswald's capture, is not known.

4. W.-R., p. 46.

indeed seem the right and proper thing to do. But before this another incident occurred which suggests that the Jägers did not act alone in their attack on Oswald. In a letter to his cousin Albrecht of November 20th¹ Frederick complained that Leonhard von Wolkenstein had just waylaid and captured the Provost of Neustift, who had been travelling on a ducal mission. The Pastor of Tyrol, Ulrich Putsch, a close associate of Frederick and later, by his liege-lord's grace, Bishop of Brixen, had escaped a similar fate only by good fortune. This attack seems very much like an act of reprisal for the capture of Oswald, especially as Michael von Wolkenstein afterwards tried to make use of the provost in an exchange of prisoners to procure his brother's release.² Thus the Wolkenstein family, at least, seems to have had no doubt about who had engineered the ambush on Oswald. A further clue is the mention of two other names, Neidhart and Frei, among the party which took Oswald prisoner.³ It is not known what claims these two men had to make against the poet, but Frei's name occurs

1. Published by Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 169 f.

2. W.-R., p. 46.

3. See the letters published by Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 170, 171.

in Oswald's account book of 1418.¹ His companion was certainly a servant of the prince, as is clear from a letter written by Frederick in 1417, in which he tried to allay the fears of Michael von Wolkenstein about a certain Neidhart, whom Michael had suspected of being engaged on secret activities against the Wolkenstein family. The prince says he has sent Neidhart with two other men on a mission which will cause Michael and Oswald no harm.²

When Frederick took Oswald into his custody in December 1421, he promised the Jägers that their enemy would not be released until the claims made against him had been satisfied in court.³ Again the prince might seem to be acting quite properly - until one considers the extent of these claims. Referring to Sabina, Oswald says:

Viertausent marck begert ir herz
und Hauenstein, es was ir scherz.
(K59, 41 f.)

Indeed he must have found such a demand difficult to take seriously, that is, until he realised its full

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1. Manuscript in the Wolkenstein Archive, Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg, fol. 6v: 'Item fur den smälzlein ist purg Hans Frey'; fol. 7r: 'Item der Frey tenet iiii ducaten'; fol. 7v: 'Item Hans Frey tenet 1 Reinnischen gvldein'.
 2. Published by Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), pp. 63 f.
 3. W.-R., p. 46.

implications. All Oswald's biographers have noted that the sum of four thousand marks seems excessive, in fact it is out of all proportion to Oswald's spoliations; the list of revenues of which he had deprived his neighbours, drawn up by Martin Jäger - who would obviously not underestimate his losses - adds up to only 13 marks per annum.¹ Even if Oswald had appropriated all these dues since the time he first inherited Hauenstein - which is unlikely² - the total sum would still fall far short of the amount demanded from him by his captors. When the final settlement was made in 1427, the sum Martin Jäger accepted as compensation was in fact nothing like the one originally mentioned, but a mere 500 ducats.³ This does not, I believe, represent a compromise and a gain for Oswald, as is generally assumed,⁴ but a quite realistic and adequate assessment of the Jägers' losses.

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1. The list, compiled at some time between 1421 and 1427, is published by Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 164-166.
 2. The only figure mentioned in the list is three years; Oswald's trespasses probably dated from no earlier than 1418.
 3. See the document in Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 179 f.
 4. See W.-R., p. 64.

The original amount was almost certainly fixed by Prince Frederick himself, not with a view to satisfying Martin Jäger, but in order to gain a hold over Oswald von Wolkenstein which the poet could not, and in fact never did, escape.¹

In order to obtain his brother's release in March 1422 Michael von Wolkenstein, together with three other men, had to guarantee in writing a bail of 6,000 guilders,² and see to it that Oswald should either come to an agreement with the plaintiffs or return to captivity by August 24th of the same year.³ As Frederick well knew, an agreement by the terms of which Oswald must lose so much money was out of the question, for it would mean his ruin. The prince had now secured a vital weapon: a bond which placed Oswald's financial survival in his hands. In this way he succeeded in turning the feud over Hauenstein to his own personal advantage. Soon after he was released

1. See below, p. 126.

2. This sum is recorded both as 6,000 ducats and 6,000 guilders: see W.-R., p. 46. The gulden and the dukaten had recently become current in Tyrol, in addition to the older mark or berner. The values fluctuated, but the mark was worth approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ ducats (Egger, Geschichte Tirols, I, pp. 638 f; P.C. Stampfer, Chronik von Meran, Innsbruck, 1867, pp. 27 f.). The bail demanded for Oswald's release was therefore less than the original claim, but still excessive.

3. See Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 137 f.

Oswald had to transfer to his guarantors all the property he owned or ever might own, in case of any loss they might suffer as a consequence of their surety.¹ The sponsors themselves had to make a similar concession to the prince, in the event of Oswald's failure to return to his custody.² If the Wolkensteins still had any doubts about Frederick's intentions, his next stratagem showed them clearly what was in his mind. Oswald returned to Innsbruck at the appointed time,³ whereupon the prince not only arrested him, but also refused to hand back to the guarantors the bond they had given him. This was for Frederick not, as Noggler suggests,⁴ a convenient way of helping the Jägers to press their claims against Oswald, but a means of tightening his own grip on the unfortunate prisoner. His action provoked the wrath of Michael von Wolkenstein, who sent him a strongly-worded challenge declaring openly that he would from now on be the prince's enemy.⁵

1. W.-R., p. 47.

2. Ibid., p. 46.

3. W.-R. (p. 48) says Oswald did not adhere to the agreement, as he was still free on August 30th 1422. However, the document he cites in evidence is dated June 30th: see Archiv-Berichte aus Tirol, ed. E. von Ottenthal and O. Redlich, Vol. II, Vienna, 1896, p. 498, No. 2725.

4. Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 142.

5. Egger, Geschichte Tirols, I, p. 502. The date of this letter was 5th September 1422.

That Frederick's aim was to quell a defiant subject, Oswald von Wolkenstein, rather than to assist a loyal one, Martin Jäger, is evident from the progress Jäger made in his case against the Wolkensteins, which was very slow indeed. In the autumn of the following year he wrote to the prince, reminding him of his promise to attend to the matter and to put an end to the crimes being committed against him. So far, he says, nothing has been done, and his position is growing worse every day.¹ Frederick seems to have paid little heed to this. It was not until April 1425 that he arranged to have Oswald's case heard before Duke Albrecht at Vienna.² That this did not come about as a result of the prince's efforts to satisfy the Jägers is abundantly clear from a further letter which Martin Jäger wrote to him in March of that year. He begins by saying that he has heard that the prince is to conduct a lawsuit with Oswald von Wolkenstein. He reminds Frederick again of his obligations and goes on to describe in a pleading tone how his position is worse than ever; his very life is not safe from the rapacious Wolkensteins; he now regrets having let

1. Jäger's letter, dated October 20th 1423, is published by Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 173 f.

2. Ibid., p. 149; cf. below, p. 115.

Oswald out of his own hands.¹ From these documents it emerges that, having used the Hauenstein feud for his own ends, Frederick had not troubled himself further with the Jägers. They had been vital pawns, and would be used again, in the important game in which his opponents were Oswald von Wolkenstein, the brothers Ulrich and Wilhelm von Starkenberg, and their allies abroad. The prize for Frederick was the power to rule Tyrol as its prince, with the noble families as his subjects, in fact as well as in name.

The long conflict of the Starkenberg family with Prince Frederick can be followed in considerable detail in a remarkable collection of letters and documents relating to the affair, the so-called Streitschrift, compiled by a member of the rebellious family soon after the events.² The evidence for the prince's struggle with his other main antagonist after 1418, Oswald von Wolkenstein, is of a more fragmentary and sometimes confusing nature. As has been mentioned already, no positive proof survives of any conspiracy by Oswald between 1418 and 1421, and it is likely that

1. This letter, of March 31st 1425, is also published by Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 174-176.

2. Published in full by Noggler, 'Die Starkenbergische Streitschrift gegen Herzog Friedrich von Österreich', Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), pp. 71 ff.

none was found by Frederick himself. But the prince doubtless suspected that Oswald's continued activity in the service of King Sigismund was a possible source of danger to him. When Oswald was first taken into Frederick's custody in the winter of 1421, Michael von Wolkenstein warned his captor that the King of the Romans would not look kindly upon such treatment of his servant.¹ Frederick ignored the threat. A year later, on December 6th 1422, the king himself issued a decree in Pressburg, condemning the action taken against Oswald as an act of revenge for his part in the struggle between Frederick and the empire some years before. Sigismund ordered the prince to return all promissory notes to Oswald's guarantors, and to relinquish all claims against them and against the poet himself.² One can well imagine that whoever kept Sigismund informed about events in Tyrol presented a one-sided picture of them and omitted to give details of what was at least the immediate, ostensible reason for Oswald's plight, his oppression of his neighbours. Nevertheless, Schatz is over-correcting this bias when he assumes that the king was misinformed, and that 'die Ursache dieser Gefangenschaft liegt klar zu Tage'.³

1. Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 136.

2. See Appendix No. 2.

3. Schatz 1902, p. 105, note 1.

As we have seen, Frederick had his own reasons for wanting Oswald in his power; there is further evidence that these reasons were political in an incident involving the Starkenbergs, which provides an interesting parallel to Frederick's treatment of Oswald as interpreted by Sigismund. In a defence of his case against the prince, addressed to the Estates of Tyrol in 1423, Ulrich von Starkenberg referred to a recent charge made against him by Frederick, that Ulrich and his brother Wilhelm had entered Sigismund's service after the prince's return from Constance.¹ It is clear from this that Frederick still bore a grudge against those who had once taken the king's side against him. If Oswald had not intended to oppose Frederick again after 1418 or to make common cause with the Starkenbergs, he was now very quickly driven to join forces with them.

As soon as Oswald fell into the Prince of Tyrol's hands in 1421, Ulrich von Starkenberg saw the opportunity to gain an ally; with this in mind he instructed his brother Wilhelm to make contact with the Wolkenstein family.² Just a year later the names of Oswald and Ulrich were linked together as

1. Document No. XXXI of the Starkenberg pamphlet, Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), pp. 108 ff.

2. Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 137.

opponents of Duke Frederick. On December 18th 1422, a few days after Sigismund had issued his decree in support of Oswald,¹ he commanded Michael and Leonhard von Wolkenstein to assist their brother and also Ulrich von Starkenberg, both of whom were being oppressed by Frederick.² Suddenly it seemed as if the prince's troubles were beginning afresh, for by January of the following year his neighbours were called upon to attack him, when Sigismund once more declared him an outlaw of the empire. An order from the king to the Imperial Marshal von Pappenheim to invade Tyrol in July 1423 coincided with the formation of a new league of the Tyrolean nobility.³ But these men had still not learned the lesson of their earlier dealings with Sigismund. Predictably, the imperial army did not appear in Tyrol, and Frederick, who had scorned the fears of his cousins in Vienna for the wrath of the king,⁴ was again victorious, bringing about the dissolution of the alliance against him on

1. See above, p. 106.

2. Altmann, Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmunds, I, p. 380, No. 5416.

3. Egger, Geschichte Tirols, I, pp. 505 ff.

4. Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 144.

December 17th 1423. He then forgave and forgot this new attack on his authority.

Although the second imprisonment of Oswald in the autumn of 1422 provided the spark which kindled a new fire of revolt against Frederick, it is uncertain whether the poet himself played any active part in the events of 1423. This uncertainty is however not apparent in any of the biographies of Oswald, for it is generally accepted that he was a helpless bystander at this time, a prisoner in the prince's dungeons from September 1422 until December 1423.¹ This view dates back to Anton Noggler and on closer scrutiny is found to be based on his interpretation of the evidence of three historical records. The first of these is the letter Martin Jäger wrote to Frederick on October 20th 1423, complaining that he had so far received no satisfaction in his case against Oswald.² Noggler calls this a complaint against 'den gefangenen Sängere',³ though the letter itself, which he publishes in full, does not mention whether or not Oswald was in prison.⁴ The second is a proclamation by Oswald of October 5th

1. See Schatz 1902, p. 104; W.-R., p. 51; Marold, p. 29; Wachinger (Reclam), pp. 95 f.

2. Cf. above, p. 104.

3. Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 146.

4. Ibid., pp. 173 f.

1423, in which he makes it known that his brother Michael and his cousin Hans von Villanders have agreed to let him collect the revenues from the estates he had made over to them when they went bail for him. This last piece of information is taken by Noggler from a document which he refers to again as 'eine Urkunde des gefangenen Sängers',¹ but which he does not quote verbatim. He does not make it clear whether Oswald designates himself as a prisoner here, or whether he, Noggler, assumes that this was Oswald's situation, an assumption he had made with regard to Martin Jäger's letter. I suspected that the latter was true, and was able to confirm this when I discovered the document in question,² in which the poet does not in fact say that he is in prison at the time. The third and last record is an abstract of a letter from King Sigismund to Oswald's brothers, in which he instructed them to render assistance to the poet and also to Ulrich von Starkenberg; Noggler gives its date as December 17th 1423.³ But this date must be a mistake; Noggler's

1. Ibid., p. 142.

2. In the Wolkenstein Archive, Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg. See Appendix No. 3.

3. Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 146, and Zs. f. dt. Alt., 27 (1883), p. 182, note 3. Oswald Zingerle also cites this letter and must have used the same source as Noggler, for he too gives its date as 17th December 1423: Zs. f. dt. Alt., 24 (1880), p. 271.

description of the contents of the abstract, as quoted above, leaves no doubt that the document in question was the one issued by Sigismund a year earlier, on December 18th 1422, to which reference has been made already.¹ This third item of the evidence from which Noggler deduced that Oswald was in prison for more than a year is therefore invalid. And if we now look again at the other two documents, both dated October 1423: is it not more likely that Oswald, when he applied for permission to collect revenues from his estates and (two weeks later!) provoked complaints from Martin Jäger, was a free man, and not languishing in an Innsbruck dungeon?

If the evidence for assuming that Oswald was in the Prince of Tyrol's custody throughout 1423 is thus discredited, then the question of his movements in this year must be re-examined. We know from Michael von Wolkenstein's stern challenge to the prince in September 1422 that his brother was reimprisoned shortly before, but for how long? It is generally accepted that his release coincided with the peaceful settlement between Frederick and the nobility on 17th

1. See above, p. 108. The probability of a mistake in the year in Noggler's (and Oswald Zingerle's) source is confirmed by the corresponding difference in the day of the month. Altmann (Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmunds, No. 5416) gives the date of Sigismund's letter as 'Freitag vor Thomastag' (1422). This was 18th December in 1422, and 17th December in the following year.

December 1423.¹ But his name is not mentioned in the list of those who were pardoned by Frederick at this time.² He was certainly free in April 1424.³ If he was at liberty in the early part of 1423, and not in Tyrol,⁴ then where was he? The answer to this is to be found firstly in a document to which so far little importance has been attached: a letter issued by Sigismund in Pressburg on 21st November 1422, giving Oswald safe conduct through all his lands.⁵ Apparently, says Wolkenstein-Rodenegg, the king was unaware that Oswald was a prisoner at this time.⁶ But if, as has been suggested above, Oswald's second period of imprisonment was much shorter than this biographer assumes, then it is possible that he did in fact make use of his safe-conduct, and paid a visit to Sigismund in the winter of 1422-23. In the light of this, one further document, which has so far been overlooked, becomes significant. It is dated Pressburg, 11th January 1423, and Altmann summarises its content as

1. W.-R., p. 51.

2. See Jäger, II, i, p. 371.

3. W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis No. 36/f.

4. There is no record of Oswald's presence in Tyrol in 1423 apart from his declaration of 5th October (discussed above, p.110); see W.-R., pp. 50 f., 105.

5. Altmann, Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmonds, I, p. 379, No. 5403.

6. W.-R., p. 49.

follows:

Sigmund ersucht den Hrz. [Filippo Maria] v Mailand um Hilfe gegen den Reichsfeind Hrz. Friedrich von Österreich und um Aufnahme seiner Bevollmächtigten Ulrich und Wilhelm von Starkenberg und Oswald Wolkenstein in des Hrz. Schlössern, damit diese von dort aus gegen Hrz. Friedrich vorgehen können.¹

The king would scarcely have made such a request had he not been certain that the men he wished to send on the mission to Milan were at least able to undertake it, however remote its prospects for success might be.

If the above re-assessment of the documentary evidence is correct, Oswald was not in prison throughout 1423, as has hitherto been assumed, but trying to recruit support abroad against Frederick. This would account for his exclusion from the prince's amnesty in the December of this year,² especially as he seems to have been a party to the schemes of the Starkenberg brothers, the only other noblemen from whom Frederick withheld his pardon.³ Even Noggler, who investigated their activities in great detail, cannot have suspected the extremes to which the two brothers carried their arrogance against their overlord. In July 1423, at the time of the last alliance of the nobility and of

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1. Altmann, Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmunds, I, p. 384, No. 5451.
 2. Klein, Die Brennerstrasse, Sonderdruck, p. 19.
 3. Ibid.

Sigismund's intended invasion of Tyrol, the king not only promised to take over all Frederick's lands,¹ but agreed also to bestow all the Habsburg domains in Tyrol on Ulrich and Wilhelm von Starkenberg 'for their loyal services', and confirmed at Ulrich's request the rights and privileges of the Tyrolean provincial diet.²

Without any material assistance from Sigismund such decrees remained just so many pieces of paper. When it became apparent to the noblemen waiting in Tyrol that they had to face Frederick alone, their resistance quickly collapsed. The Starkenbergs however still refused to capitulate, and it was towards them that the prince directed his energies in the following year. Oswald thus gained a respite, during which he tried to buttress his deteriorating position by once more renewing contact with his lord the king. But by now Sigismund, after his most recent abortive attempt to overrun Prince Frederick, was tiring of the Tyrolean question. When in the autumn of 1424 Oswald heard that Sigismund and Frederick were soon to meet, he wrote to the king, asking him to bear his case in mind at the meeting. Sigismund's reply showed that he was losing touch with the poet and his companions in

1. Altmann, I, p. 393, No. 5567.

2. Ibid., Nos. 5565, 5566.

Tyrol; he agreed to the request, but asked to be informed of what he could do to help.¹ Nevertheless, as a result of these negotiations Oswald was given a safe-conduct by Sigismund on February 14th 1425 for a journey to Vienna, where in the following April his case would be brought before Duke Albrecht of Habsburg.² This would seem to have been an ideal opportunity for Oswald to receive a hearing before impartial or even favourably-disposed adjudicators. Albrecht, who had taken Ulrich von Starkenberg into his service and pleaded his case against Frederick,³ had also married the daughter of Sigismund in 1422. But between the date of the safe-conduct and the day fixed for the proceedings an event took place which made Oswald change his mind about the advisability of travelling to Vienna. At a meeting at Castle Hornstein near Prague on February 27th 1425 a final settlement came about, at the instigation of Duke Albrecht, of the long-standing hostility between his cousin Frederick and King Sigismund.⁴ Oswald must now have

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1. Sigismund's letter is dated December 15th 1424. See Appendix No. 4.
 2. Oswald Zingerle, 'Ein Geleitsbrief für Oswald von Wolkenstein', Zs. f. dt. Alt., 24 (1880), pp. 268 ff.
 3. Noggler, 'Die Starkenbergische Streitschrift', Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), pp. 78 f., 81 f.
 4. J. Aschbach, Geschichte Kaiser Sigmunds, III, 1841, p. 235.

had grave doubts about how far he could rely on the king's support, which had been for so long his main source of strength in his battle with the Prince of Tyrol. He decided that it was wiser not to attend the hearing of which he had shortly before cherished such great hopes. This we know from an angry letter Frederick sent him in the following July, in which he complained about Oswald's absence and also about his continued attacks against 'martein Jeger und andern den unsern'.¹

The renewal of cordial relations between his most powerful friend and his deadliest foe marks the final turning-point in Oswald's fortunes in his conflict with Duke Frederick. It is also the key to his course of action during the last two years before his submission. He was doubtless seeking a way to attain a position of strength from which to negotiate for the return of his pledge to pay 6,000 guilders, the millstone which weighed him down. Still determined not to meet Frederick on his adversary's own terms, he looked round for other allies.

It was now Oswald's turn to plead for protection. There is preserved in the Wolkenstein Archive in Nürnberg the draft of a letter, unsigned, undated and

1. See Appendix No. 5.

without an address, but which was, I believe, written by Oswald at about this time to a Count of Görz. The writer begs a 'hochgeporner furst' to reconsider his decision to redeem the castle of Neuhaus from him. He says that he urgently needs to seek refuge there, because neither his life nor his property is safe from his Lord of Austria and his 'geleit' has run out 'auf dem vergangen Sand Jorgen tag'.¹ Neuhaus belonged to the Counts of Görz, formerly protectors of the diocese of Aquileia.² They no longer had any great lands or influence, but although Oswald could not hope to find in them allies comparable to the King of the Romans, at least he could find a refuge from Frederick's wrath, for at this time they were no friends of the Habsburgs.³ St. George's Day (April 23rd) was eight days after the date appointed by Sigismund for the hearing of Oswald's case in Vienna in 1425, and for which the poet was given a safe-conduct.⁴ If this was the same 'geleit' as the

1. See Appendix No. 1.

2. C. von Czoernig, Das Land Görz und Gradisca, Vienna, 1873, pp. 473 ff. The addressee of Oswald's letter could have been either Count Heinrich IV (1376-1454) or his brother Johann Meinhard (died 1429/30): Czoernig, p. 948, Tafel III.

3. H. Wiesflecker, 'Die politische Entwicklung der Grafschaft Görz', Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung, LVI (1948), p. 358.

4. See above, p. 115.

one mentioned in the letter quoted above, then this letter must have been written between April 23rd and May 11th 1425, because on this last date we find Oswald in Gais, near Bruneck in the Pustertal,¹ the nearest village to Castle Neuhaus; he was doubtless already resident there on this day. He was still at Neuhaus in the following April,² and it was from here that he replied in September 1426 to Count Palatine Ludwig's invitation to accompany him on a crusade.³

Oswald's retreat into the Pustertal was a defensive measure. His only remaining hope of positive resistance to Prince Frederick lay with the Starkenberg, who had long defied the prince's authority. They were well supplied with funds from their extensive estates, and had powerful allies outside Tyrol. Oswald had been in league with the Starkenbergs before, as we have seen, and in fact the hearing to which he was summoned in 1425 was probably concerned with their alliance against Frederick, and not with the Hauenstein affair. For the letter in which the prince rebuked Oswald for not attending this trial referred

1. W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis No. 38.

2. W.-R., p. 60.

3. See above, p. 61.

to it as the 'tag von der Starkchemberger und deinn wegen'.¹ The two brothers had an additional source of strength in Castle Greifenstein, a small fortress but one which was situated high up on a mountain, making it impregnable.² Oswald himself had sought refuge there on at least one occasion;³ whilst the Starkenbergs were still at large, he might still cling to a faint hope of saving the day.

In 1425 Oswald was no doubt keeping out of Frederick's way at Neuhaus. Here he proceeded to adopt a new and somewhat surprising tactic, by assuming the role of mediator between the Starkenbergs and the prince. In January 1426 he wrote to Bishop Berchtold of Brixen, offering his assistance in settling this dispute. Just how he hoped to benefit by this is not clear. It may be that he wished to win support for his friends in the hope that they, and he, would be able to dictate terms to Frederick. But the offer he makes in this letter is couched in rather humble-sounding phrases; referring to the prince, he says:

1. See Appendix No. 5.

2. See J. Röggl, 'Das Schloss Greifenstein und dessen Besitzer', Beiträge zur Geschichte, Statistik, Naturkunde und Kunst von Tirol und Vorarlberg, IV (1828), pp. 169 ff.

3. See above, p. 84.

Wär es nu seinen furstlichen gnaden nit ein
versmähen oder ein missuallen von mir, so wolt
ich mich gern mit seinem willen jn den sachen
getreulich müen als sein vndertäniger armer
landman ...¹

The humility may be calculated, but it is possible that Oswald had a genuine wish to be instrumental in making peace, perhaps with a view to winning Frederick's gratitude. At the end of his letter Oswald also added a request that the bishop should put in a good word for him too. But he was to be disappointed. Bishop Berchtold passed on the prince's answer, which was that he had already appointed a day for the hearing of the Starkenberg case, and he had no intention of changing it.² Oswald conveyed the bishop's letter, and also the notice he had received with it of Frederick's conditions for a settlement, to Wilhelm von Starkenberg, suggesting at the same time a meeting at some convenient place, perhaps Munich, where they might discuss the matter.³ But in his reply to Oswald Wilhelm declared himself unwilling to accept the terms offered to him,⁴ which is hardly surprising, as the

1. The letter is published by Nogger, Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), p. 98.

2. Ibid., pp. 98 f.

3. Ibid., pp. 99 f.

4. Ibid., p. 100.

zetel der taidingen listing Frederick's demands laid down that Wilhelm should surrender Greifenstein.¹

This letter from Wilhelm was written on February 28th 1426, the latest date of any document in the Starkenberg pamphlet. It will have been soon after this that he fled from Tyrol,² following his brother Ulrich who had left some time before. Finally, in November of this year, Castle Greifenstein, the last refuge of the rebellious nobility and the symbol of their resistance, capitulated and fell into the prince's hands.³

For Oswald von Wolkenstein there can have been little hope left. He had lost his main allies, Sigismund and the Starkenbergs, and even his brothers Michael and Leonhard, with whom he had signed a fraternal alliance in 1422,⁴ had since abandoned their opposition to Frederick, and were restored to his favour in 1426.⁵ Oswald's isolation was complete. The winter of 1426-27 must have been one of the most unhappy of his life, and Schatz's suggestion that

1. Published by J. Rögger, Beiträge zur Geschichte ... Tirols, IV (1828), pp. 277 f.

2. Jäger (op. cit., II, i, p. 382) reports that Wilhelm disappeared from the land in 1426.

3. Egger, Geschichte Tirols, I, p. 515.

4. W.-R., pp. 47 f.

5. Ibid., pp. 59 f.

Durch Barbarei, Arabia (K44), in which the poet describes a miserable winter at Hauenstein, was composed at this time may well be correct.¹ Oswald laments that:

Mein lanndesfürst, der ist mir gram
von böser leutte neide,
mein dienst, die sein im widerzam,
das ist mir schad und laide ...
(K44, 73-76)

The reckoning with Frederick was at hand. In February 1427 Oswald was summoned by the prince to a session of the Tyrolean diet to be held at Bozen in the following month.² In his poem Durch aubenteuer perg und tal (K26) he tells us that at this time he decided to go off on his travels again:

Ab nach dem Rein gen Haidelweg,
in Engellant stünd mir der sin nicht träge,
gen Schottlant, Ierrland über see
auf hölggen grosz gen Portugal zu siglen ...
(K26, 3-6)

There is no need to take the poet's words literally here. The pattern of events bears a marked similarity to the Starkenberg affair: Oswald's only alternative to submission was escape, perhaps to join his friends in exile or, more probably, to seek assistance from some foreign prince. Instead of travelling to Bozen Oswald fled the land. But fortune deserted him:

1. Schatz 1902, pp. 117 f.

2. See Appendix No. 6.

do klagt ich got mein ungemach,
das ich mich hett von Hauenstein verferret,
ich forcht den weg gen Wasserburg,
wenn sich die nacht versteret.
(K26, 27-30)

At Wasserburg, near Lake Constance, he was arrested by Frederick's retainers and led back, bound to his horse, to the dungeons of Castle Vellenberg at Axams and finally to Innsbruck itself (K26, 31 ff.). Here, on May 1st 1427, Oswald at last came face to face with his adversaries. According to documents signed and sealed in Innsbruck on that day he paid the Jägers the sum of 500 ducats as compensation for the damages he had caused them, but was allowed to keep the property he had taken over. Martin Jäger declared himself satisfied and released Duke Frederick from any further obligations towards him.¹ The most important document made out on this day did not, however, pertain to the Hauenstein feud, but legislated for future relations between Oswald and the duke. In this so-called Urfehdebrief Oswald had to vow to serve only Frederick as his rightful prince and overlord and never again to form an alliance or enter into a contract of service without his knowledge and consent. He had to agree to conduct any future legal disputes, with the prince or

1. See the documents published by Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 176-180.

anyone else, in the land itself. Finally, he must not carry out any act of revenge for past events. Should he break any of these vows, he will be declared a disloyal and dishonorable man.¹

Having made all these declarations Oswald was allowed to go free. After his long and determined resistance to Frederick he might count himself fortunate to have escaped with his life and property intact, unlike many others, who had forfeited their lands. Even the poet's brother-in-law Parzival von Weineck, a lesser figure among the prince's opponents, was forced to surrender his castle, Fragenstein, in 1427.² But Fragenstein was situated near Zirl in the Inn valley, a key area which Frederick systematically brought under his control.³ Hauenstein on the other hand stood in the remote wilds below the Seiser Alm away from main routes, and probably had little strategic value.

In the poem where he described his attempted escape and its consequences Oswald expressed his gratitude to the prince for his release:

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1. Published by J. Rögger, Beiträge zur Geschichte ... Tirols, IV (1828), pp. 284-86.
 2. W.-R., p. 60.
 3. See Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 152.

also kert ich gen hauenstain.
zwar disem fursten sol ich nymmer fluchen,
das er mir noch so wol getrawt,
des helf mir got geruchen.¹

That Frederick's leniency towards the poet won him an ally for the future² is, however, doubtful. Unlike his brother Michael, Oswald did not become an adviser to the prince³ but remained instead a servant of Sigismund, as we can see from a letter he carried in 1431, when he conveyed a message from the king to Frederick.⁴ This is somewhat surprising, but it seems that Frederick was content that Oswald should continue to serve the king, on the strength of the poet's written undertakings and of Frederick's own friendship with Sigismund. The prince could feel even greater confidence in this matter, because although he had satisfied the Jägers' claims and forced promises of loyalty from Oswald, he nevertheless refused to return the important bond which his enemy had signed during his first imprisonment.⁵ Schatz says that this

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1. See Klein, p. 99. These lines were omitted from K26 in the later MS. B.
 2. As Klein maintains, Die Brennerstrasse, Sonderdruck, p. 21.
 3. Michael was appointed a 'Rat und Diener' of Duke Frederick in January 1426: W.-R., p. 59.
 4. A draft of the letter is published by I.V. Zingerle in 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse, 64, Vienna, 1870, p. 624. In the letter Oswald is referred to as 'unser rat' by Sigismund, as opposed to Frederick's counsellors, who are also mentioned.
 5. W.-R., p. 64; Frederick evidently regarded this bond as a debt owed directly to him by Oswald.

circumstance does not seem to have troubled Oswald, as it was not mentioned again.¹ But Oswald did in fact continue his efforts to get back this vital document for at the very least four years after the settlement. This emerges from a communication from Sigismund to Frederick, dated August 12th 1431, in which he asks the prince to do him the favour of returning Oswald's letter. The king, who says that he has made this request repeatedly, is obviously rather weary of the whole affair, and promises to repay this favour in more important matters.² Yet despite this plea, and no doubt many others, Frederick clearly never relented, for the matter was not settled until long after Oswald's death, at a cost to his heirs of 1,000 guilders.³

iv. Conclusion

On the day of Oswald's submission in May 1427 Frederick had achieved an objective far more important to him than the fulfilling of his obligation to Martin Jäger. Throughout his reign he had shown unwavering determination to be master in Tyrol, and to be

1. Schatz 1902, p. 106.

2. See Appendix No. 7.

3. Klein, Die Brennerstrasse, Sonderdruck, p. 21.

recognised as such by all his subjects. As early as 1411 he had declared that his power in the land was the same as that which a King of the Romans wielded in the empire.¹ This statement was somewhat ironical in view of the very limited authority which accompanied the grandiose title of Holy Roman Emperor at this time, and which Frederick himself successfully challenged. But eventually, after a long struggle, Frederick attained such power as he had visualised. Beda Weber's view of the events of his reign as a conflict between an old order, represented by the reactionary tendencies of the nobility, and a new system of centralised territorial government, has found general acceptance.² Whether consciously or not Frederick helped to usher in a new era by successfully defending his principality against the combined assault of two champions of the old feudal order: the Holy Roman Emperor and the knights. Oswald von Wolkenstein was the last of a nobility determined not to concede to a prince the power which Frederick demanded.

When one probes behind this supposed clash of political ideologies for more tangible causes of the

1. Stolz, Geschichte des Landes Tirol, 1955, p. 167.

2. Cf. Klein, Die Brennerstrasse, Sonderdruck, p. 5.

prolonged animosity between Oswald and Frederick, two events stand out: the poet's appointment as a servant of King Sigismund in 1415, and the confrontation of 1422, when Oswald had to sign away his whole fortune. Before 1415 there had been no clear sign of antagonism between the two men; Oswald was not among the wealthier barons who were harassed by the energetic young prince. It was in fact the poet's foolish attempt to extend his relatively small domain, by petty crimes against his neighbours, which was the immediate cause of his downfall. It seems likely that this relative lack of means was a spur to his ambitions, and the way he chose of improving his fortunes was by throwing in his lot with the King of the Romans. His first consideration in entering Sigismund's service was, it seems, his aspiration to honours beyond the boundaries of his homeland. But it was not long before he became a key figure in the hostilities against the Prince of Tyrol, and one is led to wonder just how far Oswald himself provided the initiative here, and to what extent he was acting on the king's orders. It is probable that neither was simply the instrument of the other, for, as we have seen, Oswald also lent assistance to Duke Ernst against his brother, whilst Sigismund had reasons of his own for hating Frederick. At all events, in 1417 Oswald found himself in a

suitable position from which to synchronise the Tyrolean opposition to Frederick with the king's own plans. As he proceeded to do so, he can scarcely have realised how deeply he was committing himself. Having once allied himself with Frederick's enemy he was thereafter dependent on this alliance for his survival; every move the prince made against him from this time onwards showed that he never forgave Oswald for what he obviously viewed as treasonable acts against his authority. Had his royal protector Sigismund - 'flush of promise and slow of payment',¹ - been more reliable, Oswald might well have triumphed over Frederick and maintained his independence. As it turned out he was fortunate to escape relatively unscathed from his excursion into political intrigue. His bond remained in Frederick's hands, a permanent reminder to Oswald of his abortive rebellion.

1. J.H. Wylie, The Council of Constance to the Death of John Hus, London 1900, p. 17. Cf. K55, 31 ff., where Oswald quoted himself as saying to the king, with reference to Sabina Hausmann's (and Frederick's) demands: 'hett ich gehabt ain peutel swër,/als euer genad vernempt die mår,/von meiner frauen wer mir baß gelungen'.

4. Later Life.

Despite the setback in his fortunes which Oswald had suffered in his clash with the Prince of Tyrol, he did not now withdraw sadly to Hauenstein, as Weber supposed,¹ but remained active until the very last years of his life. Although he had been involved in hostilities with Ulrich Putsch, Bishop of Brixen, in 1429,² and aroused Ulrich's wrath again in 1435 by imprisoning one of his servants,³ Oswald nevertheless once more attained a responsible position in the Brixen judiciary; in 1437 he performed official duties

anstatt und von gescheffts wegen des hochwirdigen fürsten herrn Ulreichs Bischoues ze Brichsen seines gnedigen herrn ze Braunekg an den Hofrechten als ein Richter sitzend.⁴

And it is a measure of his unfailing vigour that even as he approached his sixtieth year he entered upon a new contract of service, which his biographers have so far overlooked. In order to do so, he once more set off on his travels.

On July 13th 1434 Count Heinrich of Görz appointed Oswald as his emissary in a legal matter.

1. Weber, pp. 428 ff.

2. W.-R., p. 69.

3. Ibid., Regestenverzeichnis No. 74.

4. Quoted by Sinnacher, Geschichte der Kirche Brixen, VI, pp. 158 f.

The document recording this arrangement was made out at Ulm,¹ as were two others concerning Oswald's affairs at this time, by the terms of which King Sigismund first entrusted the protection of Neustift Priory to him (June 14th), and then confirmed the poet's possession of certain imperial fiefs inherited by his wife Margarete von Schwangau (July 22nd).² A further document issued at Ulm is preserved in a fragment in the Wolkenstein Archive in Nürnberg. It certifies the appointment of Oswald as the servant of Heinrich of Görz, at an annual salary of a hundred ducats. Although the surviving fragment does not reveal the year of its issue, this was almost certainly also 1434, because it is dated St. Margaret's Day (July 13th),³ the same day as the letter recording Oswald's mission in the service of Count Heinrich. Somewhat surprisingly Wolkenstein-Rodenegg relates that Oswald remained in Tyrol through this year.⁴ I think it is far more likely that he was

1. See W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis No. 71, where the date is given erroneously as July 12th. The original is in the Wolkenstein Archive in Nürnberg, dated 'an sannd Margareth tag'.

2. Both W.-R. (pp. 80 f.) and Altmann (Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmunds, II, No. 10596) give the date of this document as July 17th. The copy of the original in the Wolkenstein Archive is dated 'ann Sandt Marien Madalenen tag' (July 22nd).

3. See Appendix No. 11.

4. W.-R., p. 80.

present at Ulm to receive the favours bestowed on him by Sigismund and to accept the mission from the Count of Görz, especially as there is no record of his presence at home at this time.¹ The 'last' journey abroad made by the poet was therefore not in 1432,² but at least two years later. Indeed this may well have been the last time Oswald travelled far from Tyrol, for the agreements concluded at Ulm suggest that he now finally bade farewell to King Sigismund, to return, richly rewarded, to a lord nearer his homeland.³ There is in fact no record of further contact between Oswald and Sigismund in the remaining three years before the king's death, but much evidence of a close association between the poet and the Counts of Görz, whom he continued to serve both as a counsellor and as a justice for the rest of his life.⁴ In 1441 Oswald, now aged sixty-four, was in Lienz, still active 'von geschäftswegen des Grafen Heinrich von Görz und Tirol seines gnädigen Herrn als gewaltiger gesatzter

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1. The evidence W.-R. cites for Oswald's presence in Tyrol in 1434 is five records, dated January 23rd, February 28th, July 5th, July 12th and November 14th (Regestenverzeichnis Nos. 69-73). But the July documents were both made out at Ulm.
 2. Mayr's final chapter (pp. 99 ff.) is entitled 'Letzte Ausfahrt (1430-1432)'.
 3. The Counts of Görz governed the Pustertal, the long valley which joins Southern and Eastern Tyrol. This area had originally been ruled jointly with the County of Tyrol, of which the old capital was Meran. The Count Heinrich mentioned above still called himself 'Graf zu Görz und Tirol': see Appendix Nos. 11 and 12.
 4. See W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis Nos. 71, 79, 80, 96, 121.

Hofrichter',¹ and in the following year he was rewarded with fiefs at Velden.²

The fact that Oswald continued to serve foreign princes and not the court at Innsbruck seems to confirm that his estrangement from Prince Frederick was permanent. And yet his political career in Austria was far from over. The death of his old enemy in 1439 was the signal for a new contest over the government of Tyrol.³ The late prince's son, Siegmund, was not yet twelve years old when his father died, and according to the terms of an earlier agreement he was entrusted to the care of his cousin, the oldest surviving Duke of Habsburg, Frederick V. But once more the Tyrolean knights insisted upon having a voice in the matter of the succession. Frederick V was forced to make concessions, one of which was that the fortune of his deceased uncle should remain in Tyrol in the care of five eminent noblemen. One of these was Oswald von Wolkenstein, who was given charge of two keys to the treasury. When it turned out later that Frederick had

1. Ibid., No. 96.

2. See Appendix No. 12.

3. For the following, see Egger, Geschichte Tirols, I, pp. 533 ff.; and especially A. Jäger, 'Der Streit der Tiroler Landschaft mit Kaiser Friedrich III, wegen der Vormundschaft über Herzog Sigmund von Österreich, von 1439-1446', Archiv für österreichische Geschichte, 49 (1872), pp. 89 ff.

no intention of honouring his agreement to allow his young cousin to return to Tyrol, Oswald was also among the leaders of a movement to thwart his designs. The young Duke Siegmund was informed of Tyrol's wish that he should return to the land to take over the government, and at a meeting of the Estates in Meran in 1443 it was decided that measures should be taken to counter any offensive Frederick might be planning. The land was divided into districts, and one of the five governors appointed by the meeting, with charge of the area around the Eisack and the Pustertal, was Oswald von Wolkenstein.

Here, in the very last years of his life, we find Oswald still actively engaged in political affairs. The role in which he appears is not unfamiliar: as a leader of an energetic and determined party of noblemen. But Oswald's days of anarchy and rebellion were over. In this case, where the knights were supported by the Estates of Tyrol, he might truly be said to be acting in the best interests of his homeland, by upholding the cause of the rightful prince. Unfortunately Oswald was no longer able to witness the success of his last cause: Siegmund held his triumphal entry into Innsbruck in April 1446, some eight months after the poet's death.

5. Conclusion

The author of a recent review, considering the events of Oswald's life, is struck by what he finds a strange contrast between on the one hand the 'Weite und Weitläufigkeit' of the poet's travels and his diplomatic service, and on the other 'die kleinliche Enge eines bloss auf Mehrung seines Hausbesitzes erpichten Landadeligen'.¹ But is this contrast between the two sides of his life really so strange? The circles in which the great lyric poet of the Hohenstaufen era, Walther von der Vogelweide, moved were no less elevated than those in which Oswald often found himself, and his travels no less extensive; and yet an event which Walther celebrated enthusiastically in one of his most personal poems was his acquisition of a fief, doubtless not a very valuable one.² Although both men made their mark as poets, and Oswald was also successful as a diplomat, their social status and security depended ultimately not on these attainments but on their material assets as landed noblemen. What is at first unusual about Oswald's life is that we are able to see its contrasting aspects more

1. Reinhold Grimm, 'Ich Wolkenstein ...', Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 16th January 1965.

2. Lachmann/Kraus, 28, 31.

clearly, chiefly because many more historical documents survive from the time in which he lived. But just because this is so, we can observe how the apparently disparate sides of his life were in fact closely connected. Oswald's bond of service to King Sigismund was a key factor both in his travels abroad and in his troubles at home. With this contract he purchased also the permanent hostility of Frederick IV of Habsburg, and felt the effects of this long after the two princes were reconciled. It is doubtless significant that the poet did not attain a position of authority in Tyrol until after the death of his old enemy. Yet it is as if, at the end of his life, he was able to have the last word in the Tyrolean question, as a leader of a party which successfully thwarted the ambitions of a Duke of Habsburg (Frederick V).

In the last analysis, Oswald was able to combine successfully, despite the troubles he brought upon himself, a life of freedom and travel with loyalty to his home. But for all his travels in the service of Sigismund and other princes, he played only a supporting part on the stage of international diplomacy. His own sphere of influence was essentially on the provincial scene, within the boundaries of Tyrol and of the Bishopric of Brixen. It cannot be merely

by chance that whereas historical documents ultimately fail to yield any precise information about Oswald's role in imperial affairs, they reveal clearly that he was an important figure in the political life of his homeland. When one looks back over his early rise to prominence at Brixen and at the positions he attained towards the end of his life, as a judge, provincial administrator, and as Protector of Neustift Priory, one finds much evidence to support Klein's notion of a 'Drang zur Heimat' as the motivating force in Oswald's political ambition.¹ There is, however, a danger here that the old 'myth of Oswald' may be replaced by a new one, presenting him as a man ruled not by devotion to the empire, but by a strong patriotic attachment to Tyrol.² Such sentiments should not be read into his ambitions for power in his homeland, and there was certainly no patriotism in his policy of resistance to Frederick IV.

Although historical records tell us much about Oswald's life, they are naturally concerned almost invariably with official and practical matters, and

1. Klein, Wirkendes Wort, 13 (1963), p. 10.

2. This tendency is particularly apparent in Alois Dejori's dissertation, Heimatsmpfinden und Heimatlieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein, Innsbruck, 1961.

the insight they give into his mind is correspondingly limited. He was obviously a very strong personality, proud, self-confident, and determined, even ruthless, in the pursuit of his own interests; a man well equipped for the harsh world around him. In the Hauenstein feud we see the least attractive side of his character, and also of the time in which he lived. But it was not only the Jägers who made accusations against Oswald of petty offences and acts of violence. His cousin Georg von Villanders complained that the poet had taken possession of some of his property,¹ as did his brother Michael.² Duke Frederick V had occasion to summon him on charges of theft.³ Finally, Bishop Ulrich II of Brixen describes in his diary how Oswald, who visited him as a member of a delegation from the Prince of Tyrol in 1429, struck him a blow which knocked the surprised bishop to the ground.⁴ And yet Ulrich himself has no qualms about recording in the same diary the violent methods he used against his own enemies, as, for example, when he punished

1. W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis No. 112.

2. See Appendix No. 8 and 9.

3. W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis No. 98.

4. The diary is published by Viktor Schaller, 'Ulrich II Putsch, Bischof von Brixen, und sein Tagebuch. 1427-37', Zs. Ferd., 36 (1892), pp. 225 ff. See p. 293.

trespassers by having their hands and feet cut off.¹
From the bishop's point of view such actions were of course carried out in the interests of justice, as was the Jägers' imprisoning and maltreatment of Oswald² or the poet's own theft from his brother and sister-in-law. The description of this last incident as a 'dunkler Punkt' in Oswald's life suggests that it was a quite isolated occurrence and out of character. But there is no need to take such a view, for it was an action not untypical of either Oswald or his age. This was a time of petty crime and violence, though the offender, engaged in the pursuit of his own interests, at the same time usually claimed to be seeking or defending his rights.

Very few of the letters written by Oswald which have been preserved are of a personal kind. One exception is a declaration by the poet of his case against a certain 'pösewicht' who has made an attempt on his life. Oswald is angry that an earlier statement which he posted publicly in Brixen has been removed and that its contents have been called a fabrication - 'ain getichte sach'. He did not make it up, he says - 'wie wol ich sünst tichten chann' - and he wishes upon his enemies, who have made such accusations against

1. Ibid., p. 289.

2. This incident will be described below, III, 3, iii.

him, 'ainen frummen pidern ritter', that they should all 'gen hell mit einander faren ... dem teufel hinten in sein swarz arsloch'.¹ Had more such letters survived, they would have enlivened considerably the documentary picture of Oswald. An unfortunate gap in the correspondence which has come down to us is the lack of any letters from the poet to his wife Margarete. That these would have revealed a different side of Oswald's character is suggested by the one surviving letter from the hand of Margarete herself, written to her husband only a few months before his death. It contains a simple statement of her affectionate concern for him - 'werdet ihr länger ... bleiben, so schickt nach mir; ich will nun einmal ohne euch nicht sein, es sei hier oder anderswo',² - which gives a glimpse of a whole world of feeling betrayed nowhere else by historical documents. But we have access to this world, and to a quite different view of Oswald's life and his personality, in his 'autobiographical lyric'. To this we shall now turn.

1. Published by J. Schatz, Zs. Ferd., 45 (1901), pp. 188 f.

2. Quoted by J. Schrott in the notes to his translated Gedichte Oswalds von Wolkenstein, Stuttgart, 1886, pp. 210 f.

III. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POETRY

In this section we shall look at the way in which Oswald's experiences on his travels with King Sigismund and in his political and personal feuds at home are reflected in his poetry.

The first chapter will be concerned primarily with Oswald's treatment of the political events which he witnessed as a member of Sigismund's entourage, especially in K19, in which he described his journey with the king from Perpignan to Paris (September 1415 - March 1416), and in K27, a poem attacking the Hussite heretics, probably composed during a campaign in Bohemia. Reference will be made also to K122, K123, K45, K103, K105 and to the relevant sections of K18.

The second chapter will deal with poems inspired by Oswald's experiences in his bitter struggle with the Prince of Tyrol - K85, K7, K26, K44 - and two further songs - K104 and K116 - which refer to a dispute between the poet and Bishop Ulrich II of Brixen, a matter connected with the Frederick affair. These two poems are linked with K44 also by their topographical setting, the area around Hauenstein.

The final chapter will also include some songs which the poet wrote during his feud with Prince Frederick, but these will be considered in the context of his love affair with Sabina Hausmann, the widowed daughter of the

Wolkensteins' neighbour and enemy Martin Jäger, an ally of Frederick. As this love affair, which became an important factor in the feud mentioned above, is accessible only through Oswald's poems, we shall examine here the authenticity of the story of Oswald and Sabina as it has been told by biographers since Beda Weber. The relevant poems will be discussed in two groups: before 1421 (the year of his imprisonment by the Jägers): K106, K51, K17, K57, K58, K65 and parts of K18; and after 1421: K1, K2, K4, K5, K6, K8, K9, K10, K11, K55, K59, K60, with references also to K3, K23 and K102.

These poems span a period of about fifteen years; there are no dateable poems before 1415,¹ and after 1431-32 there are few of biographical interest. The content of all the songs which will be discussed in detail justifies the description 'autobiographical', insofar as they describe or allude to events of Oswald's life. An exception is K27, the Hussitenlied, included here because of its connection with the poet's imperial service. Some poems are included in order to demonstrate the writer's view that their 'autobiographical' content has been invented or misrepresented by scholars: K51, K17, K58 and K65.

1. See Schatz 1904, p. 56. Marold's attempted chronology (Kommentar zu den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein, 1927, pp. 19 ff.) remains, where it goes beyond Schatz, largely speculation. Amendments will be suggested to the date of some of the poems discussed below.

1. Oswald and Sigismund

The events of Oswald's travels in the imperial service at the time of the Council of Constance are recorded in very few of his songs. In the long autobiographical poem Es fügt sich (K18), probably composed in 1416, he twice refers to his journey with King Sigismund through Spain and France in the winter of 1415-1416. He mentions it first in passing, in a general survey of his travels (lines 18-20),¹ and then singles out one incident, narrating in detail how he became the centre of attraction in Perpignan, when his ears and beard were decorated with rings by the Queen of Aragon (stanza III). Only one poem is devoted wholly to an account of this expedition: Es ist ain altgesprochner rat (K19). Like the previous poem it was probably composed for an audience in Constance soon after the poet's return from France in 1416.²

1. These lines were discussed above, pp. 48 ff.

2. See Schatz 1902, p. 113.

i. Es ist ain altgesprochner rat (K19)

The negotiations which occupied Sigismund, King of the Romans, at this time were of the greatest importance for the whole of Christendom. His visit to Spain in the summer of 1415 was the climax of his endeavours to put an end to the shameful schism which divided the Catholic Church. His persistence was rewarded at Narbonne in November, when the followers of Pedro de Luna (Benedict XIII) were finally persuaded to withdraw their support from this last and most stubborn of the schismatic popes.¹

Although Oswald, who joined Sigismund in Perpignan in September 1415,² must have been a witness of these important events, he makes very few direct references to them in the twenty-eight stanzas of Es ist ain altgesprochner rat. When he does so, his tone does not betray any sense of awe at their weightiness. He does not mention the serious business on which the king

1. See Albert Hauck, Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands, V, 2 (Leipzig, 1929), pp. 1001 f.

2. See above, II, 2, ii, and also Mayr, pp. 72 ff.

was engaged until stanza VI, where he alludes to the schism and to the schismatic pope. But this verse is mainly devoted to a description of Sigismund's welcome in Perpignan, and especially of the kisses he received from the ladies there:

Von künge[n], künigin junck und alt
ward er gegrüsst mit kussen,
doch nach den jungen, sach ich halt,
tet er sich nimmer wüschē.¹
wer zwaiung² an den frauen gelaint,³
wir hetten uns leicht ee veraint
wann mit dem Peter Schreufel⁴
und seinem knecht, dem teufel.
(41-48)

The derisive reference to Pedro serves simply as a humorous comparison to enhance the description of a trivial incident. The serious negotiations in Perpignan

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1. Wüschē: 'abwischen'. Sigismund apparently did not wipe his mouth after being kissed by the young ladies (jungen, 1. 43, seems to anticipate frauen two lines later), which Oswald takes as a sign that he particularly enjoyed these kisses.
 2. The double meaning of zwaiung - 'Liebesspiel' or 'Kirchen-Schisma' - has been noted by Ulrich Müller, 'Dichtung' und 'Wahrheit' in den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein, Göppingen, 1968, p. 135, note 5.
 3. The verb is leinen: 'lehnen', refl. 'sich schmiegen an'. One can see an association between this last meaning (cf. also K63, 47) and the present context, but the word has probably been chosen here for the rhyme. Müller (p. 135) translates: 'Wenn es um eine "Zweiung" mit den Frauen (und nicht um die "Entzweiung" der Kirche) gegangen wäre, ...'
 4. Peter Schreufel: this is usually interpreted as a play on the name Pedro de Luna: Lun or Lünse means a lynch-pin, for which Oswald substitutes the diminutive of Schraufe, an old Upper German form of Schraube, a screw: see Schatz, Sprache, p. 96; Grimm, 7, 1658. It is likely that the poet was also thinking of the word schrewel, schröuwel, 'Teufel, Henker, Peiniger' (Lexen, Twb., p. 187).

are mentioned again in verse VIII:

Künig Sigmund teglich zumal
sich arbait achzehn wochen
mit bäbsten, bischoff, cardinal;
(57-59)

But Oswald goes straight on to comment that, if he had his way, all schismatics would be done away with, and he would not mourn them for long:

und wërn si erstochen,¹
der seinen falsch darinn erzaigt
und zu der scisma was genaigt,
ich wolt si all verklagen,²
mit pfeiffen auf ainem wagen.²
(60-64)

In verse XVII Oswald gives his reaction to the news of Pedro de Luna's downfall, which is expressed in a similarly scurrilous manner:

Zwar Peterlin, du böse katz,³
ain kind mit falscher lawne,⁴
dir hat gevält der alte glatz;⁵

-
1. Cf. Grimm, 10, 2, 1, 1229: 'besonders altertümlich ist stechen in der Bedeutung "töten"....'
 2. Müller (p. 137) translates: '... so würde ich die (Toten)klage anstimmen, indem ich sie auf ihrem (Leichen)Wagen (oder: Schandkarren) aufspiff (oder: indem ich ihnen von einem (Kirmes)Wagen herunter aufspielte).'
 3. Katz: a term of abuse, but here the meaning of 'Ketzer' is probably also intended; see Müller, p. 142, note 2.
 4. Lawne: Oswald is playing on the name Luna. Cf. the Spanish estar de mala luna: 'to be in a bad humour'.
 5. Glatz: see Grimm, 4, 1, 4, 7767 (citing Oswald, K19, 142): 'speziell die Tonsur der katholischen Geistlichen und Mönche, die corona clericalis'. The sense of line 131 is: 'your old monk's pate has failed.'

ich hort zu Affiane¹
ain brief von künigen, herren, lant,
die vor an dich geloubent hand,
die pfeiffent dir mit grillen
zu tanz auff ainer tillen.
(129-136)

In both verse VIII and verse XVII the immediate context of Oswald's remarks helps to detract further from their solemnity. The poet's criticism of the schismatics (60-64) continues:

Manig hämisch list so ward volbracht
von in mit naigen, bucken,
des hab ich oft ain lange nacht
ain mattras müssen drucken;
(65-68)

His jibe at Peterlin (129-136) leads on to the following description:

Des trat wir die procession
ze hauffe mit gedrange,
mit pfeiffen, trummen, gloggen don
und löblichem gesange.
des nachtes ward der tanz berait,
secht, do ward Petro glatz verklait²

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1. Affiane: Avignon, where Sigismund and his retinue spent Christmas 1415, and celebrated at the same time the victory over Pedro de Luna; see Mayr, p. 76.
 2. Verklait: Schatz (Sprache, p. 64) takes this as the past participle of verklaiden. Lexer has no reference to this word, and Oswald does not use it elsewhere. One could perhaps associate its use here with the idea of dressing up for a dance (the commonest meaning, according to Trübners Wörterbuch, VII, Berlin, 1956, p. 473). The scribe of MS. c was apparently also unfamiliar with the word, and replaced it with weklait (beklait). The poet uses bekleiden in a figurative sense also in K51, 27 f.: 'Mein houbt ... ist beklait/mit waffen ...' It is possible too that verklait is the past participle of verklagen; Müller (p. 143) translates: 'da wurde der Glatzkopf Pedro ... mit Tanz ... vergessen gemacht.'

von mancher schönen dieren
mit springen und hofieren.

(137-144)

In each instance the introduction into the narrative of serious political matters serves as a cue for a trivial personal comment, concerning in the one instance Oswald's discomfort and in the other his participation in a round of merrymaking.

And what of the great personages with whom the poet came into close contact at this time? He introduces us to two of Sigismund's chief advisers, Count Ludwig of Ottingen, the royal Hofmeister, and Duke Ludwig of Brieg, but only in order to describe the horseplay which went on in the dormitory he shared with them, as, for example, in the following:

Und der von Otting leutet mir
gen tag auff meinem kophe,
recht als ain rab ain toten stier
tüt bickn zu dem schopfe.
des hab ich im vil manchen strach
mit ainem schüch, was nicht gar waich,
nach seiner haut gesmissen,
das man im sach die rissen.

(73-80)

Sigismund himself makes several appearances, scarcely at all as the solemn, awe-inspiring figure of a King of the Romans, but as a personal acquaintance of the poet. He makes Oswald a present of an exotic costume:

mörisch gewant, von golde rot,
kunig Sigmund mirs köstlich bot ...

(165-166)

or of money:

künig Sigmund follet mir
den strich¹ mit manchem plancken zier²...
(197-198)

Oswald plays often on this theme of his personal intimacy with illustrious persons, especially with Sigismund. Even when the king is described going about his own business, the poet himself is not far away. He makes us aware of his presence amongst the spectators at the reception at Perpignan (V), and then pushes himself forward, in his imagination, to join the king in his welcome by the ladies: 'wir hetten uns leicht ee veraint ...' (46). On the corresponding occasion in Paris Oswald describes the procession into the city in such a way that he himself, dressed in the Moorish costume given to him by Sigismund, appears to share the spotlight with his lord:

Zu Paris manig tausent mensch
in heusern, gassen, wegen,
kind, weib und man, ain dick gedenns,³
stünd wol zwo ganz lege.⁴

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1. Strich: purse. See below, pp. 156 ff.
 2. Mit ... zier: see Müller (p. 147), who translates 'mit vielen Silbermünzen', explaining: 'Hiermit ist die französische Silberscheidemünze le blanc gemeint.' He cites Marold's unpublished commentary, p. 267.
 3. Gedenns: Gedränge.
 4. Zwo ganz lege: Schatz (Sprache, p. 85) gives 'in zwei Reihen'; cf. Lexen, I, 1857: lege, stf., 'Reihe'. Müller (p. 145, citing Marold, p. 264) suggests also '2 leghe (ital. Meilen)'.

die taten alle schauen an
künig Sigmund, römischen man,
und hiesz¹ mich ain lappen
in meiner narren kappen.
(169-176)

Finally, when he describes Sigismund's departure from Paris, whence the king proceeded across the Channel to make peace between England and France, the poet once more subordinates a matter of world-wide importance to his own affairs, his departure from Paris and his lord's farewell to him personally:

Ehafft² not mich dar vermüt,
von dannen müsst ich reitten.
künig Sigmund, das edel blüt,
schüff pald, ich solt nicht beitten.
von Paris bot er mir die hand ...
(201-205)

As if to fill out the stanza with an afterthought, he adds:

und sigelt uber in Engelant,
die künige ze verainen,
an zu ich das maine.
(206-208)

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1. Hiesz: either the people are again (cf. line 172) being considered collectively in the singular, or man is understood as subject. The editor of MS. c amended to hiessn.
 2. This is the correct reading, as in MS. A. Schatz (Sprache, p. 58) translates ehafft not as 'eine ernste Rechtssache'; cf. Lexer, I, 513: ehaftiu not: 'gesetzl. Hindernis (zum Erscheinen vor Gericht)'. Müller (p. 147) gives 'eine hochwichtige Sache'. It is generally agreed that the important matter was the escape of Frederick of Tyrol from Constance in March 1416. But it is possible also that Oswald is playing on the word ehaft, the usual sense of which was 'legal', and alluding to his own Ehe, his marriage with Margarete von Schwangau, which probably took place in 1416-17, at about the time this poem was written.

In this poem then, which was composed at a time when Oswald was actively engaged in imperial affairs - though the exact nature of his office is not known - we find that great personages are presented in terms of the poet's familiarity with them, and important events are trivialised. One scholar has concluded from this: 'diese grossen Geschehnisse gehen ihn innerlich wenig an'.¹ But is the poem intended in any way as a commentary on these events? Can one draw conclusions from it about Oswald's interest in, or understanding of, the serious political issues of his time? Before this question can be answered, it is necessary first to look at the incidents quoted above in the context of the poem as a whole, and to consider Oswald's purpose in writing it.

In the first two stanzas of the poem Oswald prepares his audience for the story he is about to tell them:

I Es ist ain altgesprochner rat
mer wann vor hundert jaren,
und wer nie laid versüchet hat,
wie mag er freud ervaren;
auch ist mir ie gewesen wol, 5
das hab ich schon bezahlt für vol
in Katlon und Ispanien,
do man gern ist kestanien.

1. Annemarie Altpeter, Die Stilisierung des Auto-
biographischen bei Oswald von Wolkenstein und seinen
Zeitgenossen Hugo von Montfort, Muskatplüt und
Michel Beheim (Typewritten Dissertation, Tübingen,
1950), p. 25.

II Und was mein bart von freulin rain
zu Costenz hat erlitten, 10
und meiner taschen der sigelstain
ward maisterlich geschnitten
es ist ain ungleicher sin,
ie zwen an ain ziehent in hin;
weder es mir erging zu Arragon 15
und in der stat, haisst Pärpian.

Not until very recently has a real attempt been made to get to grips with the problems of translation and interpretation presented by this passage (and several others), in the commentary by Ulrich Müller.¹ Müller finds in these two verses a 'Leitgedanke' for the poem, namely Oswald's intention to talk about the freud of his recent journey to France and Spain, in contrast to the laid of his experiences not long before this in Constance. Müller translates lines 5-8 as follows:

Ist es mir einst gut ergangen in 'Katalonien',²
und Spanien - dort, wo man gerne Kastanien
isst, - so habe ich (vorher) dafür bezahlen
müssen.

Thus there is a parallel between this contrast and the one expressed in stanza II, between (earlier) sorrow in Constance and (more recent) joy in Spain - assuming that Müller's interpretation of stanza II is also

1. 'Dichtung' und 'Wahrheit' in den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein, 1968, pp. 129 ff.

2. Katalonien: Müller puts this word in inverted commas because, as he tells us, Oswald uses the name Katlon for the Kingdom of Aragon.

correct. But all is not well with the above rendering. Müller translates the word ie as 'einst', but it means 'ever' or 'always', not 'once'.¹ The simplest translation is probably the correct one, viz.

I too have always enjoyed good fortune;
and I have already paid for this fully
in 'Catalonia' and Spain ...

The order of joy, then sorrow, in lines 3-4 is thus inverted, but this inversion throws emphasis on the words laid (3) and bezalt (6). Oswald is simply using past happiness - real or imaginary - as a point of contrast with recent trouble, an antithetical device which we shall find frequently in his poems.

But what kind of trouble is he referring to? The answer to this must be sought in the second stanza, which, however, is much more difficult to elucidate. It was Wilhelm Türler who first amended Schatz's punctuation, putting line 14 - 'ie zwen an ain ziehent in hin' - in parentheses and linking 'ungeleicher sin' with 'weder' (different ... from).² This clarified the

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1. Cf. K43, 45: 'zwar ist mir ie gewesen laid,/wer dich betrübt ...' (I have always been sorry, when anyone has caused you sadness ...); see also K8, 27; K40, 44; K125, 6.
 2. W. Türler, Stilistische Studien zu Oswald von Wolkenstein, Bern, 1920, p. 114. In quoting verse II above, I have reproduced Klein's punctuation, which follows Schatz apart from omitting the full stop at the end of line 12.

problem somewhat, but without really solving it. What is the contrast being made? What are the zwen and ain, and what is the in that they are pulling? Oswald begins by reminding his hearers of earlier escapades in Constance (9-10), an obvious reference to a poem (K123) in which he told of how his beard suffered at the hands of the so-called freulin zart of the town (1-32). He goes on to relate that the 'seal-stone' was cut 'in a masterly fashion from (or for?) my pocket'. But to what does this refer, and where did it happen? Türler translates lines 9-12 as follows:¹

Was einerseits mein Bart durch Dirnen in
Konstanz erlitten hat, und andrerseits
der Siegelring für meine Tasche meisterhaft
graviert wurde ...

According to Türler's interpretation Oswald is contrasting the beard-pulling of the two girls (see K123, 9, 19) in Constance with the decoration he received in Perpignan from the (one) Queen of Aragon, 'die ihm einen gravierten Siegelring in den Bart hängte'.² But although Oswald does indeed tell us later that Queen Margarete put a gulden ring in his beard (K19, 153-160), it is unlikely that he is alluding to this event in his reference to the sigelstain. On this point Ulrich

1. Türler, p. 114.

2. Ibid.

Müller's version is more convincing:¹

Und was das anbetrifft, was mein 'Bart'²
von 'zarten jungen Damen' in Konstanz
erlitten hat, und dass meiner Tasche der
'Stein' herausoperiert wurde ...

So Oswald's purse had undergone an operation, whereby a 'stone' was removed from it. This is almost certainly another reference to the earlier Constance poem, where Oswald had gone on to describe the financial losses he had suffered at the hands of one 'Stainbrecher von Nesselwangk' (K123, 38), who was probably an inn- or brother²-keeper: 'er nam das gelt, liesz mir die tasch' (K123, 42). This still leaves the question of why Oswald calls the stone which was removed in the operation from his purse a sigelstein. Müller suggests that this is to be taken literally as 'Siegelstein', 'oder steht für Siegelring/Geld'.³ The best explanation has been given by Marold, who takes it to mean sigestein, a magic stone, in this case possessing the power to keep the purse filled.⁴ The word sigelstein does in fact appear in some medieval texts as a variant reading for sigestein, notably on one

1. Müller, p. 130.

2. Müller refers the reader to a later chapter (pp. 161 ff.) for a discussion of this and other episodes involving Oswald's beard.

3. Müller, p. 130, note 4.

4. Cited by Müller, p. 130, note 4.

occasion in the poem Pluemen der Tugend, by Oswald's contemporary and near neighbour in Tyrol, Hans Vintler.¹

Müller finds in verse II a slightly different contrast to the one suggested by Türlér, taking the two incidents of beard-pulling and extortion in Constance as the laid which the poet sets against his generally happy time in Aragon. This is in accordance with the assumed 'Leitgedanke' of the first verse. At the risk of complicating the problem further, I wish to suggest another interpretation of Oswald's line of thought in these opening stanzas, based on evidence from elsewhere in the poem. One detail of his story which is usually passed over with little or no comment is the affair of his purse. Just as in Constance, so also in Spain, Oswald's finances suffered badly. He alludes to this in stanza XV:

Mein guter strich, der reut mich nicht,
von guldin was sein name,
seid das die kristenhait verricht
ist worden zu Narbane.

(113-116)

There is again a problem of translation here. Müller's version is as follows:²

1. See the edition by I.V. Zingerle, Innsbruck, 1874, line 7808: 'das der sigstain hab die chraft,/ das er mache sigehaft'. The variants are siger-stain and sigelstain.

2. Müller, pp. 140 f.

Mein guter Strich [purse] machte mir keine
Sorgen: er trug den Namen 'von Gulden', seitdem
die Christenheit in Narbonne wieder in Ordnung
gebracht worden war.

But reuen is a strong verb, and Oswald uses it here in
the present tense, not the past (raw: K88, 18; K102,
19).¹ The sense of the first line is: 'The thought
of my good purse does not now cause me regret, ...'.
Oswald's point is that his purse did cause him trouble -
in Spain - but since Christendom was 'put in order'²
at Narbonne he no longer needs to worry about it. The
explanation of the trouble is given in stanza XIX:

Zwar alle ding verkert sich knawsz,³
der strich leit mir im sinne,
ain ander füret zwen hinaus,
so liesz ich ainen dinnen;
der gieng zu rund umb meinen leib,⁴

-
1. Cf. also K1, 91; K20, 28, 45; K36, 33; K45, 67;
K90, 29; K125, 6. Gereuen: K4, 4; K43, 40.
 2. The primary sense of verrihten is 'to put right',
but it is possible that the secondary meaning of 'to
pay' influenced Oswald's choice of the word in this
context. The implication is that the victory by
Sigismund will bring a reward for himself and all
concerned (cf. lines 117-128). The syntax of the
whole sentence can be read in two ways: either as
Müller reads it (above), or by referring seid das
back to line 113, leaving the intervening line in
parentheses, thus: 'My good purse does not
cause me regret - his name had been 'Sir Gold'
[before the incident in Perpignan, which will be
related shortly] - since Christendom was put in
order. ...'
 3. Knawsz: 'keck' (Lexer, TWb., p. 112), 'rasch'
(Schatz, Sprache, p. 82).
 4. 'Der gieng ...': i.e., the belt to which his
purse was attached.

vil mancher nimpt ain edel weib,
er deucht sich wol geheuer,
wurd im so vil haimsteuer.
(145-152)

It appears that on the occasion of a social evening the poet was relieved of his purse, or its contents, probably by a pickpocket. Just when and where this happened is not immediately clear. The above stanza follows two others which describe events in Avignon (XVII-XVIII), and Müller attaches it to these, as does Mayr.¹ But immediately afterwards Oswald tells of the gifts he received in Perpignan² from the Queen of Aragon (XX). And his opening words here are interesting:

Noch ist es als ain klainer tadel,
seid mir die schöne Margarith
stach durch die oren mit der nadel
nach ires landes sitte.
(153-156)

First, if one considers this together with the passage quoted from XV, one finds not only a parallel to the thoughts expressed in lines 113-116 (as I have translated them above), but also a verbal similarity in the way these thoughts are expressed, viz.: 'mein guter strich ... reut mich nicht, ... seid das ...'(es) ist ... ain klainer tadel [the loss], seid ...' On both occasions Oswald contrasts the rather painful misfortune of his

1. Müller, p. 143, note 4. Mayr, p. 80.

2. As he tells us plainly in K18, 33-48.

financial loss with a later piece of good fortune. The second point of interest is that if the theft of his purse did happen in Perpignan, it is very probable that he was thinking about this incident when he began to write his poem. Let us look again at what he says in stanzas I and II, beginning with lines 5-7:

auch ist mir ie gewesen wol,
das hab ich schon bezalt für vol
in Katlon und Ispanien ...

There is, at first sight, nothing unusual about Oswald's use of the word bezalen here: he 'paid', figuratively, for his good fortune with trouble. But though he does use this word elsewhere in a figurative sense, it is always embedded in the clearly formulated idea of paying a bill or a debt, as, for example, in the following:

O swacher leib,
sündiger balg, der wirt hat dich emphanen;
ich fürcht, er well bezalet sein.¹
(K7, 25-27)

I think it likely that the literal meaning of bezalen was in his mind when he began his account of the Spanish journey.

If we pursue this line of thought to stanza II, it now seems that the poet is making a comparison

1. Cf. K6, 12 ff.; K85, 11 f. Neither Grimm (I, 1793; 15, 44 ff.) nor Lexer (I, 258; III, 1025) cites a figurative use of bezahlen or zahlen before the middle of the fifteenth century.

rather than a contrast here:

es ist ain ungleicher sin
- ie zwen an ain ziehent in hin -
weder es mir erging zu Arragon
und in der stat, haisst Pärpian.
(13-16)

(it is unevenly balanced¹ - as when
two are pulling (in: a rope?)
against one - against what happened
to me in Aragon and in the town of
Perpignan.)

In Constance he had his beard pulled and his pockets
emptied; in Perpignan he lost his purse.

If this is a valid reading of the first two
verses of the poem, in what way are they an intro-
duction to the narrative as a whole? Did Oswald
intend to give a serious 'Leitgedanke' for his
audience to keep in mind throughout? I do not think
so. What he set out to do was to tell a lively tale of
his adventures in France and Spain. He needed an intro-
duction, and produced a rather makeshift affair. He
began with an old saying, a cliché: there is no joy
without any sorrow. Then, having in mind one
particularly sorrowful experience in Perpignan, he
narrowed down this general idea to something more

1. Müller (p. 130) says: 'da ist es schon eine ganz
andere Sache'. But in other places where Oswald
uses ungleich it has the sense of 'uneven,
unbalanced' rather than 'dissimilar': K41, 51;
K84, 19, 32; K122, 46.

specific: the pain of being parted from one's money (I). He was thereby able to hang his present tale - albeit loosely - on to an earlier one with a suitably similar theme, that of his escapades in Constance. (He may well have recited the Constance poem - K123 - first, by way of a prelude to his new song.) He then attempted to secure this thematic link by a rather obscurely-worded comparison (II).

Thus, intriguing though these verses are as a puzzle for the modern reader,¹ a knowledge of their exact meaning is, I feel, less important than recognising that their content anticipates the humour and the triviality of many of the incidents Oswald describes later. The question of how seriously Oswald wished to be, and can be, taken, will be discussed further after the rest of the poem has been summarised.

Stanza III is yet another enigma:

Der ainen vogel vahun müsz,
das er im nicht emphliege,
der tû im richten,² locken süsz,
domit er in betrieage.
in netzn, lätzen auff dem kloben
vil edler vogel wirt betrogen,
den solche list umbgeben,
dovon er fleusst sein leben.
(17-24)

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1. And not only for him. The scribe of MS. c, writing not long after 1445, was apparently also puzzled. He amended line 15 to 'also ging es mir zu Arragon'.
 2. Richten here means 'eine Falle stellen': Schatz, Sprache, p. 92.

Immediately preceding this is Oswald's reference to how he fared in Perpignan. The verse which follows describes the scene in this same town as Sigismund's procession arrived there. Neither of these passages has any obvious link with the image of a trapped bird. The generally accepted interpretation is that the noble bird represents the king, surrounded by potential enemies in Spain.¹ It is also possible that the poet was thinking of himself here, and elaborating further (though still somewhat obscurely!) on the misfortune in Aragon he had just mentioned. The metaphor seems inappropriate in that, as far as he tells us, his own life was not threatened, though it may have been in danger at least once, when he fell down a stairway during an alarm (XIII-XIV). But one need not interpret this detail too literally; how else could he describe the theft - the result of the trap - if he kept to the same metaphor? Also the assumption that vil edler vogel is Sigismund, the imperial eagle, is open to question. In the poem he wrote in condemnation of the Hussites Oswald referred to his fellow-knights as noble

1. See Otto Mann, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein und die Fremde', in Deutschkundliches, Friedrich Panzer zum 60. Geburtstag überreicht, Heidelberg, 1920, p. 55; Müller, p. 132, note 1.

birds, falcons (K27), and elsewhere he designated himself, when in the company of his social inferiors, as a falk among kelbern (K26, 85). In the present poem he is perhaps thinking of all the knightly company, including Sigismund and himself, in the dangerous town of Perpignan.

After this long and obscure preamble Oswald plunges into his story, with an account of the lively pageant with which Sigismund was greeted in Perpignan (IV-V). Much of the poem is given over to the narration of Oswald's own adventures here and on the journey to Paris. The tone is lighthearted and humorous. Where he does mention the political events, these the poet also presents in an entertaining manner. He tells of Sigismund's welcome in Perpignan, of his own astonishment at the strange attire and charming informality of the Spanish girls (VI-VII), and of the annoyance and discomfort he was caused by the slow progress of the negotiations and the trickery of the schismatics (VIII-IX). He describes the coarse pranks in the hostel at Perpignan (X-XII), his fall downstairs during an alarm (XIII-XIV), the loss of his money (XV, XIX) and the losses suffered by his companions (XVI), for which there was compensation when Christendom was saved. He pokes fun at Pedro de Luna and his followers

(XVII-XVIII), as he had done, in a friendly manner, at Sigismund himself (VI). He describes the procession into Paris, when he was resplendent in his Moorish costume (XXI-XXII), and the occasion when the king was honoured by the University of Paris (XXIII). We learn how the poet had his ears and beard decorated with rings by two queens (XX, XXIV), and how he was rewarded and sent off on a new mission by Sigismund (XXV-XXVI). Finally he tells of the occasion on which Count Amadeus of Savoy was elevated to a dukedom (XXVII). Though this event, which took place at Chambéry, is described in the penultimate stanza of the poem, chronologically it belongs before the events in Paris. It was probably included as an afterthought, for the sake of the well-known incident when a platform collapsed during the ceremony:

das wort¹ er von des kaisers hand
ain herzog wirdiklich genant,
do manicher an den ruggen
viel mit des stüles bruggen.
(213-216)

One may conclude that it is not politics which forms the essential subject matter of this poem, but a series of amusing and often trivial by-products of the great events, with the poet himself usually holding the stage. The same is true of other songs which Oswald

1. Schatz (1904, p. 158) reads des ward er ..., which seems to be the sense, though all three MSS. have the wording quoted.

wrote during his stay in and around Constance. In Wol auf, gesellen (K122) he describes an unhappy encounter at a dance in Augsburg with yet more freulin zart, who rebuffed him because of his long beard. In Überlingen he fared no better, finding in addition to unfriendly girls and poor entertainment a money-grubbing landlord who gave him unpalatable food and drink (K45: Wer machen well). His visit to Piacenza in Sigismund's train, some sixteen years after his experiences in Constance, produced a similar story. In Wer die ougen wil verschüren (K103) Oswald describes the wretched living conditions he had to endure in Lombardy:

übel essen, ligen in dem stro ...
tieff ist das kot, teuer das brot.
(3, 6)

The second poem he wrote during this same expedition, Es komen neue mër gerant (K105), deals with an incident at Ronciglione, where a group of Sigismund's messengers and their escorts were set upon and beaten by some local peasants. Although Oswald did not witness this scene himself, he recognised its humorous possibilities and exploited them in his song.

In none of these shorter poems is the modern reader aware of the political events in the shadow of which they were composed. Indeed there is nowhere in

the earlier cycle of Konstanzer Lieder (K122, K123)¹ any mention of the great Church Council itself. The only textual evidence that they were in fact written at the time of the Council is the cross-reference to K123 in stanza II of Es ist ain altgesprochner rat.

Although in the Piacenza songs several famous names are mentioned, the serious political business these men were engaged upon is nowhere referred to. From these later works it is especially clear that Oswald often composed his songs for the entertainment of one particular audience, in this case his colleagues in the imperial chancellery, for he included certain allusions which would be comprehensible only to them.² It is probably above all as occasional entertainment that these poems and those he recited in Constance are meant. Oswald's repertoire contains much that one might associate with the stock-in-trade of the comedian: jokes about his

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1. These two poems are in the same Ton, and were copied into MS. A together (they were omitted from MS. B). But I find it by no means certain that the Überlingen poem, K45, was also composed in 1415-16, as has always been assumed (Schatz 1902, p. 113; Mayr, pp. 62 ff.). It differs in theme from the other two - there is no mention of the 'beard' - and also in form: it is composed in the same Ton as Durch Barbarei, Arabia (K44), which was written circa 1426-27 (see below, III, 2, iii), and which it follows closely in the MSS. (Schatz 1904, pp. 22 ff.). In addition, it is certain that Oswald was in Überlingen in the year 1431: see Mayr, p. 101.
 2. Mayr has done some good detective work on K103 and K105: Die Reiselieder, pp. 170 ff.

encounters with various women, with irony at their expense and at his own; comic descriptions of brawling; complaints about landlords, living conditions and costs.

In the opening two verses of Es istain alt-gesprochner rat the poet himself supplies a link, as we have seen, between his anecdotes about trivial escapades in Constance and the story of his trip to Spain. He makes it clear that he is going to tell of what happened, not to the Christian Church or the King of the Romans, but to himself: 'weder es mir erging...'. The audience to whom he addressed himself was presumably interested not in politics, at least not at this moment, but in being amused. Müller delves in search of the political import beneath the superficial banalities of the poem, which seem to have in some cases, he says, 'einen hintergründigen Sinn'.¹ For example, he suggests that Oswald's account of how he was given a noble title, 'Viscount of Turkey', and a Moorish costume by Sigismund (XXI), may conceal the award of the Order of the Dragon, which the poet certainly received at some time from his lord.² But even allowing for self-parody, Oswald's picture of

1. Müller, p. 157.

2. See above, p. 62.

himself dressed as a Moor singing and dancing in a 'heathen' fashion seems as remote as it could possibly be from a chivalrous order dedicated specifically to fighting the heathen.¹ And would such a meaning be apparent to the audience in Constance? What Oswald impressed upon them most strongly about this incident, apart from the attention which it attracted, was its outlandishness, as is the case with many of the episodes he describes (I, IV, VII, XX, XIII, XXIV). Müller's suggestion that the dormitory pranks (X-XII) may conceal a blasphemous parody on the mass has more to recommend it.² But such a parody, if it is intended, can scarcely be the raison d'être of the scene; it is rather the form in which the description is cast. If

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1. Mayr (pp. 76 f., 101 f.) suggests that Oswald probably acquired the Drachenorden after 1425, for in his full-length portrait in MS. A, which was completed in this year, he is not wearing its insignia. Müller (p. 184) disputes this, arguing that the insignia would not necessarily be depicted here, as they would be too small to be seen. Had the poet been in possession of the Order at this time, however, he would scarcely have been deterred by the actual size of the 'Dragon' from including it in his picture, together with the Order of the Griffon, which he proudly displays there, suitably enlarged. See the reproduction in W.-R., p. 81, and also that of the portrait in MS. B, where Oswald is wearing both decorations: ibid., p. 96, and on the cover (in colour) of W. Schmied, Oswald von Wolkenstein, Stiasny-Bücherei 70, 1960.
 2. Müller, p. 138, note 1. See also his comments on the 'bath' prepared for Sigismund (K19, 38 ff.): ibid., p. 134, note 2.

this passage does contain an attack on the clergy, as Muller implies, then it is either a very trivial one, or very well disguised.

There is little evidence of any profound or subtle commentary in this poem on the political affairs of the Spanish expedition. Rather, the famous names and events are incorporated into Oswald's account of his own adventures, to which they add a particular piquancy. We find a similar technique employed in stanza III of Es fügt sich (K18), where Oswald again describes how his ears and beard were decorated with rings by the Queen of Aragon, and continues:

Weib und ouch man mich schauten an mit lachen so;
neun personier kuniklicher zier, die waren da
ze Pärpian, ir babst von Lun, genant Petro,
der Römisch künig, der zehent und die von Praides.¹
(K18, 45-48)

The function of the royal personages mentioned here is to provide a suitably splendid audience for his own personal triumph.

Is one justified therefore in drawing conclusions from such a poem about Oswald's serious attitude to political matters? Does he not in fact hide his face behind a narren kappen, such as he wore in the procession into Paris, and thus withhold from us not only the

1. Die von Praides and die schöne Margarith (K19, 154) are the same person, the young widow of King Martin of Aragon; see Mayr, pp. 74 f.

nature of his role in imperial affairs but also his views on these affairs, because as a poet he was concerned with other things? That the function of an entertainer was compatible with more serious duties is suggested by Oswald himself, also in Es fügt sich:

In urtail, rat vil weiser hat geschätzt mich
dem ich gevallen han mit schallen liederlich.
(K18, 105-106)

But even if this is more than simply a formula for the service performed by a courtier, it still does not imply that one can separate Oswald the man from Oswald the entertainer in a poem like Es ist ain altgesprochen rat. The poet betrayed more of his attitude to political events here than he realised, as a comparison with a poem by Walther von der Vogelweide may illustrate. Walther's awe-inspired contemplation of King Philip's entry into Magdeburg unites the man and his sceptre and crown in an impressive symbolic tableau.¹ In the fifteenth-century poem this ideal picture is reduced to its component parts: the king is a man of flesh and blood, to be chatted and joked with; his splendour is the colour, noise and dust of his processions into Perpignan and Paris, where the poet, in fancy dress, is a rival attraction. It is a realistic view, as it were from backstage, which exposes the grand events as

1. Lachmann/Kraus, 19, 5.

pomp and show, with rival factions abusing each other.

And yet one should beware of seeing in Oswald a kind of 'conscious realist', in the way that Walther might be called a conscious idealist. He was not deliberately unmasking the reality of imperial politics for any satirical or philosophical purpose. I cannot agree with Heinz Rupp that the poet's intention was to reveal the 'Kontrast zwischen hoher Politik und wirklichem Leben', to demonstrate to his audience 'wie sich eigentlich das grosse weltpolitische Geschehen, gesehen aus der Perspektive des Menschen vollzieht.'¹

The modern reader can, with hindsight, see Oswald's narrative in this light, but the poem does not afford adequate evidence that the poet himself shows such insight, and thus gives 'ein distanzierender, ironisch-selbstironischer Blick von tiefem Ernst auf das Geschehen in der Welt'.² We do indeed see the great events from one personal viewpoint. But the poet Oswald does not contemplate the scene around him from a distance; he is himself very much a part of it, as one of the crowd which applauds Sigismund's victory

1. 'Oswald von Wolkenstein. Es ist ain altgesprochener rat', in Philologia Deutsch. Festschrift für W. Henzen, 1965, p. 87.

2. Ibid., p. 88.

and jeers at the misfortune of Pedro de Luna. More accurate, I think, is Müller's description of the author of Es ist ain altgesprochner rat as '(ein Narr), der die Sinnlosigkeit der Welt wohl durchschaut, aber dennoch eine Hauptrolle in dem ganzen Narrentheater spielt.'¹ But this is also somewhat misleading. Can one equate the trivialising of political affairs for the purpose of entertainment (VI, VIII-IX, XVII-XVIII, XXVI, XXVII), with profound insight into their senselessness?

The main evidence of this supposed insight is Oswald's conclusion:

Wie vil ich hör, sing und sag,
den louff der werlde strieme,
so ist recht an dem jungsten tag
ain watsack als ain rieme,
ain glogghaus gilt ain essich krüg;
dient wir der sel nach irem füg,
das si wër unbetwungen,
so hett ich wolgesungen.

(217-224)

This stanza is interesting above all for the vocabulary Oswald uses. The significance, if there is any, of the objects he mentions in the comparisons in lines 220-221 - a travel-bag and a strap, a belfry and a vinegar jar - remains a mystery.² The word

1. Müller, p. 157.

2. Müller (p. 148, note 4) comments: 'Oswald stellt ... wohl absichtlich völlig Beziehungsloses nebeneinander'.

strieme (218)¹ also presents a problem. It is taken by Schatz and Müller to be a verb, meaning 'prüfe, ermesse, bedenke'.² But it is more likely to be a noun, as a comparison with a similar couplet in another poem will demonstrate:

Wie vil ich hör, sing und sag,
den louff der werlde strieme ...
(K19, 217 f.)

Wie vil ich sing und tichte
den louff der werlde not ...
(K23, 1 f.)

Both strieme and not appear to be genitive plurals dependent on louff. What Oswald means by Strieme is, however, far from clear. A common meaning is 'weal',³ and if the poet was again thinking of events involving danger and distress - cf. not - this meaning may have been in his mind when he used the word here (therefore 'the sufferings of the world'). The simplest translation would be 'strip', and a sense related to this is 'Farbstreifen', as on clothes.⁴ one could associate this idea with the phrase der tummen welte wunder, which Oswald uses in another poem,⁵ and interpret den

1. MS. B has streime. The reading in A is preferred because of the rhyme. They are alternative forms of the same word.

2. Schatz, Sprache, p. 100; Grimm (10, 3, 1610) follows Schatz. Cf. Müller, p. 148.

3. Grimm, 10, 3, 1606 ff.

4. Ibid., 1605 f.

5. K10, 2. See also below, IV.

louff der werlde strieme as ' the course of this chequered world'. This would be quite an apt description of the world he has described in his poem.

Although the epilogue is original and intriguing in its language, it does not express any profound philosophical comment on the experiences Oswald has related. To take this passage as a key to the poet's main purpose, that is, to expose the vanity of the political events he describes,¹ is, it seems to me, to miss the lack of continuity between this last verse and the rest of the poem. On the one hand Oswald was moved by a desire to tell with enthusiasm of what he had done and seen on his journey. On the other, having done so, he felt the need to point a lesson of some kind from his experiences, and the lesson here is one which any medieval poet would have to hand: the world is worthless, and man should look to the salvation of his soul. These two contrasting attitudes, the one suggesting a modern awareness of the world and its delights, the other tied firmly to medieval modes of thought, exist here side by side. The abrupt break between the end of Oswald's story (216), and the beginning of the moral (217), affords striking evidence of the rift between them.

1. See the interpretation by Heinz Rupp, in Philologia Deutsch. Festschrift für W. Henzen, 1965, p. 88.

Like the maxim with which the poem closes, the one with which it begins (they are not the same) is extraneous to the narrative, except on a very superficial level. One can, it is true, interpret the various incidents described by Oswald as freud and laid,¹ but he himself offers little encouragement to the reader to do so. Neither word is mentioned again after the 'introduction', and the only occasion on which Oswald points such a contrast is with reference to the loss of his money (113 ff., 153 ff.). Just as his concluding moral fails to do justice to the story he has told, so too his attempt to harness this story to a conventional theme ultimately fails, for the varied and lively content of his poem inevitably frees itself from such frail trammels.

It follows from this that one need not expect a carefully contrived structure in the poem. Müller rightly questions the validity of the 'völlig klarer, planmässiger Aufbau' described by Rupp,² and suggests

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1. Müller (pp. 153 ff.) traces a 'Leitthema laid-freud'. Otto Mann also says that Oswald's choice of material was governed by 'das Motiv des Zusammenhangs von Lust und Leid': Deutschkundliches, 1930, p. 55.
 2. H. Rupp, in Philologia Deutsch, p. 87. He arranges the strophes in groups of 2, 5, 2, 5, - 5, 2, 5, 2. Cf. Müller, p. 153, note 4 (where the final '2' is inadvertently omitted).

the following as an alternative:¹

3 Strophen = Einleitung	(I-III)
11 Strophen = Perpignan	{IV-XIV} ²
11 Strophen = Narbonne/Avignon/Paris	{XV-XXV}
3 Strophen = Abschied/Laudatio/Schluss	(XXVI-XXVIII)

But this geographical arrangement is also imperfect: the incident described in XX took place in Perpignan, as we have seen; and such a division is at best only a general outline, with no obvious significance.

Similarly, Müller concludes from his detailed analysis of the structure only that the poem is arranged 'in Gruppen von zwei oder drei assoziativ verknüpften Strophen, wobei die Grenzen oft sehr fliessend sind.'³

This may well have been the only structural principle apparent to Oswald's audience, and also the one he found most convenient to work with, especially if, as seems possible, he added to the poem as he went along: his opening verses lead one to expect an account of events in Spain alone (7 f., 15 f.), and one stanza at least was, it seems, a later addition.⁴ The patchwork

1. Müller, p. 156.

2. There is a misprint in Müller here: for 'XVI', read 'XIV'.

3. Müller, p. 155.

4. Stanza XXVII (see above p. 164). But it was not added or re-cast after 1433 (Müller, p. 147, note 6), for the whole poem as it stands was already in MS. A by the year 1425; see Schatz 1904, pp. 22 ff.

structure of the poem is reflected also in details of its language and style. The verse form, a simple eight-line strophe, tends to exaggerate the episodic nature of the narrative, in which the transition from one incident to the next is often quite sharp (II/III/IV, XII/XIII, XIV/XV, XXIII/XXIV/XXV, XXVI/XXVII/XXVIII). Introducing a new episode sometimes causes Oswald the same embarrassment he betrays at the beginning of the poem itself. Usually he makes use of a simple adverb or conjunction, such as zwar (49, 89, 129, 145), und (9, 73), noch (153). Once he launches himself with aid of an irrelevant preface:

Zwar dise mer, die weren lanck,
hett ich si recht besunnen ...
(89 f.)

and the escapade involving the Duke of Brieg also begins with an empty phrase: 'Herzog von Prig was nicht ain tor ... (81).

Viewed in the light of the discussion above, Es ist ain altgesprochner rat is primarily an entertainment, a lively and rather rambling story of Oswald's adventures in Spain and France. It is original and remarkable not because of any profound philosophical or political content, but because the man who recorded this very individual view of King Sigismund's expedition was a poet of immense vitality, with a gift for vivid description. And yet whilst playing the

court entertainer, Oswald also gives an insight into the way he, and his audience of noblemen at Constance, regarded the events he describes. His scurrilous invective against Sigismund's opponents is just as much the expression of a partisan political attitude as is Walther's more subtle praise of Philip of Swabia.¹ Finally, in trivialising the events he has witnessed by recording above all their repercussions on himself, especially on his purse, Oswald gives a view of contemporary imperial politics, which, though comically distorted, is none the less realistic.

ii. Ich hab gehört durch mangel granns (K27)

Only in one poem did Oswald enter the arena of political and religious debate. This is the so-called Hussitenlied, in which he attacked the followers of John Hus, the Bohemian scholar who was burned at the stake in Constance in 1415.

The style of this poem is largely determined by Oswald's use of the image of geese - a popular play on Hus's name, because the Czech word husa means 'goose' - to represent the heretics, in conflict with

1. Walther himself was of course quite capable of scurrility when the occasion demanded, again with greater subtlety, as, for example, in Wir suln den kochen raten (Lachmann/Kraus 17, 11).

the hawks, the good Christian knights. He begins with some rather obscure allusions:

Ich hab gehört durch mangen granns
mit ainem sprichwort dick ain toren triegen:
sim, Lippel wër ain güte ganns,
hett er neur federn, das im slawnt¹ ze
fliegen.
bei dem ain jeder merken sol,
das sich die löff in manchem weg verkeren;
(1-6)

Once more Oswald presents us with a puzzle for an introduction. What is the significance of the proverb about Lippel?² What are the paths (löff...weg) which are 'changing'? The last image (line 6) at least can, I think, be explained. Schatz, in his edition, unwittingly made this more difficult by regularising the spelling of löff, which he amended to leuff.³ The editor of the later manuscript c (circa 1450) had also made this alteration.⁴ Both these editors, however, overlooked what seems to me like one of the poet's favourite devices: a word-play on a proper name. The key to

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1. Slawnt: MHG 'sliunen' (Lexer, II, 984), Mod. Ger. 'schlaunen' (Grimm, 9, 517), 'gelingen'; the sense here appears to be: 'if he only had feathers, so that he could fly.'
 2. Lippel: Schatz, Sprache, p. 113: 'wohl Philipp'. The name occurs also in a song depicting a village carouse: 'Pfeiff auff, Hainzel, Lippel, Snäggel!' (K70, 19).
 3. Schatz 1904, p. 254. He did not give the readings of MSS. A and B (both löff).
 4. See the readings in Klein, p. 100.

this is to be found in stanza V, addressed to the wicked Hussite,¹ to whom Oswald gives the following warning:

wilt du den Wigklöff nicht verlän,
sein ler, die wirt dich hassen.²
(49-50)

It is interesting to note that here too the writer of MS. c failed to recognise the name of the English churchman Wycliffe, and amended it to vorlauff. Oswald seems to be alluding in his opening stanza to the spread of Wycliffe's doctrines in Bohemia. The precise meaning of the rather forced word-play is, however, not clear. Later in the same poem he twice uses sich verkeren in the sense of 'to change for the worse' (63 f., 69 f.),³ but in the present instance the connection with 'paths' allows a more literal translation; the sense of the clause is probably 'that the paths are going in many (wrong) directions'.⁴ The

1. Or to Hus? See below, p. 183.

2. Hassen: this verb can be used impersonally (with the accusative) in the sense of '(jemandem) zuwider sein' - Grimm, 4, 2, 548; the meaning here seems to be '... will give you cause to hate it'. See also the note on line 41, below, p. 187.

3. Lexer (III, 140 f.) gives as one translation of the past participle verkert, 'vom Rechten abgekommen, falschen Glaubens'.

4. I prefer the reading of line 6 in (the earlier) MS. A: 'in mangen weg'.

poet goes on to explain his point in the concluding lines of this verse:

das prüfft man an den gensen wol,
ir ainfalt si gescheidiklichen meren
zu Behem und ouch anderswo,
do si die federn reren.
(7-10)

Schatz renders ainfalt by the same Modern German word, and gescheidiklichen as 'gescheit',¹ thus, 'they are cleverly [irony?] increasing their stupidity'.²

Oswald is probably also playing on the basic meaning of ainfalt, 'oneness'; if, as will be suggested below, this poem was written in 1420, then he may be alluding in the above lines to the division of the original Hussites into two groups, the Utraquists and the Taborites, a rift which had become firmly established in 1419.³ This interpretation would also explain line 10: some of the Bohemians were shedding their old feathers, that is, exchanging their old heresy for a new one. It could be objected that the poet refers to 'many', not 'two', directions, but he would not necessarily have exact knowledge of the division in the Hussite camp. Also, his

1. Schatz, Sprache, pp. 47, 73 respectively. In both cases this passage is the only one cited.

2. The goose is of course traditionally associated with simplemindedness, as in Parzival, 247, 27; 515, 13. The Czech husa also means a simpleton: Stredniho Rozsah, Cesko-Anglicky Slovník, Prague, 1968, p. 175.

3. See Matthew Spinka, John Hus. A Biography, Princeton, 1968, p. 301.

vagueness here would be in keeping with the rest of the poem, in which he does not discuss the nature of Hus's heretical doctrines.

After this somewhat obscure beginning the theme of the poem becomes clearer. Oswald says that the vederspil has failed; he is not pleased with their hunting, for these noble birds are being killed by the geese (II). He then turns to the falcons, addressing them as 'Ir edlen valken, pilgerin'; the pilgerin (falco peregrinus, peregrine falcon) was a species highly valued in the Middle Ages;¹ if, as seems likely, the poet was addressing himself to crusaders against the heretics, he probably called them by the name of this particular species because of the other meaning of pilgerin, a pilgrim or crusader.² He tells them that their beaks and claws have been hardened by 'ain maister grosz von oberlant' (that is, God³); if they have caused him anger they should now repent and shed

1. See David Dalby, Lexicon of the Medieval German Hunt, Berlin, 1965, p. 166. Oswald lists other types of (or names for) hawk: (12) 'adler, falcken, häbich, sparwer, smieren [merlins]'; (31) 'sägger' (saker - Dalby, p. 185), 'blawfűsz'; but the peregrine falcon seems to be the only one to which any significance is attached, apart from the eagle (see below).

2. Oswald uses the word in this sense in K90, 1.

3. Cf. the poem In oberland (K111).

their old feathers; the geese will then easily be overcome (III).¹ He draws the attention of all noble Christian birds to the gaggle of geese which is mocking them, and calls upon them to retaliate (IV):

wol auff, all vogel, rauch und rain!
 hilf, adler grosz,² dein swaimen³ las
 erwachen!
 fliegt schärflich ab und stosst die genns,
 das in die rügk erkrachen! (37-40)

In the next verse the poet addresses '(du) Husz', warning him that Lucifer will have a warm welcome for him if he does not abandon the doctrines of Wycliffe (V). Read in isolation this stanza appears to be addressed to John Hus himself, while he is still alive; but the conflict between the hawks and the geese mentioned in stanzas II and IV probably represents the war between the imperial forces and the Hussites which began in 1420. Husz in stanza V is therefore better interpreted as a collective singular for the Hussites, who are referred to by other German writers of the time

1. 'Leicht wirt die ganns verdürnet': for this last verb Schatz (Sprache, p. 63) gives 'mit Dornen einhüllen'. The 'thorns' must be the beaks and claws of the falcons.
2. Adler grosz: probably the imperial eagle, i.e. Sigismund; cf. the poem on a similar theme by Muskatplüt (edited by E. von Groote, Cologne, 1852, No. 92), lines 59 f.: 'O kunyg Sygemont, wirt nimmer krank, / wirff uff den adelare!'
3. Swaimen: 'sich schwingen, fliegen'.

as hussen.¹

In verses VI and VII Oswald goes on to describe the activities of the 'geese'. Unlike other birds, who keep to their allotted order in the world, he says, the goose 'wil tragen krumpe horen',² with which it attacks its fellow birds. At the same time it is plummeting towards hell, by falsifying the scriptures (VI). Whereas before, the name of the goose was highly praised, now this has changed in a shameful manner (VII). To express these last thoughts, the poet quotes the beginning of a song:

Den besten vogel, den ich waisz,
das was ain ganns vor zeiten ward
gesungen.
das hat zu Beheim inn dem krais
verkeret sich, wann in ist misselungen.
mit ainem wort, wo vor das best
in disem raien mercklich ist gestanden,
da wider schreiben maister, gest
das bösst, so man es vindt in allen landen.
(61-68)

The words in quotation marks in the first two lines of this passage form the opening of a popular song of the

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1. See, for example, Eberhard Windecke, Das Leben König Sigmunds, edited by Wilhelm Altmann, Berlin, 1893, p. 113 (and passim): hussen und ketzer. The possibility cannot, however, be denied that by the falcons Oswald means the Catholic clergy (or good Christians in general) who are failing to repel the onslaught of heretical ideas. In this case the poem could date from a time before Hus's death.
 2. Krumpe horen: literally 'crooked horns'. The sense must be 'claws'; cf. verhürnet, 26.
 3. Inn dem krais: 'in the place (called Bohemia)'; cf. K25, 30: 'zu Brixsen in dem krais'.

time. The following version was published a century later:¹

Den besten vogel den ich waisz,	Ein gans, ein gans,	
daz ist ein gans.	gesotten gebraten	
sie hat zwen preyte füsz	bey dem feur ist gut,	
dar zu ein lange halsz.	ein guten wein dar zu	15
Ir füsz sein gel,	5 ein guten frölichen mut.	
jr stim ist hell,	den selbigen vogel	
sie ist nit schnell,	sollen wir loben	
das best gesang, das sie kan	der do schnattert und	
da da da da, daz ist gick gack,	dattert	
da da da da, das ist gick gack	10 im haberstro.	20
singen wir zu sant Mertenstag.	So singen wir	
	Benedicamus domino.	

Oswald alludes to this song in a manner analogous to his playing on names known to his audience. However, as with the word-play on Wycliffe's name, he does not take too much care to integrate the allusion into a clear line of thought. His meaning seems to be as follows:

'The best bird I know was a goose', used to be a popular song. Now, in Bohemia, this has changed, for they [the geese/Hussites] have gone wrong. In one word, where the best [the word 'best'] once clearly stood in this song, now, on the other hand, learned men there and from abroad are writing the worst things to be found in any land [and therefore the word 'worst' is to be substituted in the song].

1. See Georg Forsters Frische Teutsche Liedlein, in fünf Teilen. Abdruck nach den ersten Ausgaben 1539, 1540, 1549, 1556, herausgegeben von M.E. Marriage, Halle, 1903 (Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke, 203-206), p. 85.

He begins the next stanza with a final reference to the song:

Ir braitter füz¹ möcht werden smal,
wolt neur ain man ...
(71-72)

as he calls on his fellow-Christians to join him in a prayer to God, that He should forget the anger which is betokened both by the plague of heresy and the pestilence which is raging in other European lands (VIII-IX).²

Oswald's point of view in this poem is that of a knight, a loyal son of the Church, and a servant of King Sigismund. Although one would not expect from him any great originality of thought on the subject of Hussitism, there is nevertheless a conspicuous lack of reasoning here. It is simply a question of condemning the heretics (I, V-VII), and urging his fellow-men, and God, to overcome them (II-IV, VIII-IX). The poet's thinking is simple and very conventional: the peril which threatens Christendom is, as in the Ludwigslied, the result of its own sünd and missetat (19, 77), and of God's anger (83): the geese are reproached for not keeping to their allotted orden (51 ff.). There is no trace of the intellectual strength and subtlety which characterises Walther's Sprüche. It is as if Oswald

1. Cf. line 3 of the song quoted above.

2. See the note on this passage in Mayr, Die Reiselieder, p. 86.

seeks to camouflage the lack of an argument by the protracted use of an image, by well-worn moral maxims -

wann alte sünd pringt neue scham,
hör ich die weisen sagen.

(19-20)

or by abuse -

Ju Husz,¹ nu hasz² dich alles laid,
und heck² dich Lucifer, Pilatus herre!

(41-42)

These last lines, however, illustrate also how he compensates for his intellectual shortcomings by the energy with which he champions his cause.

It is possible that Oswald composed this poem whilst taking part in a campaign against the Hussites, either at the battle of Taus in 1432, or, more probably, at Vysehrad in November 1420.³ If so, it may well have been written at the instigation of Sigismund himself, with a view to instilling some enthusiasm into his troops. The structure of the poem does not, however, seem well-suited to this purpose, ending as it does in

1. As in line 50 (see the note on this line, above, p.180), here also Oswald uses hassen in an unusual way. In view of the poet's fondness for both word-play and assonance, Beda Weber's suggestion (Gedichte Oswalds, 1847, p. 350), 'verfolge (Wortspiel auf hussen ['hetzen' - cf. K85, 1], Huss)', seems sound.

2. Heck: 'hege'.

3. Mayr, Die Reiselieder, pp. 84 ff.

a prayer to God, rather than in a final exhortation to the knights. The references to Wycliffe suggest that it may have been written in the spring rather than the winter of 1420: during March of this year Pope Martin V had proclaimed a crusade against the heretics, whereupon Sigismund at once issued a solemn command that the Bohemians should abandon the doctrines of Wycliffe.¹

iii. Conclusion

Had Oswald been desirous or capable of making a contribution to the major political questions of his day, then he would surely have done so somewhere in his very varied and personal lyric. Although Ich hab gehört ... (K27) shows some concern for the religious conflict in Germany, one seeks in vain in the rest of his poems for evidence of any serious interest in imperial politics. One may compare his attitude in this respect with that of a contemporary, with whom Oswald must have been acquainted, Eberhard Windecke.

1. Cambridge Medieval History, VIII, p. 69.

Windecke was also employed for a time in King Sigismund's chancellery, travelled with him to Perpignan, Paris and London in 1415-16, and later wrote a biography of his lord.¹ In this work, says the historian Max Lenz,

sehen wir ihn nirgends die grossen, charakteristischen Motive in der ... Politik desselben [of the imperial court] hervorheben, obgleich seine Gegenwart am königlichen Hofe gerade in die wechsellvollste Periode derselben fällt.²

So Oswald was clearly not the only poet at Sigismund's court who failed to show appreciation for the grand designs of the king's policies.³

It would appear that the Hussitenlied represents a digression from Oswald's usual pre-occupations in the poems he wrote while travelling with

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1. Eberhard Windecke, Das Leben König Sigmunds, edited by Wilhelm Altmann, Berlin, 1893, and also by Dr. von Hagen, Leipzig, 1886.
 2. Max Lenz, König Sigismund und Heinrich V von England, Berlin, 1874, p. 7. Lenz (ibid.) attributes Windecke's lack of a 'tiefere Auffassung der politischen Tätigkeit Sigismunds' to his lowly position at court.
 3. Windecke also wrote a poem during the Council of Constance: its subject is the brisk trade at the brothels; see Die historischen Volkslieder der Deutschen vom 13. bis 16. Jahrhundert, gesammelt von R. von Liliencron, Leipzig, 1865, 1. Band, No. 54, pp. 264 f.

Sigismund. Normally he was an entertainer, providing amusement, not political and spiritual guidance, for his fellow-noblemen. The profession of political commentator seems in fact by this time to have been taken over largely by singers of an inferior social rank. While the noble dilettante Oswald von Wolkenstein sang of his escapades to amuse his companions at Constance, one such poet, the burgher Thomas Prischuch, sang the praises of King Sigismund and held forth at length on the subject of the Church Council.¹ Oswald did see fit to write one poem on a serious political and religious matter, the Hussite insurrection; but here, where he wears no jester's mask, his comments are not essentially different, either in substance or in style, from those interspersed in Es ist ain alt-gesprochnr rat amongst the narration of trivia: though in a more serious mood, he offers little more than spirited abuse of the enemy.

1. 'Des konzilis grundveste', von Thomas Prischuch von Augsburg, in R. von Liliencron, Die historischen Volkslieder . . . , 1. Band, No. 50, pp. 228-256. See also Johannes Lochner, Thomas Prischuchs Gedichte auf das Konzil von Konstanz, Berlin, 1906.

2. Oswald and Frederick

Oswald could afford to be lighthearted and unconcerned about the political issues at stake in Constance and Perpignan, for these were the king's problems, not his own. But when we turn to the events in Tyrol, which, as we know, affected immediately his person and his property, the situation is different. His experiences in the struggle with Prince Frederick inspired him to a more personal kind of poetic utterance, imbued with feeling which sprang from deeper within him.

i. The 'Greifensteinlied' (K85)¹

The earliest and liveliest record in Oswald's poetry of the hostility between himself and the Prince of Tyrol is the so-called Greifensteinlied. It was probably composed in 1418, for it was early in this year, according to Anton Noggler,² that Frederick laid siege to Castle Greifenstein, high on a mountain near Bozen,³ where some of the Tyrolean barons had sought

1. This is one of the poems translated by Wachinger; see the Reclam edition, No. 17.

2. 'Versuch einer näheren Zeitbestimmung der ersten Belagerung Greifensteins unter Herzog Friedrich dem Älteren', Zs. Ferd., 27 (1883), pp. 22 ff.

3. See the picture in W.-R., p. 48. The now ruined castle is situated near Siebeneich, in the Etsch valley west of Bozen. For the geography of the area described in this poem, see Map, p. 384.

refuge from his wrath.

In this short poem of seven four-line stanzas the poet is concerned with one incident, a successful sortie from the stronghold against the besieging forces. Without any preamble he plunges straight into the action, with the battle-cry:

'Nu husz!' ¹ sprach der Michel von Wolkenstain ...

The impact of this opening line is reinforced by the repetition of the cry, with variations, in the next two lines:

'so hetzen wir!' sprach Oswalt von Wolckenstain
'za hürs!' ² sprach her Lienhart von Wolkenstain,

Then, with admirable conciseness, the final line of the stanza fixes the location and hints at the situation in which the brothers find themselves:

si müssen alle fliehen von Greiffenstein geleich

Having placed the scene of the drama and its heroes before his audience, Oswald goes on to describe the action:

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1. Husz!: Grimm, 4, 2, 1975 f.: 'Hetzruf an Hunde', used also in the description of persecution, e.g. of heretics; cf. hussen: 'sich schnell bewegen, rennen; hetzen, reizen' (Lexer, TWb., p. 97).
 2. Za hürs!: Schatz (Sprache, p. 79) says 'Hetzruf'. Lexer does not record the word, but Grimm (4, 2, 1969) mentions a Swiss dialect word hursch, 'hinweg!, fort!'

- II Do hüß sich ain gestöber¹ ausz der glüt,¹
all nider in die köfel,² das es alles blüt.³
banzer und armbrost, darzu⁴ die eisenhüt,
die liessens uns zu letze;⁴ do wurd wir
freudenreich.

The impressionistic style of this description is well suited to the tumult of battle. The transition from the indistinct picture he sketches in the first two lines of the stanza to the detail he picks out in lines three and four is well executed by means of the inversion: a list of the objects left behind by the fugitives fills line 3, and this is taken up by the following die, before the verb is introduced. Only then does the narrator (in uns) clarify his own viewpoint; he then pauses to state in a simple sentence his joy and that of his comrades at their success.

The description and comment contained in these last two lines are expanded in the following verse. Again there is an effective juxtaposition of objective description of the action, and spontaneous, personal comment upon it. Oswald's pleasure at the success of the

1. Wachinger (Reclam, p. 51) translates: 'Da begann ein Stürmen von Feuersglut'; under Gestöber, Grimm (4, 1, 2, 4241) gives 'aufwirbelnde Staubmasse' (and refers to this passage). Oswald is describing the cannon-fire.

2. Köfel: rocks, rocky ravines.

3. Blüt: 'blühte, leuchtete'.

4. Zuo letze lâzen: 'als Abschiedsgeschenk lassen' (Lexer, I, 1891).

sally turns to defiant mockery of his enemy, who is now introduced by name:

III Die handwerch¹ und hütten² und ander ir gezelt,
das ward zu ainer aschen in dem obern veld.³
ich hör, wer übel leihe, das sei ain böser gelt:⁴
also well wir bezalen, herzog Friderich.

In the fourth verse the scene shifts to the valley near Castle Rafenstein, where the fighting continues. As in II, Oswald begins with a general description of the skirmish, and then picks out one detail from it:

IV Schalmützen, schalmeussen⁵ niemand schied.
das geschach vorm Raubenstain inn dem Ried,⁶
das mangem ward gezogen ain spann lange niet
von ainem pfeil, geflogen durch armberost
gebiett.⁷

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1. Handwerch: M.H.G. antwerch, siege artillery.
 2. Hütten: presumably temporary shelters. Oswald uses the same word to describe the camouflaged hiding place of fowler (K83, 23).
 3. In dem obern veld: see Wachinger (Reclam), p. 116: 'Das "obere Feld" befindet sich etwas oberhalb der vorgeschobenen Felsspitze, auf der Greifenstein liegt; es ist die einzige Stelle, von der aus man die Burg beschiessen konnte.'
 4. Gelt: payment; Wachinger (Reclam), p. 51: 'Man sagt, wer übel ausleiht, kriegt schlecht zurückgezahlt.'
 5. Both words are alternative forms of scharmützel, to skirmish.
 6. Ried: a place-name; cf. Grimm, 8, 916: Ried, 'sumpfige Gegend, Rodeland, ... hat sich häufig zur Ortsbezeichnung versteinert'.
 7. Durch armberost gebiett: on Oswald's (frequent) use of this kind of circumlocution, a device of geblümte Rede, see J. Beyrich, Untersuchung über den Stil Oswalds von Wolkenstein, 1910, pp. 72 ff.

In the remaining three stanzas he describes the end of the fight, and names the parties involved in it. He pours scorn on Frederick's courtiers, and accuses the local peasants and townsmen who supported the duke of treachery. Reinforcements for the noblemen arrived from Rafenstein, and they were finally able to escape:

V Gepawren von Sant Jörgen,¹ die ganz gemaine,²
die hetten uns gesworen falsch unraine,
do komen güt gesellen von Raubenstaine.
got grüsz eu, nachgepawern, eur treu ist klaine.

VI Ain werfen und ain schiessen, ain groß gepreusz
hüb sich än verdriessen, glöggel dich³ und seusz!⁴
nu rür dich, güt hofeman, gewinn oder fleusz!
ouch ward daselbs besenget vil dächer unde meusz.⁵

1. Sant Jörgen: the village of St. Georgen, near Bozen.
2. 'Die ganze Gemeinde'.
3. Glöggel dich: Schatz, Sprache, p. 74: 'schwing dich wie eine Glocke' (?). Wachinger (Reclam, p. 51): 'tummel dich'. Cf. Grimm, 4, 1, 5, 169: glöckeln: 3) 'Von der Bewegung her übertragen: schweifen, hin und wider glöcklen, ... umb hin faren.'
4. Seusz: Wachinger (p. 51) translates this as 'schrei', but movement is probably also implied; cf. Grimm, 8, 1932: sausen, 'von Menschen oder Tieren, die schnell und geräuschvoll daherkfahren.'
5. (Unde)meusz: Schatz (Sprache, p. 87) is uncertain whether this is 'mice' or a word meaning 'Hütten'. Wachinger (p. 51) gives 'samt den Mäusen'. Weber (Gedichte Oswalds, p. 382) cites this passage under (die) mauss, 'Loch, Unterkunft, Zelt', though without naming the source of his information; mauss in this sense could perhaps be a cognate of of the verb mausen (M.H.G. mûsen), 'listig sein, schleichen, (refl.) sich hineinstehlen', and therefore mean a hiding place.

VII Die Botzner, der Ritten¹ und die von Merän,
Häfnig,² der Melten,³ die zugen oben hran,
Serntner,⁴ Senesier,⁵ die fraidige⁶ man,
die wolten uns vergernen,⁷ do komen wir der von.

The patchwork structure of this poem is typical of Oswald's style. The closing verses appear in all three manuscripts in the order quoted above, but whereas V and VII are similar in content and form, the stanza between belongs rather to the description of the skirmish in IV. There is also a change in the rhyme scheme after III, coinciding with the beginning of the scene at Rafenstein: the first three verses rhyme AAAB, and they are linked together by a common rhyme in the final line - geleich, freudenreich, Fridereich;⁸ thereafter each stanza only has one rhyme. It is probable that the poem was not composed at one sitting, but it still has a unity

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1. Der Ritten is a ridge of hills above the right bank of the Eisack, between Bozen and Waidbruck. The name is used also of the inhabitants of this area; a long feud between this community and Oswald himself is recorded in a number of documents in the Wolkenstein Archive in Nürnberg.
 2. Häfnig: Häfling, a village south-east of Meran.
 3. Melten: the village of Mölten, near Meran.
 4. Serntner: the people of the Sarntal, north of Bozen.
 5. Senesier: the inhabitants of Jenesien, north of Bozen, near Rafenstein.
 6. Fraidige: Wachinger (p. 51) translates 'trutzig', but the context points to the other meaning of this word (M.H.G. vreidic), 'treulos'.
 7. Vergernen: 'umgarnen'.
 8. Klein's text, following MS. B, has Friderich. The scribe of MS. c amended this to Fridereich. Both spellings are found in contemporary documents.

because Oswald does not describe the events in a clear progression; instead, he builds up his picture in an impressionistic fashion. In the descriptive passages he combines the general and suggestive with representative details; in narrating the events his viewpoint switches between retrospective reporting and participation in them as they happen, on one occasion with unusual suddenness: 'ain grosz gepreusz/hüb sich än verdriessen, glöggel dich und seusz!' The frequent use of alliteration is particularly effective in knitting the poem together, and the repetition of spirants and plosives evokes well the noises of battle: husz ... hetzen ... za hürs; gestöber ... glüt; banzer - armbrost; handwerch ... hütten; schalmützen, schalmeussen; grosz gepreusz.

The Greifenstein song was inspired by a victory in battle, a victory which obviously gave the poet great satisfaction. Its taste still lingered in his mouth as he wrote. One senses that here is a man of action, describing a situation which he greatly relished. The fight is not conducted in the abstract, as in the Hussitenlied, but on a real battlefield. At Greifenstein he was not facing an enemy of the empire or of the Faith, but a personal foe. He has neither time nor need for argument, for prayer or moralising; he is concerned only with actions, and his reaction to them. The

incident he describes may well have been a minor success for a handful of rebellious barons against the forces of law and order. But Oswald is able to convince the reader completely (his original hearers doubtless needed no convincing) that he has won a splendid and just victory over an unworthy foe. He does so not by argument, but by his spirited denunciation of the duke and his followers, and by the vigorous manner in which he describes how they were routed.¹

ii. Imprisonment and Release (K7, K26)

The Greifensteinlied was composed, it seems, as a celebration of victory; but of all the poems which deal wholly or in part with the Tyrolean affair, this is the only one in which Oswald expresses any joy. In the rest, all written after the fateful year of his first imprisonment in 1421, his mood is one of gloom or desperation. In many of them he views his misfortunes under the aspect of his unhappy love for Sabina Jäger, the daughter of his hostile neighbour at Hauenstein. These poems will be considered in the context of this affair in a later chapter. Apart from the Sabina songs,

1. On the garbled version of this poem in the Augsburger Liederbuch (printed in Klein, pp. 218 f.), see Friedrich Ranke, 'Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein auf der Wanderung', in Volkskundliche Gaben, John Meier zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht, 1934, pp. 164 ff.

the next poem inspired by the Tyrolean conflict which can be dated exactly was written in 1427, and is in a quite different vein from the Greifenstein poem.

(a) Loblicher got (K7)

This song begins with a prayer, in which Oswald declares his willingness to do penance, as, it seems, he now must (I):

Ich bin umbfangen mit der wat,
darinn ich büssen sol,
herr, das geschicht nach deinem rat,
zwar das vernim ich wol:
des seist gelobt durchleuchtig klar,
nach deim begeren bin ich willig zwar.
(13-18)

He prays also to the Mother of Christ for help, and curses his sinful body, which is now compelled to pay for the sweetness of worldly life which it has enjoyed. He must now exchange joy for sorrow (II). Only in the final stanza (III) does it become apparent what has given rise to this mood of penitence:

Mit umbeswaiff
vier mauern dick mein trauren hand
verslossen; . . .

Gen diser werlt hab ich die angst
verschuldet sicher klain,
neur umb den got, der mich vor langst
beschüff von Wolkenstein;
der sei mein trost und aufenthalt:
O Fellenberg, wie ist dein freud so kalt!
(43-44, 49-54)

The key to the occasion of the poem is in the very last line. Vellenberg, near Axams, west of Innsbruck, was

the castle to which the poet was taken first on being arrested by Duke Frederick's retainers early in 1427.¹

Oswald's reaction to his final enforced submission, as expressed here, is typical of him. He does not mention the issue between himself and Frederick, but withdraws to his thoughts and seeks refuge in God. Although on the one hand he expresses his utter contrition before his creator, he at the same time makes a point of denying firmly that he is guilty before any man - 'gen diser werlt', that is, Frederick and the Jägers. He is a sinner, as all men are, but in this matter he is in the right!

This tendency towards pious introspection in times of adversity is found elsewhere in Oswald's work, especially, as we shall see, in the Sabina poems. But at this time his pride and confidence were soon restored when it transpired that his worst fears were not to be realised. With his release in the spring of 1427 the danger which had threatened his property and his life had passed. We shall now consider a poem composed soon after his return home, in which he looked back with some detachment over his recent experiences.

1. See below, p. 207.

(b) Durch aubenteuer tal und perg¹ (K26)

In one of the historical documents which recorded the settlement between Frederick and Oswald on May 1 1427, the poet stated that earlier in the year he had been ready to set out on a journey, which was, however, forcibly prevented:

Als ich yeczund weguertig gewesen pin vom lannde
zereiten, vnd aber ettlich lanndleute, mit namen
Martin Jeger vnd ... die Haussmannen ... den ...
fürsten herczog Fridreichen ... baten, mich bei
dem lannde zebhalten, ... das derselb mein
gnediger herr von Osterreich tet, vnd bin nach
seinem geschefft widerumb zu seinen gnaden
geriten ...²

Just how the interruption occurred and what happened between the time of this abortive journey and the day of the above declaration, is not recorded here. But soon afterwards Oswald set down in a poem his version of the intervening events. He begins by describing his plans for an expedition abroad:

Durch aubenteuer tal und perg
so wolt ich varen, das ich nicht verläge,
Ab nach dem Rein gen Haidelwerg,
in Engellant stünd mir der sin nicht träge, ...
(K26, 1-4)

He sketches out over the first two stanzas the route he had intended to follow: he would have travelled on

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1. Klein has perg und tal, as in MS. B. The reading quoted here is that of A and c, and is required by the rhyme: Haidelwerg (1.3).
 2. Published by Anton Noggler, in Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 176 f.

from Britain to Portugal, to North Africa, to Septa (the fortress of Ceuta), which he had once helped to storm, and then

Granaten hett ich bas versücht¹
wie mich der rotte künig² noch hett
emphangen ...
(15-16)

It has now become clear that in listing the places he had wished to visit, Oswald was in fact remembering a journey he had undertaken many years before.³ That he made preparations to leave Tyrol in 1427 we know; that he would have travelled once more to Portugal and North Africa is unlikely. The immediate reason for his setting out, however, is hinted at later in the poem, when he describes the confrontation with Frederick:

vil mancher sprach: 'dein ungevell
soltu nicht han verritten.'
(139-140)

It seems that he had decided to go abroad in order to escape 'misfortune', that is, retribution for his opposition to the prince.

The function of the flight of fancy with which the poem begins soon becomes apparent. After reliving

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1. 'I should have visited Granada again'; versuchen is used in this sense also in K12, 8; K112, 267.
 2. The Moorish King Jusuf III; see Mayr, Die Reiselieder, p. 74.
 3. In 1415-16; see above, pp. 52 f. and Mayr, pp. 72 ff.

in his imagination those glorious days of the past
(lines 1-16), Oswald brings himself down to earth with
a jolt:

zu ritterschafft was ich geschücht,¹
vor meinen kindlin wer ich darinn gangen;
dafür müsst ich zu tisch mit ainem
stubenhaitzer brangen.

(17-20)

The poet is here using recollections of splendid times
past as a point of contrast against which to set a
description of the gloomy present. His theme is
similar to the one with which he had launched himself
into the story of his Spanish journey (K19): the
contrast of past joy and present sorrow. There the
particular sorrowful experience was of a monetary kind.
Here Oswald has been touched on another vulnerable spot:
not his purse, but his pride. The unifying thread in
the present poem is the contrast he draws between his
status and past achievements as a knight, and the
unchivalrous treatment he has recently been made to
suffer. Thus the first two stanzas describe not merely
a journey, but the traditional way of life of a knight,²
as Oswald's choice of vocabulary emphasises: 'Durch

1. Geschücht: 'gerüstet'.

2. Travel was an essential part of the knight's life,
as Oswald tells us in K112, 1-7.

aubenteuer ... das ich nicht verläge; zu ritter-
schaft ... geschücht'. His kindlin, on the other hand,
represent the domestic life he would have left behind
when setting out in pursuit of ritterschaft. He goes
on to tell of his part in a victory over the heathen
(12 f.), his reception at a royal court (15 f.) and of a
further incident, which he describes in a somewhat
mysterious manner:

nach ainem plümlin was mir we,
ob ich die liberei da möcht erstiglen¹
von ainer edlen künigin ...
(7-9)

This is almost certainly a reference to the occasion
on which Oswald was admitted to a particular chivalrous
order, the Aragonese Order of the Jar (Orden de la Jarra)
- also known as the Order of the Griffon - probably
during his expedition to Spain in 1416.² The word
liberei,³ the Middle High German form of the French
livrée and Spanish librea, occurs also in an account by
a contemporary of Oswald, the Augsburg patrician
Sebastian Ilsung, of how he received from the Queen
of Aragon

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1. Erstiglen (ersteigen): 'erlangen, erreichen'; see
Schatz, Sprache, p. 61; Lexen, I, 677; in each
case this is the only reference cited. Oswald
probably coined the word for the sake of the
rhyme with siglen, 1. 6.
 2. This interpretation of the lines in question was
suggested by Mayr, p. 75.
 3. Schatz (Sprache, p. 85) is not sure what it
denotes here.

jr liberey und gesellschaft, ein weisse stol
mit eim kentlin; die hat mir jr küniglich gnad
mit jren henden umgetan, auch ain halsband mit
kentlin und ein greiff daran, zu eren der
himmelkünigin Maria.¹

In his portrait in MS. B Oswald is wearing these same
insignia, a white stole with a badge in the shape of a
jar, and a necklet of similar jars from which is
suspended a griffon.² And what is the plümlin for
which the poet longs? Lexer gives as a figurative
meaning of bluome, 'das schönste seiner Art',³ and
Schatz translates the line in question 'ich wollte
etwas Kostbares erwerben'.⁴ But it may be significant
that the ceremonial jarra contained three flowers.⁵

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1. Quoted in A. Schultz, Deutsches Leben im XIV. und XV. Jahrhundert, Grosse Ausgabe, Vienna, 1892, p. 544. Kentlin is a diminutive of kanne, a jar.
 2. See the reproduction in W.-R., p. 96, and on the cover of W. Schmied, Oswald von Wolkenstein, 1960.
 3. Lexer, I, 315; but this is normally in conjunction with a genitive, e.g., aller ritter bluome.
 4. Schatz, Sprache, p. 54.
 5. They were lilies. See W.-R.'s description of the order (it was also called the Order of Moderation) and its emblems, pp. 76 f., and the illustrations in A. Schultz, op. cit., Nos. 552, 558.

Having recalled that earlier glory, Oswald picks out as an initial point of contrast with it a representative detail from his recent experiences - sharing a table with a stoker (19-20).¹ Then he elaborates on this painful change in the fortunes of his knightly dignity (III):

Wie wol ich mangeln herten straiß²
ervaren hett, des hab ich klain genossen,
seid ich ward zu dem stegeraiß
mit baiden sporen seuberlich verslossen.
dieselbig kunst ich nie gesach,
doch hab ich sei an schaden nicht
geleret;³
(21-26)

A man such as he, who could still have proved his mettle in chivalrous campaigns, now found himself lashed to his horse, with his spurs, the symbol of his noble calling, used in a base manner to tie him. He regretted bitterly that he had left Hauenstein:

do klagt ich got mein ungemach,
das ich mich hett von Hauenstein verferret,
ich forcht den weg gen Wasserburg,
wenn sich die nacht versteret.⁴
(27-30)

-
1. The stubenhaitzer of line 20 and Peter Haitzer (71) are presumably the same man.
 2. Straiff (M.H.G. streif): 'Streifzug'.
 3. 'I had never seen that trick before, but I did not learn it painlessly.'
 4. Versteret for versternet, for the sake of the rhyme: geleret ... verferret. Lexer (III, 252) gives only this reference to versternen, 'refl., mit Sternen besetzt werden'. Schatz's translation (Sprache, p. 66), 'wenn die Nacht vergeht', assumes the opposite meaning and makes better sense, though I think a past tense is meant: 'als die Nacht (damals) verging'.

The motif of spurs used as fetters is inverted in the following verse, where the poet moves on, in his characteristically episodic style of narration, to the scene in Vellenberg, the castle to which he was taken as a prisoner (IV):

In ainem winckel sach ich dort
zu Fellenberg zwen boien, eng und swëre.
ich swaig und redt da nicht vil wort,
ie doch gedächt ich mir nöttlicher mëre.¹
wurd mir die ritterschaft zu tail,
in disen sporen möcht ich mich wol streichen.²
mein gogelhait mit aller gail
geriet vast trauriklich ab in ain keuchen;³
was ich güt antlas darumb gab,⁴
das tet ich haimeleichen.
(31-40)

Here he lay for days (V), wondering when he would have his neck broken, guiltless though he was (of course):
'wie wol ich hett kain schulde' (44). He was well-guarded, for the prince had warned the jailers of his guile:

'wart, Peter Märckel,⁵ zu dem tor,
er ist bescheid,⁶ das er uns nit entsnellet!'
mein listikait hett in der fürst
die oren vol erschellet.
(47-50)

-
1. 'I had painful thoughts.'
 2. Sich streichen: Schatz, Sprache, p. 100: 'sich sehen lassen'; Lexer, II, 1234: 'sich kleiden, putzen'.
 3. Keuchen (keiche, keuche): a prison.
 4. Literally, 'whatever good absolution I gave to them for this ...' Schatz (Sprache, p. 48) interprets: 'was ich ihnen wünschte'.
 5. The name of a guard.
 6. Bescheid (for bescheiden): clever.

A particular regret which the poet expresses is at the lack of any assistance from his lord, the king: 'der römisch künig die sorg mir nicht vergulde'¹ (42). This was obviously something which rankled in Oswald's heart, for he voices a similar thought again, during his description of the next dungeon he was taken to, in Innsbruck: 'der römisch künig hett mein so gar vergessen' (86). In such comments it emerges clearly that to Oswald the king was first and foremost a personal ally and a protector of his own interests. In this capacity Sigismund is now judged to have failed.²

From Vellenberg the poet was transported in the same undignified manner as before, tied to his horse like one who had stolen the crown jewels, to Frederick's capital Innsbruck: a delightful trip to court, he says (VI):

Darnach so ward ich gen Insbrugk
ain Preussen vart³ gen hoff köstlich gefüret,
dem meinem pfärd all über rugk
verborgenlichen niden zü versnüret.
ellender rait ich hinden ein
und hett doch nicht des kaisers schatz
verstolen.

(51-56)

1. Verguluten: 'gut machen, vergelten', here in the preterite tense.
2. See also K55, Wes mich mein bül ie hat erfreut,
3. Schatz (Sprache, p. 115) does not explain this. As a trip to Prussia would at this time be a crusade, Oswald is again using ironically a term from the realm of knighthood to describe his experience.

There he was once more assigned to the cellars, cut off from the sunlight for twenty days. At least, he says, he was able to save wear and tear on his shoes!:

man barg mich vor der sunne schein,
für springen¹ lag ich zwanzig tag verholen.
was ich da auff den knieen zerraisz,
das spart ich an den solen.²
(57-60)

In his dungeon Oswald did not lack company, but it was certainly not the sort he would have chosen himself. There were no kings or dukes to sup with here, but only nasty people like

Ain alter Swab, gehaissen Planck,
der ward mir an die seitten dick gesetzet.
Ach got, wie bitterlich er stanck!
(61-63)

The poet spends three stanzas (VII, VIII, X) describing his cell-mates, drunken, smelly, and with filthy habits. He pauses to remind himself of the splendid company he kept not long before (IX):

das₃ mich der phalzgraf von dem Rein⁴
vor³ kurzlich bat, ob im ze tische⁴ sitzen.

-
1. 'Instead of jumping': a further, somewhat contrived, contrast between his present situation and a knightly activity, i.e., dancing; springen is used with this sense also in K11, 85; K21, 23; K25, 39; K45, 45; K47 2; K122, 25.
 2. 'What I wore out at the knees (of my clothes - by praying for help), I saved on my soles.'
 3. The von in Klein's text has been corrected by Wachinger, Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum, 74 (1963), p. 31.
 4. Ob im ze tische: 'at his table'; cf. K41, 12: 'ob seinem tisch'.

wie gleich der falck¹ den kelbern was!
 der römisch künig hett mein so gar vergessen,
 bei dem ich ouch vor zeitten sas
 und half das krut ausz seiner schüssel essen.
 (83-88)

And yet, though he claims to be offended by the disgusting behaviour of his companions at table in the prison, he cannot disguise the fact that he revels in the drastic, and probably much exaggerated, description of them:

die machten grausen meinen leib,
 wenn wir das brot zesamen wurden duncken.
 simm, ainer kotzt, der ander hielt
 den bomhart² niden mit der langen mässe,
 als der ain büxs von anderspielt,³
 die überladen wer, durch bulvers lasse.⁴
 (73-78)

The introduction to stanza X, which follows his reminiscence of banqueting with royalty, suggests that this verse was added as an afterthought, for good measure:

1. Falck: Schatz, Sprache, p. 62: 'so nennt sich der Dichter als tirolischen Ritter im Gegensatz zu den kelbern, den kleinen Leuten'. The sense seems to be: 'how the falcon was reduced to the level of the calves'. According to Grimm (5, 52) the calf is proverbially: 1) uninhibited and uncouth, 2) stupid and clumsy. In a poem by Oswald which describes a peasants' revel, the dancers are called upon to 'spring kelbrisch' (K70, 23).
2. Bomhart: Schatz, Sprache, p. 54: 'Geschütz, Musikinstrument, [here] starker Furz'.
3. Schatz's text has vonander ('auseinander') spielt, thus: 'as if one blew apart a gun which was over-loaded'. (Cf. vonander spielt, also in the sense of 'part', K63, 5.)
4. '... durch Losbrennen (Loslassen) des Pulverschusses', Schatz, Sprache, p. 84.

Noch waisz ich ainen in der leusz¹
mit namen Kopp, den kund ich nie geswaigen;
der snarcht recht als ain hafenreusz² ...
(91-93)

When one compares this episode with the poet's description of the pranks in the Perpignan hostel, one finds a similarity of which Oswald was probably unaware. It seems that whereas he found the spectacle of one nobleman emptying a chamber-pot over the head of another amusing (K19, 89 ff.), a stoker who made vulgar noises was quite disgusting! It was not Oswald's delicate sensibility which was offended in the Innsbruck dungeon, as much as his snobbishness.

With characteristic abruptness he now breaks off this description to turn in conclusion (XI-XIV) to the matter of his reckoning with Frederick and his release from prison. He tells how a number of people, some of whom he names (101-104), appealed to the prince on his behalf:

die baten all mit rechter gier
den fürsten reich, durchleuchtig, hochgeboren,
da mit er wër genädig mir
und têt kain gäch in seinem ersten zoren.
(105-108)

-
1. Leusz (M.H.G. lûz): hiding place (cf. K83, 8); here, prison.
 2. Hafenreusz: both Klein and Schatz print this as one word, though Schatz (Sprache, pp. 19, 76) takes reusz as the subjunctive of a verb (M.H.G. rûzen, riuzen, 'rauschen, schnarchen'), and translates 'wie ein Hafen (a pot) surrt'. It is possible also that Oswald has made up a compound noun, meaning 'the humming of a pot'.

It is by no means impossible that Frederick did invite Oswald to sing with him, after the main business was settled. But by passing quickly over the Urfehde - which we know (and Oswald knew) was a very important piece of paper - as something to be dashed off quickly, Oswald cleverly puts up a smokescreen to obscure the details of the settlement, and also the delicate question of his own guilt in the matter. Having established his version of how he was set free, Oswald keeps to it (XIV):

Dem kanzler ward gebotten zwar,
ausz meiner vāncknusz half er mir behende,
geschriben und versigelt gar.
des danck ich herzog Fridrich an mein ende.
der marschalck sprach: 'nu tritt mir zū,
mein herr hat deins gesanges kom erbitten.'
ich kom für in, do lacht er frū;
(131-137)

Unfortunately, he spoils the effect of this camouflage somewhat by quoting the comment of witnesses to the effect that he should not have tried to escape (138-140).

In the final stanza (XV) the poet reflects on his situation, beginning as follows:

Der wirdig got, der haimlich got,
der wunderlich in den vil ausserkoren,
der liesz mir nie kain freis gebott¹

1. Gebott: Schatz (Sprache, p. 71) translates 'Gebot, Befehl', but does not include a reference to this passage. One meaning of the word gebot is 'Einsatz beim Spiel' (Lexer, I, 758; Grimm, 4, 1, 1, 1803), which would fit the metaphor that Oswald uses in the next line: '... never allowed me to play freely for long, and because of that I have lost many a game.'

die leng, des han, ich dick ein spil verloren.
 mein tentschikait¹ und üppig er²
 ist mir durch in an wasser oft erloschen,
 wann zeuch ich hin, so will er her,
 in disem streit so wird ich überdroschen.³
 (141-148)

Compared with the epilogue he appended to Es ist ain altgesprochner rat (K19), this would seem to be a more personal statement and more relevant to the experiences he has described in the rest of the poem. But again there is a break between his narrative and the lesson he draws from it. There is no hint earlier in the poem of the contrition he expresses in these lines, where he suddenly turns his thoughts to God. As in Loblicher got (K7), here also Oswald keeps his proud and self-righteous attitude towards his enemies separate from his humility before God. In the final couplet he attempts to link his story more closely with its moral:

verdiente straff zwar umb die minn
 bestet⁴ mich manchen groschen.
 (149-150)

-
1. Tentschikait: cf. tentsch (K82, 26): Schatz (Sprache, p. 101) says: 'mag verkehrt, Verkehrtheit bedeuten'. It is probably a form of tenkisch, left-handed, awkward, wrong: Oswald uses this word in K63, 17, and the reading in MS. A is given as tentk(isch).
 2. Üppig er: vanity. Cf. K115, 68, where Oswald couples together hoffart und üppigen müt.
 3. Überdroschen: the meaning is evidently 'beaten, defeated'. Grimm does not record such a sense for this word, though dreschen and several others of its compounds are used in the meaning of 'beat, thrash' (Grimm, 11, 2, 161; 2, 1402).
 4. Bestet: costs.

While still refusing to admit any guilt towards Frederick, he finds a way of explaining what he has done to bring retribution upon himself. He blames all his troubles on his sinful love for Sabina Hausmann,¹ and accepts his recent misfortune as atonement for this. But in the final line he undoes his work of penitence by introducing another matter, which, though thinly disguised by the motif of minne, reveals what was really on his mind at this moment: his defeat at Frederick's hands (the end of a chain of events which had begun when he was lured into a trap by Sabina, therefore straff umb die minn) could still cost him a lot of money: the prince still had Oswald's letter of credit in his possession.²

This poem was evidently inspired by Oswald's wish to express his feelings on the conclusion of a long and bitter struggle. In it he gives a personal view of the reckoning with Prince Frederick. As in Es ist ain altgesprochner rat, he tells of a journey, but in this case it was a journey which came to a premature end at an unexpected destination, an Innsbruck dungeon. Now the poet has no taste for the jester's mask, but wears for the most part a grim expression moulded by his recent

1. See stanza XII, and below, III, 3.

2. See above, p. 126.

experiences. Yet although he still felt the cold of the cellars in his bones, he had by this time recovered from his ordeal sufficiently to be able to look back upon it with a measure of ironic detachment. He doubtless had an audience in mind when he composed the poem, and provided for some amusement with his description both of the vulgarity of his cell-mates and of the jollity which accompanied his release. Also, as in other autobiographical poems, he stylises his experiences: he measures the base treatment he has suffered against the way a knight should be allowed to live. His miserable trek as a prisoner is prefaced, for the sake of such a contrast, with an account of a journey of a far more fitting kind, which, he assures us, he would have undertaken had he not been prevented. In his description of his arrest and imprisonment the poet's method is to choose and emphasise certain incidents which illustrate how badly and, he implies, wrongly he has been treated: being tied to his horse, being chained up, carefully guarded and insulted. The contrast between his humiliation and the respect due to one of his rank is sustained by the implication of details associated with the realm of chivalry, in particular, the use made of his spurs. He uses a variation of this technique in the description of his rehabilitation. First he tells of the great number of people who intervened on his

behalf, then he selects an incident (there is no reason to suppose he fabricated it) which illustrates how he was restored to his rightful position of honour: he does not describe a confrontation between angry lord and guilty subject, but instead writes a little sketch in which the jovial and music-loving prince calls upon his favourite poet to entertain him.

Although Oswald creates a stylistic framework for his experiences, this does not detract from the strong personal element in the poem. One is very much aware of the man who is choosing and shaping the material. The poet's insistence on his status and dignity as a knight was by no means a literary pose: the orders of chivalry he displays in his portraits provide visible evidence of both his achievements and his pride in them. Nor was the knight's duty to travel far and wide just an idea to him: the journey he describes was no fiction, but a reality he had known. He uses no literary model of knighthood against which to measure his recent unchivalrous adventure, but his own life. And throughout the poem, in the picture of wounded knightly dignity, in the aristocrat's repugnance at the behaviour of his uncouth companions, and in the vanity of the poet who claims to be esteemed by a prince who has long been his enemy, we find the familiar Wolkenstein egoism, tinged with self-irony.

iii. The Hauenstein Songs (K44, K104, K116)

It was from Castle Hauenstein that Oswald had set out on his unfortunate expedition in 1427,¹ and he returned there after the settlement with Frederick.² The three poems to be considered next all have Hauenstein as their setting. The first (K44) was probably written in the critical winter of 1426-27; the other two contain references to the aftermath of the Hauenstein affair, and to a dispute between Oswald and Bishop Ulrich II of Brixen which arose not long after.

(a) Durch Barbarei, Arabia (K44)³

Oswald begins this poem as if he is going to recount more of his experiences in distant lands:

Durch Barbarei, Arabia,
durch Hermani in Persia,
durch Tartari in Suria,
durch Romani in Türggia,
Ibernia ...

(1-5)

The first seventeen lines are taken up almost entirely by a list of place-names such as these. But it is not in fact his intention to tell of his travels. He has

1. See K26, 28.

2. In a stanza of K26, omitted from MS. B, he mentions this: 'also kert ich gen hauenstain'; see Klein, p. 99.

3. See also the translation by Wachinger (Reclam, No. 22).

forgotten the time when he made such expeditions, he says: 'der sprüng¹ han ich vergessen' (6). It is a long time since he visited these foreign countries (12). His breathless tour of the world comes to a halt in a place and a situation which at this moment epitomises for Oswald the very antithesis of all this splendour he has known: domesticity in a remote neck of the woods high in the Alps:

Durch Arragon, Kastilie,
Granaten und Afferen,
ausz Portugal, Ispanie,
bis gen dem vinstern steren,²
von Profenz gen Marsilie,
In Races vor Saleren,³
daselbs belaib ich an der e,⁴
mein ellend da zu meren
vast ungeren.

(13-21)

Now, instead of the breadth and variety of the world he has travelled, he must endure the narrowness of married life in a tiny castle in a dense forest. He goes on to evoke vividly the oppressive monotony of the sights and sounds of the winter scene around him:

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1. Sprüng: hops (from one place to another).
 2. Vinstern steren: a corruption by popular etymology of finis terrae, Cape Finisterre. For the latest and most detailed account of the place-names mentioned here, see Ulrich Müller, 'Dichtung' und 'Wahrheit' in den Liedern Oswalds von Wolkenstein, 1968, pp. 78 f.
 3. 'Ratzes am Schlern', a place close to Hauenstein.
 4. An der e: in marriage.

Auff ainem runden kofel¹ smal,
mit dickem wald umbfangen,
vil hoher berg und tieffe tal,
stain, stauden, stöck, sneestangen,²
der sich ich teglich ane zal.
noch aines tüt mich pangen,
das mir der klainen kindlin schal
mein oren dick bedrangen,³
hat⁴ durchgangen.

(22-30)

Oswald's musical ear was particularly sensitive to the screaming of children, as he records elsewhere.⁵

He begins the second stanza also with a reference to happy days past, this time summarising them more briefly:

Wie vil mir eren ie beschach⁶
von fürsten, künigin gefach,
und was ich freuden ie gesach,
das büsz ich als under ainem dach.
mein ungemach,
der hatt ain langes ende.
Vil gütter witz, der gieng mir not,
seid ich müsz sorgen umb das brot.

(31-38)

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1. Kofel: here an outcrop of rock. See the picture of the ruins of Hauenstein in W.-R., p. 8.
 2. Sneestangen: poles used (as still) to mark a path hidden under snow.
 3. Schatz (Sprache, p. 50) takes this as the present of a verb bedrangen, 'bedrängen'. Wachinger's translation assumes it to be a past participle (of what verb?) and makes more sense: '... mir in die oft geplagten Ohren eingedrungen ist' (Wachinger, Reclam, p. 69).
 4. Hat: this is the reading in MS. A. Klein has hand, as in MS. B.
 5. See K30 and K45, 89 f.
 6. Gefach: Schatz (Sprache, p. 71): 'zusammen'. But 'häufig' (Lexer, TWb, p. 69) makes better sense.

Travelling the world is, it appears, not nearly so demanding on his wits as having to feed a family. Also he is the object of hostile threats and, he adds pathetically, he has no one to tell his troubles to:

darzu so wirt mir vil gedrot,
und tröst mich niema mündlin rot.
(39-40)

Nor does he find any assistance from former friends:

den ich ee bott,¹
die lassen mich ellende.
(41-42)

After these brief hints of the possible cause of his depression, the hostility of (as yet unspecified) enemies (39) and the disloyalty of his friends (41-42), Oswald resumes the description of his cheerless surroundings. In the first verse he contrasted the lands he had visited with the place to which he was now confined. He turns this time to the company he has to keep: not princes and queens, but farm animals and coarse, grubby peasants:

Wellent ich gugk, so hindert mich
köstlicher ziere sinder,²
der ich e pflag, da für ich sich
neur kelber, gaisz, böck, rinder,

1. Schatz (Sprache, p. 53) translates: 'denen ich früher gab'; Wachinger (p. 71): 'die mir früher gehorchten'. The former seems preferable, for Oswald does not normally use bieten in the sense of 'gebietsen': cf. K16, 20; K19, 54, 166, 205; K21, 83; K23, 47; K92, 18.

2. 'The dregs of splendour'.

und knospot¹ leut, swarz, hässelich,
vast rüssig² gen dem winder;
die geben müt als sackwein vich.³
(43-49)

Compelled to exchange the freedom of the courts for the restriction of the farmyard, Oswald finds that his nerves cannot take the strain, with the result that his poor children must suffer:

vor angst slach ich mein kinder
offt hin hinder.
(50-51)

This is not the end of the story; retribution is always at hand, in the shape of his wife Margarete:

So kompt ir mütter zü gebraust,
zwar die beginnt zu schelten;
gäb si mir aines mit der fawsst,
des müsst ich ser engelten.
si spricht: 'wie hastu nu, erzausst
die kind zu ainem zelten!'⁴

1. Knospot: 'plump, klotzig'.

2. Rüssig: 'schmutzig'; MS. A has rotzig.

3. Als sackwein vich: Wachinger (p. 71) puts a comma between the last two words and translates: '(die machen mir eine Stimmung) wie Sauerwein und Vieh'. Müller (p. 81, note 2) also says this is an example of asyndeton, translating: 'Ungeziefer und schlechter Wein'. But the correct reading is 'wie Sauernwein dem Vieh (tut)'. The key to this is a similar passage in K45, where the poet is complaining about the inferior wine in Überlingen: 'Wann er geit freud und hohen müt, / recht als der sack dem esel tüt.' (K45, 37 f.). This also explains the emendation of the line in question by the editor of MS. c to 'als sackwein tüt'.

4. 'Beaten ... to a flat-cake'.

ab irem zoren mir da graust,
doch mangeln ich sein selten,
scharpf mit spelten.¹

(52-60)

Wolkenstein-Rodenegg found it necessary to apologise to 'feinfühilige moderne Naturen' for this splendid passage; like other biographers he overlooked the timelessly human touches in its portrayal of domestic discord, and tried to excuse Oswald by reference to his time, when 'die Sitten noch nicht so zart besaitet waren wie heutzutage'.² The poet doubtless loved his family as much as any man, but there will also have been times when he found them a burden, as in the winter which he describes here.

In the opening lines of the third and final stanza Oswald completes his picture of a rustic purgatory. Instead of being lulled by the rippling of a neighbouring stream, he gets a splitting headache from its rushing:

Mein kurzweil, die ist mangelrai,
neur esel gesang und pfawen geschrai,
des wunscht ich nicht mer umb ain ai.
vast rawscht der bach neur hurlahai
mein houbt enzwai,
das es beginnt zu krancken.

(61-66)

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1. Spelte: splinter of wood; a striking word to describe Margarete's anger, but possibly also to be taken literally - for a weapon she used.
 2. W.-R., p. 61. J. Schrott (Gedichte Oswalds von Wolkenstein, 1886, p. 205) says that the scene is not to be taken seriously.

He had lived too close to nature for too long to be romantic about it, especially in an Alpine winter!

Having concluded his description of the scene at Hauenstein, Oswald now takes up his earlier hint (39) of the troubles which beset him at the time he wrote the poem. At first he makes only a general reference to his need for assistance in warding off calamity:

Also trag ich mein aigen swêr.
tæglicher sorg, vil böser mêr
wirt Hauenstain gar seldn lêr,
möcht ichs gewenden an gevêr,¹
oder wer das wêr,
dem wolt ich immer dancken.

(67-72)

Then he indicates the source of the 'bad news': his prince is ill-disposed towards him, through no fault of his own (of course), and even though no other prince has ever wronged him:

Mein lanndesfürst, der ist mir gram
von böser leutte neide,
mein dienst, die sein im widerzam,
das ist mir schad und laide,
wie wol mir susst kain fürstlich stamm,
bei meinem gûten aide,
nie hat geswecht leib, er, gût nam
in seiner fürsten waide,
köstlich raide.²

(73-81)

Finally, he repeats his accusation of (unjustified)

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1. 'If I could be rid of them peaceably'.
 2. 'In seinem herrlich schönen Herrschaftsgebiet' (Wachinger, Reclam, p. 73).

disloyalty on the part of his friends, and calls upon the whole world to help him keep the wolves at bay:

Mein freund, die hassen mich überain
an schuld, des müsz ich greisen.
das klag ich aller werlt gemain,
den frummen und den weisen,
darzü vil hohen fürsten rain,
die sich ir er land¹ preisen,
das si mich armen Wolckenstein
die wolf nicht lan erzaisen,²
gar verweisen.

(82-90)

Unlike Oswald's account of his imprisonment or of the Greifenstein incident, this poem does not deal with a clearly recognisable event or series of events, but describes a more general situation: married life in his castle in wintertime. But did Oswald intend to paint a kind of Genrebild? Is the situation he describes in the central section (18-66) really the raison d'être of the poem? These questions are best approached through its style and structure.

There are obvious similarities here to the poem discussed last (K26). Oswald begins with an account of his travels, but again not for their own sake. The theme

1. Land (lan): 'lassen'.

2. Erzaisen: cf. Grimm, 15, 517 f.: zeisen: 'zupfen, auseinanderzupfen, - ziehen', also 'berauben, ausbeuten', as in the saying 'witwen und weysen schaben und zeysen'. Oswald is probably thinking of this figurative sense, with the 'wolves' as his enemies. Wachinger (p. 73) translates 88-90: '(Ich klage es ... vielen Fürsten) ..., dass sie mir armen Wolkensteiner nicht erlauben, die Wölfe zu zausen und ganz zu vertreiben'. But it would make better sense to take die wolf as the object of lan, and verweisen as M.H.G. verweisen (not verwîsen, as Wachinger does): '... that they should not let the wolves tear me to pieces, (and) make me completely destitute'.

is slightly different: not 'an expedition I wished to make', but 'countless journeys I made long ago'. The function of this introduction is, however, the same: it serves as a point of contrast with his present situation. The antithesis of past splendour and joy, and present drab misery is repeated in stanza II - eren ... freuden/
büss ich ... ungemach. köstlicher ziere/sinder - and implied again by the ironic use of kurzweil to denote the unpleasurable experiences he describes in stanza III. In the description of his present circumstances one discerns, even more than in the previous poem, the tendency to strike a stylised pose. He is a poor man who has difficulty in making ends meet (37 f.) and in 'keeping the wolf from the door' (89 f.). His woes have been caused by böse leutte (74), a wicked third party reminiscent of the slanderers of the Minnesang convention. His portrait of himself as the hen-pecked husband (52 ff.) is almost like an illustration of how the elicher weibe bellen for which he had once expressed an aversion (K18, 104) has become reality. The nagging wife has long been among the most popular of all comic themes, and this conventional aspect of Oswald's description is emphasised by the line in which he laments the absence of any consoling mündlin rot (40), an obvious (synecdochic) counterpart to the eliches weib.

The function of this emphasis on undeserved misery becomes clear in the course of the final stanza, where the poet first strikes the rather exaggerated attitude of a victim of unprecedented and unjust oppression (73 ff.) and disloyalty (82 f.), and then formulates his elaborate appeal to the whole world, and particularly to princes, for assistance (84 ff.). Here is the key to Oswald's immediate purpose in writing this poem: it is a product of his conflict with the Prince of Tyrol, and was probably written in the winter of 1426-27,¹ during his last unavailing efforts to find help in averting the reckoning with Frederick.

Viewed in this light, the picture of life in a dismal Alpine winter seems designed to lend weight to Oswald's final plea, by substantiating his definition of himself as mich armen Wolckenstein (88). If such was his aim when he conceived the poem, however, then in the making it became much more. It is quite possible that his account of a domestic squabble took shape originally as an illustration of a preconceived, conventional idea of marriage,² of täglicher sorg (68), rather than as 'die

1. There is general agreement on this date: see Schatz 1902, p. 118; Marold, Kommentar, p. 22.

2. The thesis of Ulrich Müller (p. 83): '... szenische Veranschaulichung einer Stilisierung, die der Dichter schon früher benützt hatte' (in K18, 99, 104).

Gestaltung eines Erlebnisses, ... einer Episode, die auf den Dichter eingewirkt hat'.¹ But this passage, in which he relates how he spanked his children without reason, only vor angst, and was punished for it (50-60), has a realism which transcends any comic convention, and to deny the possibility that the poet could be speaking from experience is obviously absurd. Similarly, there is no doubting the reality of the wintry scene, with its monotonous landscape and uncongenial company. The details Oswald assembles characterise briefly but vividly the nature of the countryside and its inhabitants, whilst expressing his own repugnance towards them (22-26, 43-49, 62-66). Ulrich Müller again rightly applies the test of literary convention here, but in the end reduces the passage to a mere parody of a spring song.² Although it is possible that in describing, for example, his reaction to the noise of the brook, Oswald is playing on a conventional motif,³ this does not make the brook itself any the less real. It is still the stream

1. Thus A. Dejori, Heimatempfinden und Heimatlieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein, 1961, p. 127. Oswald does in fact say that this happens often (51), and that he seldom (59) escapes punishment.

2. Müller, p. 81.

3. Ibid., '... das für die lyrische Naturstilisierung typische Rauschen des Baches'. The gently murmuring stream is not in fact a prominent feature of the stylised landscape of Minnesang, though Hennig Brinkmann deduces from Oswald's use of the motif here, 'ganz offenbar in parodistischer Wendung', that it must by now have become quite typical: Zu Wesen und Form mittelalterlicher Dichtung, Halle, 1928, p. 162.

which flows past Hauenstein, and which he mentions elsewhere.¹ Even if there is an element of parody in this poem,² it is only one stylistic device which the poet uses in creating his picture of winter at Hauenstein. To exaggerate the importance of such a device is to belittle the originality and realism of the picture as a whole.

The strophic form which Oswald employs here is, one would think, much less suited to narrative and description than were the shorter stanzas of K19 and K26. Yet despite the length of the strophe and its elaborate rhyme scheme,³ his verse is surprisingly muscular, carrying virtually no excess weight in the form of Flickworte or syntactical obscurities. A striking feature of the style of this poem is in fact the clarity

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1. K104, 10; here, in another winter song, he says that the brook is covered with ice. One might therefore ask how, if the description in the present poem is realistic, the water can now be rushing. The answer must be that it is early winter: in line 48 Oswald uses the phrase gen dem winder, 'as winter approaches'.
 2. I find the parallels drawn by Müller (p. 81) to conventional details of nature description extremely remote, for example: 'Die optische und akustische Belästigung durch die üble Aussicht von dem "kofel smal" und durch "der klainen kindlin schal" ... sind eine Umkehrung des Frühling-Natureingangs mit bunten Blumen, grün belaubten Bäumen und angenehmem Vogelsang.'
 3. Thus: AAAAAB CCCCCB DEDEDEDEE FGFGFGFGG. Oswald used the same strophe (and melody) in the Überlingen poem, K45.

and preciseness of the language, especially in the descriptive passages mentioned above. Oswald's technique consists simply in the accumulation of nouns and adjectives, aided, in the first passage (22-26), by the equally simple devices of antithesis and alliteration. But the effect is vivid in the extreme.

Compared with Durch aubenteuer tal und perg (K26), this poem appears to have greater unity and harmony of structure. The explanation for this has been suggested already. After telling the story of his imprisonment, Oswald appended to it, by way of conclusion, a moral of doubtful relevance. His situation at Hauenstein, on the other hand, when all was not quite lost, called for a more practical message, and his poem works towards such a conclusion. However, the lasting appeal of both these poems depends not on their concluding sentiments, but on their description of personal experiences. In neither case are these experiences of great consequence or intrinsic interest. But in the Hauenstein poem in particular, by virtue of its lively picture of winter in a tiny castle, Oswald created from his petty domestic and political troubles lyric poetry of a high order.

(b) Von trauren möchte ich werden taub (K104)

In the second Hauenstein song Oswald is in a more confident, even pugnacious mood; but he still has troubles, and it is winter again:

Von trauren möchte ich werden taub,¹
seid das der vorder winderklaub
herwider hat behauset sich
auff seinen alten sitz.
Der ist so nahent bei der tür
gelegen mir durch mangel spür,
des ich mag klain erfreuen mich;
das macht sein grober litz.

(1-8)

The poet begins by complaining that winter has once more returned to settle before his door, bringing its usual cold misery. The word winderklaub appears to be an odd, but for Oswald not uncharacteristic, coining to express the idea of 'der winterliche Raub des Sommerschmuckes', as Schatz translated it.² The poet goes on to describe the signs (spür) of the arrival of winter:

Kellt, reiff und grossen snee,
den bach verdackt mit eise
bracht er ausz des Bösaigers haus,
des³ nam ich auch nicht breise,
wann raine frucht ausz bösem ai
kom nie von vogels hitz.

(9-14)

1. Taub: 'stumpfsinnig, närrisch'.

2. Schatz, Sprache, p. 108. Cf. also Weber, Gedichte Oswalds, 1847, p. 472: 'der Winter, der alle Schönheiten der Natur hinwegnimmt, wie Klaubauf (Kinderschreck, wilder Mann) gebildet'. Klauben means to pluck; cf. K21, 44.

3. Klein has das (MSS. A and B). I read des, with Schatz (1904, p. 266), as in MS. c.

So the winderklaub has brought its seasonal torments from a particular house, that of a man called 'Bösaier'. This is not a corruption, for the sake of the word-play (ausz bösem ai), of 'Seiser',¹ 'pusaier',² or 'Passeirer',³ but the real name of a tenant of a nearby farm. The evidence for this is to be found in Oswald's account book of the year 1418, which contains the following entry: 'Item der posayer tenet xix lb. vnd vi gr.'⁴ But what has this man to do with winter? His name is also one which the poet has no wish to applaud (12). Why 'also'? The rest of this stanza provides no explanation, but completes the picture of the desolate landscape:

Gras, blümen, grüner kle
ganz seider ist verschwunden,
verflogen sein die vogelin,
der wald ist loubz beschunden,
der sunn verlos von seim geschrai
zu Hauenstain den glitz.

(15-20)

This is a more conventional description of winter than the corresponding passages in the previous poem, apart from one unusual detail in the last two lines (19-20). In order to appreciate this, however, one needs to know that

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1. A. Dejori, Heimatlieder Oswalds, 1961, p. 209.
 2. Schatz, Sprache, p. 112.
 3. Ulrich Müller, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein. Die "Heimatlieder" über die Tiroler Streitereien', Zs. f. dt. Phil., 88 (1969), p. 224, note 10 (citing the unpublished commentary by W. Marold).
 4. In manuscript in the Wolkenstein Archive, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg, fol. 5v.

the Schlern, the rock-face which towers above the Seiser Alm, cuts off the site of Hauenstein from direct sunlight during the winter months. The use of the word geschrai is at first sight puzzling. Oswald uses it on three occasions as an attribute of spring; in each case it rhymes conveniently with mai: 'der maie, mit geschraie ...' (K21, 3); 'mai, dein geschrai ...' (K42, 41); 'O ... mai, dein süsz geschrai' (K100, 1-2). Schatz translates this as 'Annehmlichkeit (der Maienzeit)'.¹ It may be derived from schreien in the sense of to proclaim,² and thus mean the heralding or the arrival of spring. In the present context, therefore, the sense of von seim geschrai would be 'because of its (winter's) arrival'.

The first line of the second stanza provides us with a clue to the puzzle in verse I: 'Nu mir der pawer ist gevar ...' (21). This is in fact a summary of the hidden meaning of the winter scene. The winderklaub of the poem is not only a personification of winter, but also the name of a peasant on the Hauenstein estate.³ He

1. Schatz, Sprache, p. 73.

2. See Lexen, II, 797: schrien, 'ausrufen, verkünden'.

3. He also appears in the account book mentioned above (p. 232, note 4), as der winderklawer, winderklawber, and Nicolae Winderklaub.

evidently returned to his farm¹ in the winter (having resided in the summer with Bösaier ?), and was at this time keeping watch on Oswald. Thus the grober litz of line 8 is not only the grim aspect of winter, but the coarse face of the peasant.

It seems that once again winter coincided with warfare on the local front. Behind the hostility of the poet's immediate neighbours there lay a dispute with a more powerful adversary. He continues:

... und auch gen Brixsen nicht wol tar,
dorumb das ich erzürnet han
ain klainen ungenant
Mit ainem smalen widerdriesz,²
den ich bot dem geraden fűsz.²
(22-26)

The 'little man (at Brixen) who shall be nameless' is later addressed as Uli (50), and must be Ulrich Putsch, who became Bishop Ulrich II of Brixen in the year 1427. He was an old enemy of the Wolkensteins, for he had been a constant ally of the Prince of Tyrol, whom he had served as Chancellor.

The poet refers here to an occasion on which he incurred by some deed the wrath of the bishop. It is

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1. Winterklaubhof is recorded as the name of a farm near Hauenstein; 'see Schatz, Sprache, p. 116.
 2. Fűsz (viesz - cf. MS. c): a term of abuse. Schatz translates it as 'Lump' (Sprache, p. 66); cf. Lexen, III, 345: 'Teufel(skerl), schlauer Feind'.

an interesting coincidence that Ulrich himself also committed to paper an account of how he was offended by a particular action of Oswald's. In a diary which he kept during his years of office, he tells of how he was visited on October 31st (allerheiligenabend) 1429 by a delegation from his chapter, with whom he was then at loggerheads. As he opened the door to welcome the envoys, he received a distinctly unfriendly greeting from one of them:

Oswaldus de Wolkenstain dedit mihi unum magnum ictum cum pugno trudens me retro dicens: 'Stett still, es ist nimmer als vor!' Ego vero respondi: 'Wie tust also, ich gelaub du seist nit wol bey dir selber.' Et ipse: 'Siczt pald nider oder ir muesst leiden, des ir ungern leidt.' Et ego sedi.¹

Could this be the same incident to which Oswald refers in the present poem? Schatz did not think so, as he preferred to assign the poem to the winter of 1427-28.² The answer to this question depends on the meaning of the word widerdriesz, for it was Oswald's 'bffering' of this which enraged his enemy (23-26). Its usual sense is 'Verdruss', 'was Verdruss erregt', though in certain contexts it can be associated with an act of violence.³ If it means 'a

1. The diary is published by Viktor Schaller, in Zs. Ferd., 36 (1892), pp. 286 ff.; see p. 293.

2. Schatz 1902, p. 119.

3. Grimm (14, 1, 2, 941 f.) has the following quotation from a sixteenth-century text: '... ermördt worden, von wegen eins widerdriess und gewalts, so er begangen hett.'

blow' in the present passage,¹ then one need look no further for the event to which it refers. That being struck by a ministerialis of his diocese was not an everyday occurrence in the bishop's life is indicated by the fact that this was the only event which prompted him to use the vernacular in his diary, in quoting verbatim the accompanying exchange of words. One may assume also that Oswald did not often punch a high-ranking dignitary of the church.

But even if we knew for certain that the ictus Ulrich received and the widerdriesz given to him by the poet were one and the same, this would help us very little in understanding exactly what Oswald is talking about in the next thirty lines of his poem. He goes on to say that, despite the position he is in,² he does not regret what he wishes upon the man who spoiled his game (27-28). If Oswald had his way,³ that giant⁴ would be prevented from

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1. Schatz is somewhat vague on this point. He translates the word as 'Gegenstoss' (Sprache, p. 108 - this is the only time Oswald used it), but in his notes to the poem says that the blow of 1429 is not meant here (Schatz 1902, p. 119).
 2. The sense of 'nu (21) ..., so (27) ...' seems to be: 'although now ..., yet ...'
 3. If one supplies this clause, then the statement which follows explains the 'what I wish upon him' of line 27. A colon should therefore replace Klein's full-stop at the end of line 28.
 4. Rise: ironic, for the bishop was a small man (cf. l. 24: ain klainen ungenant); see also Müller, Zs. f. dt. Phil., 88 (1969), p. 225.

sneaking off to his whore, sweeping the streets with his cloak as he goes (29-33). He addresses his enemy as 'Gabriel',¹ and hopes that his teeth will rot (33-34). He would be as surprised as if someone gave him Strasbourg (?), if all those people who indulged in shameless and unconcealed lechery were swept out with a fiery broom (35-40).²

The third stanza is equally obscure. The poet says he had hoped that his case would be quite successful, but there had been a breach of loyalty, as he had noticed from an evil rumour (41-44). At that time his best chance had been to keep quiet, and this, God be praised, turned out to his advantage, for some people wanted to have him locked up (45-48).³ He addresses the bishop again, this

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1. Müller (*ibid.*, p. 226), following Marold, suggests that Oswald may be alluding to a story in Boccaccio in which a priest disguises himself as the archangel Gabriel in order to seduce a penitent girl.
 2. 'Ob in wurd allen ausgefegt/mit ainem haissen schäbe' (i.e. schaube - cf. K82, 65 and Schatz, Sprache, p. 94); I take this to mean: 'if all their sinfulness were burned (by Fegefeuer) out of them ...' But why would Oswald be surprised at this (if his words are not ironic)? The answer may lie in the obscure allusion to Strasbourg.
 3. 'Do man die rigel und die zeun / so geren hett vernufft.' (47-48): Schatz amends vernufft to vermufft; Müller (Zs. f. dt. Phil., 88 (1969), p. 226) accepts this, and translates it as 'vermodern lassen' - 'es hiesse dann: sie hätten die Riegel und Gitter lieber vermodern lassen als mir die Freiheit zu geben.'

time with a phrase borrowed from the Bible - 'Noli me tangere'; he calls him 'Perzli, Üli',¹ and warns his enemy not to deceive him (49-50). If something is difficult to arrange, he says, then it can be brought before a judgment seat, and settled by the new Italian method (51-54). The final six lines of this stanza are as inscrutable as the rest, and illustrate the problems of translation and interpretation which the poem presents:

Leicht tün ich mir so we
mit smucken und mit smiegen;
ob ich den bauch noch recken möcht,
leicht hulf ich ainen biegen,
der mir den staffel geren zuckt,²
tief in des meres grufft.
(55-60)

Ulrich Müller tries to make sense of this by amending staffel to stoffel, a fool, therefore: '(wenn ich noch könnte, würde ich) lieber mithelfen, den Dummkopf [Ulrich] irgendwo zu ersäufen'.³ But it is possible, I think, to translate the words as they stand. Staffel could be either 'ladder',⁴ or, more probably, the diminutive of stap, staf, a staff, therefore:

1. Üli must be an abbreviation of Ulrich. Perzli is probably a form of the dialect word porzel, 'kleiner Mensch'; see Müller, ibid., p. 225, note 16.
2. Klein has no comma after zuckt.
3. Zs. f. dt. Phil., 88 (1969), pp. 226 f.
4. Cf. K23, 41, where Oswald uses staffel in the plural, meaning steps. It can also be used in the singular for step-ladder, though this is rare; see Grimm, 10, 2, 1, 519.

I may easily cause myself an injury with
bowing and scraping; if I could straighten
myself up again, I might easily help to bend
(lay low, humble?) the person who wishes to
pull the ladder from under me (or ... who likes
to grab his bishop's staff to use against me)
and throw him deep down to the bottom of the sea.

Getting to grips with the linguistic difficulties here
is like trying to discern the pattern in separate pieces
of a jigsaw puzzle for which vital sections and an overall
pattern are lacking. The poet's words were intended for
the ears of an audience familiar with the events to which
he alludes.

In the fourth and final stanza Oswald turns
abruptly from the matter between himself and Ulrich, and
concludes with a general lament on his domestic woes which
is virtually a resumé of Durch Barbarei, Arabia (K44). He
remembers the friends (joys?)¹ he has known in towns such
as Cologne, Paris and Nürnberg; these are a thing of the
past,² for now he must often live on a high mountain (61-
66).³ The cause of this is a wife (whom he names - von

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1. In line 63 Klein has 'was ich ie freunden da gesach', and gives no other readings. Schatz's edition has freuden, also without variants. One would expect the latter from K44, 33: '... was ich freuden ie gesach'; but cf. line 64 (next note).
 2. 'Die gan mir hie nicht in' (64): they do not visit me here. If this is to be taken literally, freunden would be the correct reading in 63.
 3. These six lines belong together; there should be a comma at the end of 64 and a full-stop after 66. The sense of 'von ebner wis ... hausen ... auf hohen berg' seems to be: 'move from living on flat ground to a high mountain'.

Swangau) and children; they spoil his pleasure¹ because he must protect them so that the wolves do not snatch away their food (67-74). It is one care after another, but there is someone who could redress them:

Ain mü die ander vindt;
wers alles wil besorgen,
das tû mein herr von Österreich
umb seinen schatz verborgen.
(75-78)

This is probably a reference to the sum of money still owed to Frederick by Oswald, as Schatz first suggested.² What the connection is between this matter and Oswald's feud with the Bishop of Brixen is, however, not clear. It is possible that the sach which the poet mentions (41) is the Hauenstein affair,³ and the breach of faith (42) the prince's failure to return his letter of credit. The 'bolts and barriers' to which he alludes almost immediately after this (47) could well be those of Frederick's dungeons, for as far as we know Oswald was not imprisoned again after 1427. But this evidence is fragmentary and not conclusive. Oswald's comment that one trouble leads

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1. Schimpf (70) is used here in the sense of kurzweil (cf. K44, 61), as in Für allen schimpf (K99), a poem describing the splendid social life at Nürnberg, written not long before (see below, p. 248).
 2. Schatz 1902, p. 119. He translates line 78: 'um seinen gehüteten Geldbetrag, den ich schulde' (Sprache, p. 63); cf. Lexer TWb., p. 267: verbergen, 'beiseite schaffen, aufheben, verbergen'.
 3. Cf. K55, 34: 'Ich hoff, mein sach möcht werden güt'. This line, written before 1427, refers to his dispute with Frederick.

to another may simply be designed to link the two affairs together under one general heading. Having done so, the poet ends with an appropriate maxim:

der tod die leng vil sach richt, slicht,
und mangel krumpen sin.¹

(79-80)

Ironically, these banal words were prophetic, for it was only his own death which eventually relieved the poet of the burden of the debt which he has just mentioned.²

As in the previous poem, we find here an unusual mixture of nature description, personal biographical detail, and allusions to local politics; but in this case the treatment of these subjects is less impressive. First, the description of winter in stanza I is much closer to the conventional Natureingang; it has a list of typical features - gras, blumen, grüner kle, vogelin, wald - individualised only by the mention of the darkness around Hauenstein. Also, the allegorical function of this passage is ultimately incompatible with realistic description. Second, although the later reader can savour the humour and spiritedness of Oswald's invective in stanzas II and III, he is frustrated by the

1. 'In the end death settles and straightens many matters and much crookedness.'

2. See above, p. 126.

lack of a key to the poet's comments on the affair at Brixen. Oswald's audience was doubtless familiar with this matter and able to appreciate fully his scurrilous attacks on the bishop. One need not probe for any real substance behind the accusations about illicit love affairs and legal swindles,¹ which are commonplaces of medieval anti-clericalism.² Last, the description of married life at Hauenstein in the final stanza is a recapitulation (an encore, because the earlier song was successful?) of what he had once expressed with spontaneity and feeling. Oswald's attempt to unify these various elements is also less successful than in the first Hauenstein song. The two themes of winter and domestic trouble are not interwoven, but treated separately (stanzas I, IV), and provide a framework for the longer polemical section. The sudden introduction of the second theme at the beginning of the final verse leads Müller to suggest, with some justification, that this could have been added later.³ But such a break between one stanza and the next

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1. The implication of 51-54 is, I think, that Ulrich is guilty of some such fraud.
 2. Oswald himself hints elsewhere at some of the things that are carried on in the name of religion and piety: K18, IV; K90 (amorous adventures); K112, 183 ff. (bending the law).
 3. Zs. f. dt. Phil., 88 (1969), p. 228.

is not untypical of Oswald's episodic style in his longer poems.¹

The enigmatic allusions to contemporary events in this poem have given rise to much speculation about its date. It was written in winter (I), after 1426-27 (if IV was based on K44). Schatz assigned it to the winter of 1427-28, because of its references to the debt to Frederick (78 f.) and to the settlement of May 1427 (45-?).² Marold³ and Wolkenstein-Rodenegg⁴ accepted his dating. But the affair of the schatz verborgen, Oswald's letter of credit for 6,000 guilders, which Frederick still held, troubled the poet long after this time.⁵ Also there is no record of hostility between Oswald and Bishop Ulrich II before the incident of October 1429.⁶ Therefore the events to which the poet refers probably took place after that same autumn.

1. See, for example, the discussion above of K19, K26.

2. Schatz 1902, p. 119. Schatz refers to line 45, but does not explain how he interprets it. Presumably he takes the rigel und ... zeun (47) to be those of the prince's dungeons.

3. Marold, Kommentar, p. 22.

4. W.-R., p. 66.

5. See above, pp. 125 f.

6. Shortly before this, on October 7th 1429, Oswald was present at legal proceedings in Brixen; see W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis, No. 54. Bishop Ulrich II was appointed in November 1427.

Max Herrmann, who first attempted to date the poem, came to the conclusion that it was written in the winter of 1432-33.¹ But this is too late, for the poem was already in MS. B by the summer of 1432. This I conclude from the not entirely lucid description of this manuscript given by Schatz.² The poem appears towards the end of the MS., which was completed in August 1432, apart from a few songs, including some later compositions which, says Schatz, were numbers '112 ff.' in his edition.³ This should mean that our poem - No. 113 in Schatz⁴ - was among those which were added later. The editor thus unwittingly undermined his own dating (1427).⁵ Let us consider again the evidence of the manuscript. Looking closely at the position of the poem in MS. B, where it is No. 104 (as in Klein),⁶

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1. 'Die letzte Fahrt Oswalds von Wolkenstein', Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturgeschichte, III (1890), p. 607.
 2. Schatz 1904, pp. 35-43.
 3. Ibid., p. 43. In his edition Schatz arranged the poems chronologically, and not according to their order in any MS.
 4. It is not No. 112, which is a misprint in the editor's list of poems in MS. B (and c): ibid., p. 39. The task of following Schatz's description of the MSS. would be less hazardous had the proofs of his introduction been read more carefully. There are two more misprints on p. 43: in lines 5, 6 read 124, 125 for 24, 25. There may be others, less obvious, but more misleading.
 5. Cf. above, p. 235, note 2. [Addendum: since this page was typed, I have discovered a further misprint in Schatz: his reference to poems '112 f.' (see note 3, above) should read '118 f.' This explains his apparent self-contradiction.]
 6. Klein adheres strictly to the order in MS. B.

one finds that it immediately precedes the Ronciglione poem (K105), which records an event early in 1432 (not 1433, as Schatz, following Herrmann,¹ supposed). Also, if my reading of Schatz is correct, our poem was included in the list of contents in the manuscript, which bears the date August 30th 1432. I deduce this from the following information: at the head of the contents table, which is on the second leaf, is the said date; beneath it is a list of the titles of the poems in their order in the manuscript; on the reverse side of this leaf, 'mit anderer Tinte und wohl auch später', are the titles of poems 108-116.² The present poem - No. 104 - is therefore listed on the first, dated side, and was written before August 30th 1432.

We are now left with three winters. The one immediately after the altercation between Oswald and the Bishop of Brixen is discounted by Herrmann, on the grounds that Ulrich was in Innsbruck at this time, and could not have threatened the poet; but the fact that Ulrich was far away could explain why Oswald felt free to

1. Schatz 1902, p. 119. Cf. Herrmann, Vierteljahrs-schrift für Literaturgeschichte, III (1890), p. 606. This date was corrected by Norbert Mayr: Die Reiselieder, p. 110.

2. Schatz 1904, pp. 34 f.

give vent to his spite in a poem.¹ Also, he could still have feared the bishop's supporters in Brixen: he was worried even about a peasant on his doorstep!

The next year can be excluded: Oswald spent some months, from September 1430 until at least the following April, travelling through Germany with King Sigismund, as Mayr has shown.²

The last possibility, the winter of 1431-32, has not yet been seriously considered. It is true that the poet joined Sigismund in Italy at this time, but not until January 1432, as was demonstrated in an earlier chapter.³ The poem speaks, however, of the arrival of winter at Hauenstein (stanza I). But if Oswald was writing in 1431, why did he recall events which happened two years before? There is no need to assume that he did so, for we can draw on first-hand evidence that the trouble in Brixen recorded at that time was breaking out once again. In an entry in his diary to November 1431, Bishop Ulrich notes that he has received a declaration of hostilities, accompanied by lies and insults, from one

1. Ulrich Müller uses this point to support his dating of this poem (1429-30): Zs. f. dt. Phil., 88 (1969), p. 228.

2. Mayr, Die Reiselieder, pp. 100 ff.

3. See above, pp. 56 f., also the letter from Sigismund to Oswald, inviting him to Lombardy, Appendix No. 10.

Heinrich Seldenhorn, 'prefatus traditor, assassinus et latro, cum suis complicibus, ribaldis'!¹ This same 'brigand' had been one of those who had spoken up on Oswald's behalf during his imprisonment,² and was also his companion in the delegation sent to Brixen in 1429.³ It would not be unreasonable to assume that the two men were in league again now.

This is not the only evidence which points to the end of 1431 as the occasion of the poem. Max Herrmann, who also supports his dating by a reference to the Bishop of Brixen's diary, draws attention to Ulrich's comment that the winter of 1432 was severe, and many people fell prey to the wolves.⁴ The comparison Herrmann draws between this passage and Oswald's own words in the present poem (K104, 72 ff.) is not necessarily of great significance, for, as we have seen, the poet had spoken

1. Published in Zs. Ferd., 36 (1892); see p. 304.

2. See K26, 104: 'frein, graven, Sälden horen ...'

3. Zs. Ferd., 36 (1892), pp. 292 f. In a document dated 1427, Seldenhorn has the titles 'Pfleger auf Salern und Hofrichter zu Brixen' (W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis No. 56).

4. Herrmann, Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturgeschichte, III (1890), p. 607.

once before of keeping the wolves at bay (K44, 89 f.);¹ but if the bishop can be called as a witness here, then he will help our case, for the winter he is talking about was not in fact the one which began in 1432, but the one which ended in this year. The entry in question is at the very head of the section dated 1432.²

I would suggest, therefore, as the date for K104, November or December 1431. This also accommodates three final points. First, Oswald's recollection of happy times in Costnitz, Nürnberg (62) could then refer to the visit we know he paid to these towns in the previous winter,³ rather than to earlier, unknown journeys. Second, his readiness to travel to Piacenza in the middle of winter in response to Sigismund's summons would be more easily understandable: he could escape from his troubles at home,

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1. Although in both poems Oswald is probably using the 'wolves' figuratively, for the troubles which beset him at Hauenstein, a literal interpretation is also possible, especially in K104, 72 ff., where he says that he must protect his children and their food from falling prey to them.
 2. See Zs. Ferd., 36 (1892), p. 305.
 3. There is documentary evidence that Oswald visited these two towns with King Sigismund in the winter of 1430-31; see Mayr (pp. 100 ff.), who is doubtless correct in assigning K98 and K99, in which the poet praises the company he found in Constance and Nürnberg, to this time. Previously it had been assumed that they were written at the time of the Council of Constance; see Schatz 1902, p. 113.

and he would also have a further opportunity to press the king for assistance against Prince Frederick (cf. K104, 77 f.).¹ Third, this poem appears in MS. B before the Piacenza song, K105, which is followed by a note to the effect that it is to be sung to the same tune.² I think it likely that Oswald took this melody with him to Lombardy in January 1432, having used it not long before for the second Hauenstein song.³ On his return to Tyrol the two poems were copied into MS. B, shortly before its completion in August 1432.

(c) Zergangen ist meins herzen we (K116)⁴

The final poem to be considered here differs from the other two in that the season is not winter but spring. The stream is now no longer frozen, the fields are freed from the stifling blanket of snow, and the forest echoes once more to the song of birds. This is the gist of what could be a quite typical picture of May, as it had been celebrated in countless medieval spring songs before;

1. As recently as August 1431 Sigismund had written to Frederick in this matter; see above, p. 126, and Appendix No. 7.

2. See Klein, p. 253.

3. There is a third poem in this Ton (called the Verdriesslicher Ton by Herbert Loewenstein (Wort und Ton bei Oswald von Wolkenstein, Königsberg, 1932, p. 37)), K102, Sich manger freut. This was probably written first, as it precedes the other two in the MS., and tells of an escapade of the poet in the month of May (line 2).

4. See also Wachinger's translation (Reclam), No. 23.

but Oswald's description of this particular May is anything but conventional. He is again at Hauenstein, and his surroundings are even more clearly defined and individualised than in the first poem (K44), as he expresses his joy at the passing of winter:

Zergangen ist meins herzen we,
seid das nu fliessen wil der snee
ab Seuser alben und aus Flack
hort ich den Mosmair sagen.¹
Erwachtet sind der erden tünst,
des meren sich die wasser rünst
von Castellrut in den Isack,
das wil mir wol behagen.

(1-8)

The places mentioned here are not simply local signposts which Oswald plants in an otherwise stereotyped description for the purpose of putting his own signature to the poem. Nor is the reference to melting snow simply a hackneyed descriptive detail. These two elements are integral parts of a quite original picture: the deep snow which has covered the Seiser Alm during the winter months is now beginning to trickle down past Flack² to join the springs already gathering below at Kastelrut, whence they flow down the steep hillside to swell the river Eisack. The poet's simple expression of pleasure at the surging

1. This man is quoted also in K81, 5, where he is called Hainz Mosmair.

2. The name of a meadow near Hauenstein.

movement around him was doubtless heartfelt, and this personal note is sustained in the second half of the stanza:

Ich hör die voglin gros und klain
in meinem wald umb Hauenstain
die musick brechen¹ in der kel,
durch scharpfe nöttlin schellen,
Auf von dem ut hoch in das la,
und hrab zu tal schon auf das fa
durch manig süsse stimm so hel;
des freut eu, güt gesellen!

(9-16)

By the use of the possessive meinem, and the mention of his castle by name, Oswald again turns what could have been a quite conventional feature of nature description - the wood - into one particular place, and at the same time embraces it as its proud owner. The attitude of the lord surveying his manor also adds a personal touch to the description of the birds singing in the trees. Oswald was fond of describing bird-song in musical terms, and indeed devoted a whole poem to this theme.² In the present context this is not treated over-elaborately, for its own sake, but is well integrated into the picture of spring at Hauenstein.

1. Brechen: Schatz (Sprache, p. 55) refers to this line under the word brechen, as also to K34, 17: 'mang vogelreich sein kel ... schärpflichen bricht ...', but without suggesting a translation. I think both these passages should be cited under prehen; this usually means 'to shine', as in K12, 23: 'ir amplick prehent als die sunn', but can also have the sense of 'to sound'; see Lexen, I, 346.

2. K50. Cf. also K21, 39 ff.

In the final line of the stanza (16) the poet turns to his audience, stepping into the traditional role of the medieval poet as leader of the May-time celebrations.¹ This line thus bridges the gap between the description in the first verse and the sentiments expressed in the refrain which follows it:

Was get die red den Plätscher an?
mein singen mag ich nicht gelän,
wem das missvall, der lasz mich gän
und sei mir heur als verd!
Ob mir die vaigen² sein gevar,
noch tröst ich mich der frummen zwar,
wie wol das heuer an dem jar
valsch böse munz hat werd.

(17-24)

It is possible that Oswald is alluding here to a dispute of the kind he had publicised in the previous poem. Dejori claims to have identified the Plätscher as a supporter of the Prince of Tyrol, one Hans Plätscher, who died in 1418.³ But it is unlikely that the poem was composed as early as this.⁴ If Oswald was in fact thinking of one particular man, it may have been the Hans

1. As also in the following: K21, 1 ff.; K37, 31 ff.; K40, 17 ff.; K47, 1 ff.; K75, 1 ff.; K106, 1 ff.

2. Die vaigen: vaige has the sense here of 'unverschämt, böse'; see Schatz, Sprache, p. 62; Grimm, 3, 1442.

3. A. Dejori, Heimatlieder, pp. 152 ff.

4. See Wachinger (Reclam), p. 117.

der Plätscher who is mentioned in a document of 1429;¹ but as Wachinger has pointed out, Plätscher was a common name in this region,² Also, Oswald is almost certainly indulging in one of his frequent word-plays, for the word Plätscher means a gossip.³ The poet's reference to his unpopularity in certain quarters is expressed in such a general and formalised way that it seems idle to speculate on who or what might be behind it. Perhaps one should take his words literally, that is, his singing (18) has been criticised and he is threatened by some rival entertainer (of base coin = 24).

In stanza II he returns to his description of spring at Hauenstein:

Versunden was meins herzen qual,
do ich die ersten nachtigal
hort lieplich singen nach dem pflüg
dort enhalb in der Matzen.
Da sach ich vierstund zwai und zwai
gewetten schon nach ainem rai,
die kunden nach des Mutzen füg
wol durch die erden kratzen.

(25-32)

Again we find typical elements employed in an unusual way. The nightingale was commonly the leader among the birds

1. See W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis, No. 54.

2. Wachinger (Reclam), p. 117.

3. Ibid.; see also Grimm, 7, 1902, under Platscher; J. Schatz, Wörterbuch der Tiroler Mundarten, I (Schlern-Schriften 119), Innsbruck, 1955, p. 90, under pletschen.

who heralded the arrival of spring, or of the dawn, and appears in this role in other poems by Oswald.¹ Here the occasion is made so much more real, first of all simply by the addition of the word ersten (26). Also, it is not only the first nightingale but the first to be heard in a particular place, the Matze, the name of a field (or farm) near Oswald's home.² Dancing was of course the traditional way of celebrating the May, and the motif of dancers pairing off in the rai was a particular favourite with Oswald.³ This theme too is treated in an unusual way in the present poem. The poet conjures up a picture of the peasants in the field, ploughing their furrows (durch die erden kratzen) in four pairs (vierstund zwai und zwai gewetten⁴), as though they were dancing the 'Reigen'. Their master of ceremonies is the Mutze, the farmer of this name.⁵

1. Cf. K42, 32; K49, 15; K100, 8; K101, 10; K106, 8.

2. See Schatz, Sprache, p. 116.

3. Cf. K37, 31; K47, 3; K70, 25; K100, 5; he even includes this detail (and the nightingale) when using May as a contrast to a miserable winter he spent in Hungary: K30, 10-15.

4. Wetten: 'to yoke together'.

5. See Wachinger (Reclam), p. 118; cf. the list of Oswald's estates in W.-R., p. 18.

Oswald then calls upon all creatures to come out of their winter retreat and take part in the rejoicing:

Wer sich den winder hat gesmuckt,
und von der bösen welt verdruckt,
der freu sich gen der grünen zeit,
die uns der mai wil pringen.
Ir armen tier, nu raumt eur hol,
get, sücht eur waid, gehabt eu wol!
perg, aw und tal ist rauch und weit,
des mag eu wolgelingen.

(33-40)

Here the theme of the awakening of the world in spring is invested with new life by the sensuous vigour of Oswald's language. He uses a variety of verbs - including the unusual (sich) gesmuckt, (sich) verdruckt - and in different forms, from exhortation in the third person to the direct form of address. In the first two couplets he makes good use of antithesis, and then proceeds to another favourite device, asyndetic accumulation, in this case of verbs: raumt, get, sücht, gehabt eu.

In conclusion, the poet again addresses his audience, taking up the call with which he had ended the first stanza: 'Wolauf, ir frummen, und seit gail!' (41). However, instead of elaborating upon this and exhorting everyone to dance and sing, he tells them of the need to behave in an honourable and just manner:

wer eren pfligt, der wünsch uns hail.
kain schand niemand glosieren¹ mag,
wie scharpf man si betrachtet.
Es ist ain alt gesprochen wort,
recht tün, das sei ain grosser hort,
wann es kompt alles an den tag;
oft ainer des nicht achtet.

(42-48)

This may again be taken at its face value, as a simple maxim suited to the occasion: spring is a time for moral and spiritual renewal. Or there could also be a link with the thoughts expressed in the refrain. Oswald repeats the word frummen (22; 41) in addressing his hearers, and his comment that all honest people will wish them well (42) could be another veiled thrust in the direction of a common enemy. He does not pursue this, however, but ends with a warning that misdeeds cannot be concealed from Christ himself:

Herr Christan in der obern pfarr,²
zwar der ist sicher nicht ein narr,
wer in wil teuschen auf dem stück,³
der musz gar frü erwachen.
Er beit ain weil und doch nicht lang,
darnach so fiermt er aim ain wang,⁴

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1. Glosieren: gloss over.
 2. This has always been taken to mean Christ, though the possibility of a blasphemous word-play on a local name cannot be excluded.
 3. Wachinger (Reclam), p. 75: 'Wer ihn in diesem Handel täuschen will'.
 4. 'He smacks him on the cheek'. Schatz (Sprache, p. 67) says that firmen is used here 'in übertragener Bedeutung' for 'züchtigen'. Cf. Grimm, 3, 1674: 'beim firmeln schlägt der Bischof dem Kinde auf die Wange'.

das im vergen sein valsche tück,¹
des er nicht mag gelachen.
(49-56)

It may perhaps be significant also that this warning is not directed specifically at the poet's audience, but is phrased in such a way as to allow for the interpretation that it was intended for an absent third party, the vaigen mentioned in the refrain (21).

In this poem one can discern the same elements which made up the previous song, that is, description of the poet's surroundings at Hauenstein, veiled references to local troubles, and a moral. But here Oswald finds a particularly happy formula for the arrangement of these parts. The petty personal matters, instead of forming an unwieldy and obscure bulk at the centre of the poem, are absorbed into a spring song, as an element of antithesis in the refrain and perhaps also as a hidden barb in the concluding homily. This last part of the poem does not obviously have the character of an obligatory appendage, but is a lively and good-humoured sermon, in keeping with the general tone of the poem and with the role of the poet as the herald of spring. Finally, the nature description is not an external framework for a polemic, but dominates

1. Klein has rück, corrected by Wachinger, Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum, 74 (1963), p. 31: MSS. A, B and c all have tück.

the whole poem, as a realistic, individual portrayal of the advent of spring in the poet's homeland. If any poem by Oswald truly merits the definition Heimatlied, without the sentimental overtones with which this word is inevitably charged, then it is this celebration of spring at Hauenstein.

iv. Conclusion

The poems Oswald wrote during the period of his troubles at home in Tyrol are, like the Sigismund songs, by-products of the political intrigues rather than political poems, and are not easy to categorise. The poem directed against the Bishop of Brixen (K104) is the most obviously polemical, and, like the Greifenstein song, contains elements of the Scheltspruch. Durch Barbarei, Arabia (K44) is a kind of Bittlied, but, as we saw, is memorable for other features. The third Hauenstein poem (K116) is a spring song, but of an unusual kind. Each of these compositions is an individual and original creation, as is also the longer narrative poem K26.

The style of Oswald's self-portrait in these poems is to some extent shaped by traditional motifs: the poet appears in the guise of herald of spring (K116), knight (K26), harassed husband (K44, K104), and penitent (K7). But such roles are dictated also by real experiences, which he describes. Oswald is now clearly

recognisable as the man whose feud with the Prince of Tyrol we traced in letters and documents. He was not an observer at the events in Tyrol, as he had been in Constance and Perpignan, but was very much involved in an earnest political and personal struggle. Compared with the poems he wrote while travelling with Sigismund, the songs discussed in this section reveal a shift of emphasis towards a more personal kind of lyric; the poet is here writing for himself, because his experiences moved him, not because they were a source of entertainment.

Oswald emerges from these poems as a proud, masculine, vigorous man. His uninhibited energy enlivens the battle cries of the Greifenstein song and his scornful outburst against all those who earned his hostility; it finds an outlet also in the exuberance of the spring song and, under the stress of imprisonment, in religious fervour. Always it is the proud egotistic nobleman who is speaking, and almost invariably it is about himself. In the poem on his journey to France and Spain, Oswald had described himself as the equal of a king as a centre of attraction (K19, 173 ff.); in a more serious moment (K26, 42, 86) he has no qualms about taking the same king to task for failing to assist him in his personal misfortune. Where the question of his own fault in this matter arises, he either flatly denies he owes a debt to anyone but God himself (K7, 49 ff.), or he evades the

issue and changes the subject to singing and composing (K26, 121 ff.), where there is no threat to his primacy. He is capable of self-irony, but he is always self-righteous. Whether with good grounds or not, he insisted that he was a man who had been wronged, on the one hand by his prince, and on the other, as we shall now see, by the prince's ally, and Oswald's own former mistress, the mysterious Sabina Jäger.

3. Oswald and Sabina

In the thoughts of Oswald the poet, the troubles he had to endure in the political struggle in Tyrol were inseparably bound up with a particular woman, and it is impossible to discuss his poetic 'autobiography' without mentioning the name of Sabina Jäger. Oswald's association with this woman provides a variation on the theme of ill-starred lovers, and is ready-made for romantic fiction. Indeed, their love affair has already been the subject of several novels.¹ The immediate inspiration for these was derived from the first account of the affair in Beda Weber's biography. Weber describes how, on returning from his travels in 1397, the young poet met and fell in love with Sabina, daughter of the Wolkensteins' neighbour

1. See the bibliography in W. Kosch, Deutsches Literaturlexikon, 2nd edition, Bern, 1956, vol. III, p. 1961.

and bitter enemy, Martin Jäger. She would not, however, agree to marry him, unless he proved his love by making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He complied with her wishes, only to discover on his return some three years later that she had married Hans Hausmann, a citizen of Hall, in the Inn valley. After this she disappears almost completely from Weber's story for a long period of time. Later we read that in 1421 Sabina, now a widow who enjoyed favour at the court of Prince Frederick, allowed herself to be used as the bait in a trap laid for Oswald by his enemies. Soon afterwards she died.¹

This story has not only provided the basis for historical novels, but has also, in its essentials, remained unchallenged in scholarly accounts of Oswald's life since Weber. Recently, however, doubts have been cast on the authenticity of what Klein has called the 'Liebesroman um die Sabina Jäger'.² But the matter has not yet been pursued in detail.

It is not surprising that Oswald's biographers have been fascinated by the story of this woman who played an important part both in his emotional life and in the political intrigues in Tyrol. But has her

1. Weber, pp. 123 ff., 355 ff.

2. K.K. Klein, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Wirkendes Wort, 13 (1963), p. 4.

importance perhaps been exaggerated? If so, then it has not been without encouragement from the poet himself, for, as we shall see, he certainly makes much of his affair with Sabina in his poems. Historical documents are of no help to us here; it is too easily overlooked that there is nowhere in the records so far explored any hint of a relationship between Oswald and Jäger's daughter, apart from their opposition in the Hauenstein feud. In the matter of the love affair, biographers, including Weber, are entirely dependent on interpretation of Oswald's poetry. The basis of the following inquiry into the story will therefore be a reappraisal of the poems in which it originates, those attributed to the influence of this particular woman. First we shall consider briefly the question of the identity of 'Sabina'.

i. 'Sabina'?

The party which waylaid and imprisoned the poet in the autumn of 1421 included a woman, as Prince Frederick's formal reference to the incident makes clear:

Wir Fridreich ... etc. bekennen, als Martein
Jeger von sein und seins weibs wegen, die
Hawsmannin, der Neyhart und der Frey Oswalden
von Wolkhenstain gefangen ... haben, ...¹

The evidence about the identity of this woman in later

1. Published by Anton Noggler, in Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 170 f., document No. 8. Cf. also No. 9, pp. 171 ff.

genealogies, which both Weber and Noggler used, is not reliable, as Mayr has shown.¹ As she brought claims against Oswald over Hauenstein property, she must have been the daughter of Martin Jäger and Barbara von Hauenstein. The only date in her life known for certain is that of her death, 1424-25.² According to Mayr she probably married in 1406-7, when she was about seventeen years old; her husband, who almost certainly lived in Brixen, not in Hall, was dead by the year 1409. Only her surname is mentioned in contemporary records, and Mayr doubts whether the name attributed to her by genealogists, Sabina, is authentic. His suggestion of an alternative, Barbara, is, however, not convincing. His evidence is a record of the granting of a Hauenstein fief in 1402 by Michael von Wolkenstein, acting on behalf of his brothers, and by Barbara, die Tochter des Martin Jäger.³ But this must surely be a mistake in the rolls. Barbara was the name of the last of the Hauensteins, whom Martin Jäger had married in 1387.⁴ In matters concerning Hauenstein property, including the dispute with the Wolkensteins, Jäger acted always in his wife's name or jointly with her, even as late as 1425.⁵ It must be she

1. Mayr, Die Reiselieder, pp. 41 ff.

2. See Schatz 1902, p. 107.

3. Mayr, p. 41.

4. As Mayr himself notes, p. 43.

5. See Noggler, 'Der Wolkenstein-Hauensteinische Erbschaftsstreit', Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 112 ff., and documents Nos. 4, 6, 9, 11, 12 (pp. 162 ff.).

who is meant in the transaction of 1402, and not her daughter, who by Mayr's own reckoning was then only thirteen years old,¹ and therefore not of an age to be distributing fiefs.²

For the time being, then, there is no reason for not calling the widow Hausmann by the traditional name Sabina. In his poetry Oswald never addresses her, or any woman except his wife Margarete, by name. Mayr³ finds this unusual, but convention had always demanded that a poet keep his mistress's name a secret. Similarly, the poet's naming of his wife, sometimes by her initial,⁴ was also in accordance with literary convention, as we see, for example, in Hugo von Montfort⁵ and the Ackermann aus Böhmen.⁶

1. Mayr, p. 43.

2. There is a small but significant error in Mayr's version (p. 41) of the document of 1402, where he states that 'Michael von Wolkenstein, für sich und seine Brüder und Barbara, die Tochter des Martin Jäger, ein Hauensteinisches Erblehen vergab.' In his source (Archiv-Berichte aus Tirol, II, Vienna, 1896, No. 786, p. 142) this verb is in the plural (verliehen); Michael was acting not on behalf of, but together with, this Barbara.

3. Mayr, p. 41.

4. See K33, 25; K68, 11 ff.; K69, 32, 71, 75; K71, 30; K75, 27; K77, 1, 13, 39; K87, 33; K97, 21, 29.

5. Edited by J.E. Wackernell, Innsbruck, 1881, No. XXVIII, line 374; XXXVIII, 37, 41.

6. Chapters IV, XXXIV.

That Jäger's daughter was the woman of whom the poet Oswald speaks so often is established beyond doubt by one single reference, which forges a solid link between documents and poetry. In the long poem he wrote after his release from the Prince of Tyrol's custody in 1427, two years after Sabina's death, he blamed his misfortune on an unhappy affair with a woman who some years before had put him in chains. His children, he says, will live to regret

das ich den namen ie erkannt
von diser Hausmaninnen.

(K26, 119 f.)

The ill-treatment he mentions here can be identified by working back through references in earlier poems as that which he suffered in the Jägers' dungeons six years before. We know from historical evidence the date and circumstances of his imprisonment,¹ but we have only the poet's word that he had previously had a long and intimate relationship with one of his captors, whom he describes as follows:

Ain frauen pild,
mit der ich han mein zeit so lang vertriben,
wol dreuzen jar und dennoch mer
in treuen stet beliben
zu willen nach irs herzen ger,
das mir auf erd kain mensch nie liebers ward.
(K1, 19-24)

As a statement of fact this assertion of constancy and faithfulness needs modification, inasmuch as Oswald, at

1. See above, pp. 98 ff.

the time he wrote it - 1421 - had already been married for four years to another woman. Although he gives the precise duration of his affair, his description of the relationship itself is therefore not quite so accurate, unless one assumes that his marriage to Margarete von Schwangau was without love; but it is evident from a number of his poems that this was not so.¹ The poet's claim to have remained faithful to a lady for many years calls to mind the convention of Minnesang. He disguises the identity of his beloved in the vague term ain frauen pild - though his audience could be in no doubt as to who was meant here² - and he professes staete and triuwe, the essential virtues of the courtly lover. Yet any suggestion that Oswald's attentions to this lady were limited to playful chivalrous homage is contradicted by his declaration in the same stanza that

in freuden si mir manig nacht
verlech ir ermlin blos.

(33-34)

In another poem, written at about the same time, Oswald refers again to both the duration and the intimacy of the affair:

Was hilft mich, das ich manig nacht
in grossen freuden han gewacht
in dreuzehenthalben jaren³

(K9, 9-11)

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1. See especially K33, K68, K71, K77, K87, K97, K110.
 2. This poem will be discussed in detail below, pp. 303 ff.
 3. Both this figure and the one quoted previously (K1, 21) are probably intended to mean 'about thirteen years'.

Although the mention of a specific period of time would not in itself exclude the possibility of a game of Minnedienst,¹ it now serves to reinforce the impression of a real love affair.

The passages quoted above illustrate the often tantalising texture of Oswald's love poetry: on the one hand, hints of personal experience and earnest profession of feelings tempt the reader to a literal, biographical interpretation of his words; on the other, conventional motifs, as well as apparent anomalies by comparison with what we know of his life from other sources, counsel caution.

ii. The Sabina Poems: Before 1421

(a) Love and Marriage

The one fixed point from which the early years of Oswald's affair with Sabina Jäger can be approached is his statement in the winter of 1421-22 that his love for the woman who has betrayed him had lasted for thirteen years. Looking back from this point in search of clues to the nature and course of their relationship, for some document of the devotion the poet claims to have sustained for so long, we are attracted to one poem in particular, by the following lament:

1. Cf. Ulrich von Lichtenstein, Frauendienst, edited by R. Bechstein, 5, 7: 'ich was der selben vrouwen kneht/vil nach unz in daz fünfte jar.'

ich nems für güt, woltst du mich noch geweren.
Dorumb ich in dem achten jar
mich dicke hab gewunden
mit seniklichem seufften zwar,
und bin ich noch unenbunden.

(K106, 36-40)

This poem begins with a description of the blossoming spring,
and a call to everyone around to make ready for the dance:

Nempt war der schönen plüde, früde!
müde ist der kalde winder.
kinder, schickt eu zu dem tanz!

(1-3)

In the remainder of the first stanza the poet elaborates on
this theme, telling of how the grass and flowers are
sprouting (4-7). He introduces a touch of humour and
originality into this Natureingang with a description of the
nightingale singing 'better than the hen', and of a singing
competition between a thrush and a crow (8-11). At the
beginning of the second verse he turns his thoughts to his
beloved:

Des wart ich von der schönen, hönen.
krönen wolt ich noch ir herze,
smerze kan si wenden mir
schir, und benemen alles trauren bitter

(15-18)

This idea is then elaborated over the remaining three
stanzas of the poem. He goes on to describe how she
causes him to be restless and troubled (19 f.); he has
been her squire (knecht), and is now her knight (21 f.).
He will serve her all his life, in the hope that she will
lighten his burden of woe (23-28). In verses III and IV

he addresses her directly: she may command him without fear for her honour (29-32); he hopes that his ritterlich gesange will arouse her love, for which he has striven for eight years, without relief from his sorrow (33-42); she is his joy, his life-blood, and the light of her eyes robs him of his senses (43-46); may she offer him a greeting often, as his heart desires (47-50), and assure him that he is not forgotten, for she is always in his thoughts, however far from her he may be (51-54); he sees her so seldom, when will his misery end ? (55-56)

As the above outline suggests, this is basically a quite conventional song, with its combination of nature description and a lament for unrequited love. Is it possible, then, to interpret it as an earnest declaration of love for one particular woman, Sabina Jäger? The poet's reference to a specific period of time - eight years - spent in longing for his beloved's favour led Schatz to choose this as one of only two poems 'welche während des Verhältnisses auf Sabina gedichtet sind und Bezug auf sie haben müssen.'¹ This seems justifiable, for the passage in question has no parallel in Oswald's poetry, apart from the two similar statements quoted already. Schatz goes further than this and suggests that Oswald's complaint of unrequited love 'darf nach Abzug aller bloss literarischen Momente

1. Schatz 1902, p. 107.

wohl dahin ausgelegt werden, dass die Hausmannin das nicht gewährte, was Oswald wollte, nämlich die Heirat.¹ The possibility that the poet's plea for love and consolation might hide a proposal of marriage cannot be denied, but so common is such a lament in the Minnesang that speculation of this kind needs support from outside the poem. If one does strip Oswald's words of all that could be interpreted as literary motifs, one is left not with a proposal of marriage, but with just two details. One is the mention of eight years, the other is contained in the following lines:

getreuer was ichs ie ir knecht,
secht, desgeleichen bin ichs nu ir ritter.
(21-22)

At first this appears to be as conventional as the rest of the poem: Oswald uses elsewhere the word knecht in the sense of an obedient lover, as in the following passage:

Si ward mein herr und ich ir knecht
nu ist mir sicher ungedrot ... (K74, 4)²

But in the present context it is used in contrast not to herr or frau, but to ritter, as in the phrase 'ritter und knecht', knights and squires. If one calculates the approximate date of the poem from Oswald's own figures, that is, in the eighth year (K106, 37) of thirteen (K1,

1. Ibid.

2. Cf. also K74, 18; K43, 67.

21/K9, 11 - in the winter of 1421) then it was written in the spring (müde ist der kalde winder) of 1416, that is, at or towards the end of his journey to Portugal and Spain. During this illustrious expedition, his first mission in the service of King Sigismund, the poet almost certainly acquired the first of his chivalrous decorations, the Aragonese Order of the Jar, as we have seen.¹ He would therefore now have good grounds proudly to call himself a knight. In the light of this, another inconspicuous phrase in the poem attracts attention:

Mein ritterlich gesange, lange
pange, lasz, frau, ainig jölich,
frölich lieb erwecken dich!

(33-35)

The phrase does not occur elsewhere in Oswald's poetry.

To sum up: this poem tells us nothing about Oswald's relationship with Sabina, except that he addressed love songs to her in a conventional manner. He sends her greetings as a servant who has elevated his status and his worth in her eyes by his accomplishments on a chivalrous expedition. There is perhaps one more clue in the poem to the circumstances of its composition, in the closing lines:

wie ferr ich bin ellende,
so nahet mir dein stolzer laib,
da von ich nicht enwende.
ach, selten sehen, liebstes weib,
wann hat die not ain ende?

(52-56)

1. See above, p. 204.

The homage was probably paid from afar, that is, from Constance.

The second place where Schatz found what he took to be a clear allusion to Sabina was in the long autobiographical poem Es fügt sich (K18),¹ In stanza V Oswald refers to

... ain ausserweltes mündli rot,
da von mein herz ist wunt bis in den bittern tod
(66-67)

He goes on to tell of the pain which this woman causes him. When he is near her he trembles and sighs helplessly; he has often travelled far from her without receiving consolation. If she were to help him, his sadness would turn to joy (V). He describes how he visited Nio, a small island where there were no men, but more than four hundred women, none of whom could compare with her. If only she knew the burden he bore, he might hope that she would have pity on him. He cannot sleep for thoughts of her. He calls for sympathy from those who are in love. If he knew he would never see her again, he would shed many a tear (VI).

This poem was probably composed in 1416,² soon after the one we have just discussed (K106). As Oswald devoted two of his seven stanzas to an account of how he suffered for the love of one lady, he may well have been thinking once more of Sabina. In both poems he complains

1. Schatz 1902, p. 107.

2. Ibid., p. 100.

of the burden of love he bears:

ich trag ain burd swerlicher heb
(K106, 27)

... ich trag auff mein rugk ain swëre hurd
ach got, wesst si doch halbe meines laides burd¹
(K18, 85 f.)

In Es fügt sich he tells at length of his sorrow, but again it is in the generalising language of minne: he hopes for gnade (79), for trost (74), and for the segen she once offered him (94). He lends great urgency to his pleas by expressing his emotional torment in terms of physical reactions (68-72, 75-76), but this too is conventional.² His assertion that his beloved's beauty surpassed that of the population of an island full of women recalls the fantasies of contemporary travelogues:

Vierhundert weib und mer an aller manne zal
vand ich ze Nio, die wonten in der insell smal;
kain schöner pild besach nie mensch in ainem sal,
noch mocht ir kaine disem weib geharmen
(81-84)

but the fantasy is only apparent: this island was identified by Eduard Schröder as the Greek island of Nios, whose male population spends much time at sea.³ Oswald

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1. According to Schatz's glossary (Sprache, p. 55), Oswald uses burd in this figurative sense only in these two passages.
 2. As Ulrich Müller has noted and illustrated: 'Dichtung' und 'Wahrheit' in den Liedern Oswalds, 1968, p. 34.
 3. See his review of Schatz, Sprache, in the Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum, 49 (1930), p. 181.

Had he been rejected by his beloved, and given up the hope he had cherished of marrying her? Mayr has argued convincingly that the daughter of the petty nobleman Jäger would be beneath Oswald's ambitions, that he could and did find a more illustrious match elsewhere.¹ The evidence of this poem does not contradict such a view. In the lines quoted above Oswald distinguishes between romantic love - characterised by the term geben mut - and its antithesis, marriage - summed up in the idea of a nagging wife. What his true feelings were for the lady who had supposedly enslaved him, we cannot be sure. He may have loved her deeply, or simply chosen her as his partner in an amorous game. In either case the whole passage from Es fügt sich which we have considered above can be construed as a compliment by the poet to his frau before he embarked on the practical business of continuing his line of the Wolkenstein family.

(b) The Pilgrimage of Love

In 1426 the Count Palatine Ludwig III undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and invited Oswald to join him as he passed through Tyrol. The request arrived too late, however, and Oswald sent his apologies to the Count for not being able to follow him. In this letter, a draft of which is preserved, the poet goes on to offer

1. Mayr, pp. 44 f.

advice to Ludwig about the best and safest way to travel to Jerusalem.¹ As he is apparently speaking from experience, Oswald must at some time have visited the Holy Land. There is, however, no other surviving documentary evidence about his journey, and the story of his 'pilgrimage of love' undertaken at the bidding of Sabina Jäger has no other basis than what can be abstracted from his songs.

Two poems from which information has been derived are Ach senliches leiden (K51) and Var, heng und lasz (K17).² In the first of these the poet laments at being parted from his lady; he describes his sadness at being without her, and at the possibility that her gnad will not be vouchsafed to him. It is a common theme, but here the clues to the circumstances of the poem's composition are more than usually explicit:

Ach senliches leiden,
meiden, neiden, schaiden, das tüt we,
besser wer versunken in dem see.
zart minnikliches weib,
dein leib mich schreibt³ und treibt gen
Josophat⁴
(1-5)

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1. The draft is published by J. Schatz, Zs. Ferd., 45 (1901), pp. 183 f.
 2. Cf. W.-R., p. 13;; Mayr, pp. 40, 50 f.; Ladendorf, Neue Jahrbücher, 4 (1901), p. 136.
 3. Schreibt: the sense here is 'verschreibt, verbannt' (cf. K124, 8); see Schatz, Sprache, p. 96.
 4. Oswald mentions the valley of Jehosophat in his letter to Ludwig (Zs. Ferd., 45, p. 184). This line of the poem could also have the figurative sense 'you are driving me to my death' (cf. line 7), for in the Middle Ages this valley was associated with the Last Judgment, as Wachinger has pointed out (Reclam, p. 113); cf., for example, Walther, Lachmann/Kraus 16, 8 f.

The separation has been caused, it seems, by the departure of the knight for the Holy Land, at his mistress's command. The allusion to drowning in the ocean, as a way of escape from sorrow, suggests that the poet was at this moment travelling across the sea, and this is borne out by the unusual simile he introduces:

Mein herz in jamer vicht,
erbricht. bericht und slicht den kummer jo!
frau, schidlicher¹ freuntschafft wart ich so
recht als der delephin,
wenn in der sin fürt hin zu wages grund
vor dem sturm, und darnach wirt enzunt
von sunnen glast,
die im erkückt all sein gemüt

(14-21)

The second poem (K17) is a dialogue between a freulin zart and her lover, who is about to depart for the Holy Land. He tells her:

In Suria stet mein gedanck,
zu fronem grab nach deinem rat gar sunder wangk,
nach deinem dankh so wil ich teglich achten
(10-12)

Both songs refer to a pilgrimage undertaken by a lover at his lady's bidding. Such a theme is, however, not uncommon in the literature of chivalry, and one must therefore beware of taking Oswald's words literally, as a personal confession. Both poems were probably written to entertain

1. Schidlich: 'einen Streit entscheidend, friedfertig'. The sense is: 'I am waiting for the friendship that will settle my troubles.' He hopes that the storm of his cares will pass, and that she, his sun, will shine on him again.

his fellow-travellers on board ship, and he may well have invented the minne situation in order to stylise his journey in terms of a literary convention. This seems all the more likely in view of the impersonal nature of the second poem, which consists mainly of a long speech by the lady in which she advises her lover about how to cope with the hazards of his voyage. The main purpose of this seems in fact to be to show off the Italian nautical terms which Oswald picked up on board ship.¹

The key passage in the story of Oswald's supposed pilgrimage of love is stanza IV of Es fügt sich (K18), which begins as follows:

Mein tummes leben wolt ich verkeren, das ist war,
und ward ain halber beghart wol zwai ganze jar;
mit andacht was der anfangk sicherlichen zwar,
hett mir die minn das ende nicht erstöret.
Die weil ich rait und süchet ritterliche spil
und dient zu willen ainer frauen, des ich hil,
die wolt mein nie genaden ainer nussen vil,
bis das ain kutten meinen leib bedoret.
Vil manig ding mir do gar ring zu handen ging,
do mich die kappen mit dem lappen umbefing.
zwar vor und seit mir nie kain meit so wol verhing,
die mein wort freuntlich gen ir gehöret.
Mit kurzer schnür, die andacht für zum gibel aus,
do ich die kutt von mir do schutt in nebel rausz
...

(49-62)

1. See Mayr, pp. 52 ff., and Guntram Plangg, 'Romanisches in der Dichtung Oswalds von Wolkenstein', in Welt-offene Romanistik, Festschrift Alwin Kuhn zum 60. Geburtstag, Innsbruck, 1963, pp. 54 ff.

The story Oswald tells here is somewhat confusing. He became a beghart for nearly two years, he says, that is, he put on a monastic habit in order to live a life of austerity and good works.¹ He assures us that his intention to change his ways was serious, and that his initial frame of mind was pious - mit andacht (49-51). In the end, however, minne put an end to his devotion (52). But then he seems to tell the same story again in a different way: he had been serving a lady who refused to give him her favour unless he put on a Mönchskutte (53-56). From this it would appear that minne was in fact the origin of his idea of becoming a beghart. He goes on to relate that the monk's robe proved very useful, for then 'many things came easily to hand'. Never did any woman who accepted his courtship bring him such good fortune (57-60). Finally he refers once more to the end of his undertaking, when he threw off his kutte and with it his piety (61-62). Oswald thus appears to give two versions of this escapade: he says first that he began to live a religious life, but was distracted from it by love, and second that he was persuaded to change his ways by a lady. One could reconcile the two by assuming that the frau he mentions was the person who first inspired his good intention, but that this led eventually to

1. See E.W. McDonnell, The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture, New Brunswick, 1954, pp. 246 ff.

debauchery (the minn and manig ding). Oswald's audience would be prepared for such a twist in his story, because the beguards and beguines had soon acquired a reputation for quite unreligious loose-living.¹

There is almost unanimous agreement among Oswald's biographers that in this passage he is describing his pilgrimage to the Holy Land.² If this were so, one would expect him to mention, in addition to clerical garb - die kappe mit dem lappen, ain kutten - some special mark of the pilgrim, the broad-brimmed hat, the staff and scrip, or the cross.³ Nor does he even refer to a journey here. The only link with his pilgrimage is in fact the theme of Minnedienst, which this passage has in common with the two poems quoted earlier (K51, K17). The association of Oswald's adventures as a beghart with his journey to the Holy Land is yet another detail of Beda Weber's biography

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1. See Grimm, 1, 1295, under begine. Cf. also Wachinger (Reclam, p. 41), who translates line 57 'da ging manches gar leicht', and refers to the popular motif of the monk as lover.
 2. E.g. Weber, pp. 126 ff.; W.-R., p. 14; Marold, p. 25; Mayr, pp. 40 ff.; Schwarke, Interpretationsstudien, pp. 43 ff.; Ulrich Müller, pp. 29, 33.
 3. See E.L. Cutts, Scenes and Characters of the Middle Ages, London 1926, pp. 164 ff.; also A. Schultz, Deutsches Leben im XIV. und XV Jahrhundert, 1892, p. 237. The cross, described by Schultz as 'zwei kreuzweise gelegte Wanderstäbe, die sie (die Pilger) auf ihre Kleider sticken liessen', is mentioned specifically by Oswald in the poem where he talks of the time he was a bilgerin: 'Zwai stäbichen hëtt ich pald genät/auf ainen höggen ...' (K90, 9-10).

which has remained firmly established despite the scantiness of the evidence on which it is based. The explanation for this is that no other known event of the poet's life obviously tallies with a period of penance lasting two years. But even this negative reason is invalid, because two years would be an exceptionally long time for such a journey, as Mayr concedes.¹ For example, the pilgrimage undertaken by Duke Ernst of Habsburg in 1414 was completed in four months.² In fact, if the passage in Es fügt sich is finally disassociated from Oswald's (supposedly two-year) visit to the Holy Land, then there is no reason why this should not have coincided with Duke Ernst's expedition. As we saw earlier, Oswald supported the duke against his brother Frederick soon after this,³ and also it is certain that a common ally of Ernst and Oswald, Ulrich von Starkenberg, was on this same pilgrimage in 1414.⁴ During the period they were abroad, from July to November, there is no record of Oswald's presence in Tyrol.⁵ Shortly before this he

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1. He notes that the average duration of such a journey was 6-8 months: Mayr, p. 49.
 2. See A. Steinwenter, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte der Leopoldiner', in Archiv für österreichische Geschichte, 58 (1879), pp. 457 ff.
 3. See above, pp. 89 f.
 4. See J. Chmel, Geschichte Kaiser Friedrichs IV, Hamburg, 1840, p. 584.
 5. W.-R., p. 24; pp. 102 f.

collected a debt from the Bishop of Brixen and also sold the rights to two pieces of land.¹ Such ready money would be needed to finance a journey to Palestine.

What, then, was Oswald doing during his two years as a beghart, if he was not in the Holy Land, but at home? One possible answer is provided by the records of the Augustinian Priory at Neustift, near Brixen. In 1411 Oswald purchased a prebend at this priory, by the terms of which he moved into a house there, and dined at the table of the provost. How long or how often he made use of this accommodation is not clear, but it was a permanent arrangement, and Oswald secured thereby the right of burial at Neustift.² In the years immediately after this he appears to have been occupied with local, diocesan affairs, and he did not become involved in political activities outside Brixen until 1413 or later.³ This partial withdrawal from the world could well be the time to which he is referring in the problematic passage in his poem. But what of the meit or frau he mentions? The association of his religious

1. Ibid., Regestenverzeichnis, Nos. 24, 25a, 25b.

2. W.-R., pp. 22 ff. The record of this agreement is published in full in the Urkundenbuch des Augustiner Chorherrenstiftes Neustift, herausgegeben von T. Mairhofer (Fontes Rerum Austriacarum, 2. Abteilung, XXXIV. Band, Vienna, 1871, pp. 468 f.).

3. See above, pp. 70 ff.

si sprach zu im: 'ich wol vernim dein krumben don.
was möcht mir, ach, der beghart¹ wolgefallen?' ...
ain slëcht gewand tet mir die schand, als oft
geschicht.
(K41, 25-28; 31)

It is unlikely, therefore, that the story Oswald tells in stanza IV of Es fügt sich has any connection with either his pilgrimage or his plans for marriage, or indeed with Sabina Jäger. This can be confirmed by examining the continuity between this verse and the one which follows it. Stanzas V, VI and lines 101-103 of VII all clearly refer to the same woman, whom we have assumed (in the last section) to be Sabina. The lament of stanza V begins as follows:

ja zwinget mich erst ain ausserweltes mündli rot
da von mein herz ist wunt bis in den bittern tod
(K18, 66-67)

Wachinger translates this erst as 'vor allem';² Schatz gives 'jetzt erst',³ which is confirmed by the way Oswald uses the word elsewhere.⁴ In either case it seems that the poet is introducing this woman for the first time. If this is so, and it is Sabina to whom he now refers, then these lines effectively separate the story of his escapade as an amorous monk (IV) from the description of his love for her (V-VII).

1. Here in the sense of 'tramp'.

2. Wachinger, Reclam, p. 41.

3. Schatz, Sprache, p. 61.

4. Cf. K1, 91; K2, 71; K9, 53; K63, 28; K74, 8;
K78, 26; K91, 77; K92, 35; K102, 19.

(c) 'Ain mensch von achzehen jaren'

If Oswald's attachment to Sabina Jäger lasted for as long as he claims, then it is reasonable to assume that he addressed a number of poems to her. Werner Marold did not think it necessary to limit these to the two which Schatz considered to be certain, for Schatz's caution was a reaction against the carefree method of Beda Weber and his followers, to whom every poem had been fair game for fanciful interpretation. In Marold's chronology five of Oswald's poems before 1421 are ascribed to Sabina's influence (K43, K57, K58, K80, K106), with a further nine as possibilities (K46, K52, K53, K65, K66, K90, K91, K93, K94).¹ Eva Schwarke rightly questions the adequacy of Marold's grounds for choosing so many,² and indeed his uncertainty is reflected in the greater number of poems to which he appends a question mark. But Schwarke's criticism, that Marold was attracted to the poems he chose only by the note of lamentation which he associated with Oswald's feelings for Sabina, can be applied to her own approach, which differs only in that she restricts the Sabina poems to three (K57, K65, K106) in which she herself finds this same note

1. Marold, Kommentar, pp. 19 ff.

2. Schwarke, Interpretationsstudien, pp. 10-11.

particularly moving.¹ One of these songs (K106) has been discussed already. We shall now examine K57, K65, and one more of the supposed Sabinalieder, K58, and consider how far the biographical interpretation which has been applied to these poems can be justified.

It was Beda Weber who first told how Oswald met and fell in love with Sabina Jäger when she was eighteen years old, and this event has been accepted as fact by almost every biographer since.² The origin of the story is obviously Ain mensch von achzehen jaren klüg (K57), in which the poet describes his love for an eighteen-year-old girl. If the reader of this poem hopes to learn more about the girl, in addition to her age, and about Oswald's relationship with her, then he is soon disappointed. There is virtually nothing in the poem which raises her above the anonymity of the other women, real or imagined, to whom Oswald addressed his love. He describes how she has taken all joy from him, and made him restless. He has been captivated by her eye(s) and her mouth (I). However far he

1. Ibid.

2. Weber, p. 123. Cf. Marold, p. 25; W.-R., p. 11; Mayr, p. 44; most recently, in Hans Rupprich, Die deutsche Literatur vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Barock (De Boor/Newald, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur, IV, i), 1970, p. 173. Schatz (1904, pp. 8 ff.) and Wachinger (Reclam, pp. 92 f.) leave open the question of when Oswald and Sabina became acquainted.

is from her, he sees her face, and her tender looks arouse his love. If only she knew his thoughts when he stands before her, weak with love and not daring to move! (II)
There is no more womanly woman, she is so charming. Her beautiful bearing causes him discomfort (with love). When he thinks of her proportions - who could be ill-disposed towards this sweet girl? If only she would think of him! (III)

The wish expressed in the closing line of the poem is a cliché of the courtly lyric. Oswald uses almost the same words in the final line of a hymn of praise to the Virgin Mary: 'so tû mich, lieb, bedencken!' (K34, 36). Also, the description of the girl in the present poem is quite vague and impersonal:

wenn ich bedenck so gar die masz
kürz, leng, smal, brait, zwar tûn und lasz ...
(21-22)

Why then, has the girl thus 'described' been identified with Sabina Jäger? The reason is that the poem contains one tantalising detail about the person who is its subject - her precise age - which tells us that Oswald is thinking of one particular woman; the only woman in his life whom we know by name, besides his wife, is Jäger's daughter.

Assuming for the moment that the girl in question was in fact Sabina, why did Oswald write this poem? The answer seems obvious: he met her, was attracted to her,

and paid homage in song.¹ But her father had been the Wolkensteins' next-door neighbour since Oswald was a boy.² Did it really take him eighteen years to make the acquaintance of a girl who grew up on the same estate? This is highly improbable. Yet if he knew her already, then why does he not only mention her age, but even go so far as to fill the whole of the first line of his poem with it? To the modern ear the phrase ain mensch von achzehen jaren implies 'such a young girl'. Thus Weber says that Sabina was 'erst achtzehn Jahre alt'³ when Oswald got to know her, and Mayr, that she was a 'blutjunge Frau'.⁴ But this is a false interpretation of the poet's words: the word 'young' does not occur in the poem, and in fact a girl of eighteen would not appear young in the eyes of Oswald or his contemporaries, not, that is, if we take marriageability as a yardstick. One example may serve for many: the mother of Oswald's enemy, Frederick of Tyrol, was only fourteen years of age when she married Duke Leopold II of Habsburg. Far from being synonymous with youth, the age of eighteen

1. Thus Weber, p. 123; Marold, p. 25; W.-R., p. 11; Mayr, p. 44.

2. Martin Jäger had married Barbara von Hauenstein between April 1387 and March 1388; see Mayr, Die Reiselieder, p. 43.

3. Weber, p. 123.

4. Mayr, p. 44.

had at this time quite the opposite meaning: in the medieval legal code, the Schwabenspiegel, the chapter (51) which deals with the age of majority is headed kint von achzehen jarn.¹ Here is the key to an interpretation of Oswald's poem which would give due prominence to the one unusual detail in it, the phrase with which it opens: the occasion of the poem was the coming-of-age of a girl. It may have been Sabina Jäger, it may even have been Margarete von Schwangau. More than this we cannot say for certain.

The poem which immediately follows K57 in all the manuscripts is also, by common consent, a Sabina song.² In it Oswald compares his beloved to the months of the year:

Mein bül laisst mir gesellschaft zwar,
recht als die monat tünt dem jar

(K58, 1-2)

By association with the charges of inconstancy Oswald made against Sabina after her treachery in 1421, this poem came to be regarded as a description of the changeable temperament of his mistress.³ Disregarding for the moment the possible identity of the girl in question, this is not even an accurate interpretation of the simile upon which the

1. Der Schwabenspiegel, herausgegeben von F.L.A. von Lassberg, Tübingen, 1840, p. 26.

2. Weber, p. 125; Marold, p. 19; Altpeter, Die Stilisierung des Autobiographischen bei Oswald, p. 12; Ladendorf, Neue Jahrbücher, 4, p. 136; Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 121.

3. See especially Ladendorf, Noggler, loc. cit.

poem is constructed. First of all, the poet is describing not only her personality but also her appearance:

Zu jedem hat si sich verphlicht
mit müet und ouch mit angesicht

(5-6)

The parallels he draws with the months of May, June, July and August (17-32) refer to her beauty, for example:

Ir har, ir mund, ir wenglin vein,
ir öglin, klar als der rubein,
dem geit der junius liechten schein,
mit seiner krafft in hübschem plüt

(21-24)

Second, there is virtually nothing in the poem that could be construed as an accusation of fickleness, with the possible exception of the following comparison with March, phrased in conventional antitheses:

Si macht mich siech dick, oft gesund,
mit lieb und laid zu manger stund,
das macht der merz, der irs tüt kund ...

(9-11)

For the rest, the main themes are her beauty - compared with the summer months - and her cold aloofness - compared with winter. Had Oswald really been concerned with the subject of capriciousness, he would surely have expressed it more clearly, perhaps by contrasting the seasons instead of working chronologically through the year. As it is, he seems to have begun with the idea of a comparison between his (real or imagined) lady-love and the months, which was then worked out in a catalogue of items. The main evidence

for associating this poem with the allegedly fickle Sabina is thus undermined. Another detail which may have contributed to this interpretation is the poet's use of the term bül, for in several of his later poems he uses this word with reference to Sabina.¹ On two occasions, however, it applies equally clearly to his wife Margarete.²

Mein herz, das ist versert (K65), the last of the three poems (after K57 and K106) included by Eva Schwarke in her chapter on the 'Frühe Sabina-Gedichte',³ provides a further illustration of the hazards of a biographical interpretation of Oswald's love songs. Here the poet complains that his heart has been struck a poisonous wound and cut in two by a sharp sword. No doctor on earth can cure him, he says, only the person who caused him this injury (I). He then addresses the offender directly:

Frau, krön dein edle art!
bewar dein höchsten schatz,
das dir nicht werd verschart⁴

1. K23, 116; K26, 112; K55, 1; K59, 3; K60, 7.

2. K33, 35; K77, 2.

3. Schwarke, Interpretationsstudien, pp. 16 ff.

4. Verschart. This could be the past participle of verscharn, here in the sense of 'verführen' (Lexer, III, 213), or of verscherten, meaning 'to wound' (cf. K1, 30).

dein wild in schanden latz,
Da mit kain zungen an dir nicht werd erfreuet,
so wirt mein herz gesund gar und verneuet.
(7-12)

The meaning here of schatz is probably 'treasured possession',¹ that is, her noble, womanly nature, thus repeating the idea expressed in the previous line. The wild of the metaphor introduced in the next couplet is, it seems, the poet himself, trapped in the shameful snare of unrequited love. Schwarke has a quite different interpretation of the passage. Following Schatz's text, which has verkart in line 9 (as in MS. A), she translates: '(du musst dich in Reinheit bewahren), damit dein starkes Gefühl nicht in Schande verwandelt wird.'² Although verkeren is used frequently by Oswald in the sense of 'to change',³ here it must surely mean 'to lead astray'.⁴ Whilst he does use wilde on one occasion with the meaning 'wild, undisciplined behaviour',⁵ to interpret wild

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1. It would be possible also to take schatz to mean 'beloved' (cf. K33, 29; K107, 6), anticipating lines 9-10. See Schatz, Sprache, p. 95.
 2. Schwarke, p. 17.
 3. E.g., K10, 22; K18, 49; K19, 145; K27, 64, 69; K32, 3.
 4. Lexen, III, 140. Oswald uses this verb on one other occasion in the sense of 'to turn (physically)': K33, 13.
 5. K10, 93. Cf. wild, 'game': K21, 49; K28, 61; K52, 4.

here as the passionate feelings of the woman is to ignore the conventional situation - the lady's aloofness in face of her lover's pleading - around which the poem is constructed.

In the final stanza the poet reminds his beloved of the words with which she once willingly consoled him, and begs her to think of his impending death (for the lack of her love), and to act in order that he may be saved:

Ich man dich, lieb, der wort
mit williklichem trost.
bedenck das kleglich mort,
da mit ich werd erlost!

(13-16)

He ends by declaring that he would prefer to die rather than to live in dishonour (the dishonorable slavery of unanswered love):

Vil besser ist mit eren kurz gestorben zwar,
wann mit schanden hie gelebt zwai hundert jar.
(17-18)

Schwarke sees this poem as a very personal statement of Oswald's passion for Sabina Jäger.¹ Such an interpretation is, however, difficult to justify. The poet expresses himself in traditional images such as he uses in other love poems. In Freuntlicher blick (K91) he describes how a lady's eyes have wounded his heart (1 ff.), and he begs her to save him from death with her love (57 ff.). In Tröstlicher hort (K56) he says that his heart is dying without his beloved, and only she can save him from the

1. Schwarke, pp. 17 ff.

bonds in which she has enmeshed him (23 ff.).¹ The lady is in each case anonymous, though the second song may well be dedicated to Oswald's wife Margarete, because he addresses his hort also as: 'Gesell, geluck, freud, wunn und hail' (K56, 7). He uses exactly the same words, with the addition of 'und höchstes G' in Senlich mit langer zeit (K97), which was certainly written for Grete. The idea of unrequited love as ignominious bondage is mentioned briefly in Mein herz jüngt sich (K68), addressed to his wife, who, he says, has saved him, because she

entslosz meine band
so gar an strëfflich schand

(4 f.)

The woman whom Oswald reproaches in Mein herz, das ist versert cannot be identified, and the conventional situation of the lovesick man offers little scope for a biographical interpretation. In fact, Oswald was probably inspired here not by personal experience, but by a fellow poet, for it has recently been established that the melody of his poem was borrowed from a song by the Italian composer Francesco Landini.² This song, entitled Questa fanciulla, is also

1. Cf. also K51, 7 ff., 14 ff., 35 ff.

2. See Theodor Göllner, 'Landinis Questa fanciulla bei Oswald von Wolkenstein', in Die Musikforschung, 17 (1964), pp. 393 ff.

a lover's lament, in which the poet speaks of a wounded and captive heart.¹

From the above discussion it emerges that the story of the early years of the love affair between Oswald and Sabina Jäger is built on very insecure foundations. This applies to the matter of their meeting, to the 'pilgrimage of love' and her supposed rejection of his offer of marriage, and to the traditional idea of Sabina's character. The real background of the poet's relationship with the woman he 'served' for so long cannot be deduced with any certainty from his early poems. A biographical approach must ultimately be frustrated, for in these and other love poems we come up against the barrier of his phraseology, of descriptions, pleas and laments which are the essential subject-matter of the contemporary love lyric.² Ironically it was not until her betrayal of Oswald that Sabina became clearly recognisable in his songs.

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1. See The Works of Francesco Landini, edited by Leonard Ellinwood (The Medieval Academy of America), 1939, pp. 285 f.
 2. See the review of this material in Arthur Hübner, 'Das Deutsche im Ackermann aus Böhmen', reprinted in Der Ackermann aus Böhmen des Johannes von Tepl und seine Zeit (Wege der Forschung CXLIII), edited by Ernst Schwarz, 1968, pp. 243 ff.; also J. Beyrich, Untersuchung über den Stil Oswalds von Wolkenstein, Leipzig, 1910, pp. 87 ff.

iii. The Sabina Poems: After 1421

(a) 'Dise Hausmannin'

In one stanza of the poem which he wrote after his release from Prince Frederick's custody in 1427, Oswald viewed his recent misfortune in the context of his love affair with the widow Hausmann:

mit meines bülen freund müsst ich mich ainen,
die mich vor jaren ouch beslüg
mit grossen eisen niden zu den bainen.
was ich der minn genossen hab,
des werden meine kindlin noch wol innen;
wenn ich dort lig in meinem grab,
so müssen si ire hendlin dorumb winden,
das ich den namen ie erkannt
von diser Hausmaninnen

(K26, 112-120)

This passage is important because its dramatic last line contains the only mention in Oswald's poetry of the fateful name of his former mistress. He tells us that he has had to come to terms with her relatives, that is, her father Martin Jäger and her two sons,¹ and then recalls how, some years before, she put iron fetters on his legs. This last remark enables us to identify Sabina in a number of poems he wrote after the incident mentioned here, which must have occurred during his imprisonment in the winter of 1421-22. The lines quoted above also raise two questions about Oswald's treatment of the Hauenstein affair in his poems. The first is, what kind of woman was Sabina? The answer

1. See W.-R., p. 63.

to this has been almost unanimous: 'ein wahres Satansmädcl',¹ 'ein weibliches Scheusal',² 'eine berauschend duftige Giftblume',³ a 'dämonisches Weib', to whom Oswald sacrificed 'Leib und Seele, Ehre und Gut, ... um schliesslich schmäählich betrogen zu werden.'⁴ Such descriptions are somewhat highly-coloured, to say the least, but when one considers passages like the one quoted above, it is scarcely surprising that Sabina has been generally regarded as a wicked femme fatale who ruined poor Oswald's life. One simple point, however, is too easily overlooked: we know Oswald's version of the events in question - but we do not have Sabina's. Though we can call on some documentary evidence in the matter of the Hauenstein feud, the poet himself is our only witness to the character of his mistress, and to her treatment of him. The second question concerns Sabina's role in the intrigues against Oswald during and after the year 1421. His assertion that his children will live to regret that he ever knew this woman (K26, 115-120) does not sound like an empty phrase, and in fact we know that there was truth in it: the burden of debt which Oswald incurred during his imprisonment in 1421-22 was bequeathed to his children when he died.

1. Otto Ladendorf, Neue Jahrbücher ..., 4, p. 136.

2. Anton Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 131.

3. Gustav Roethe, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Deutsche Rundschau, 197 (1923), p. 148.

4. W.-R., p. 58.

And yet, as we have seen, the responsibility for the imposition of this burden lay with his arch-enemy, the Prince of Tyrol.¹ Why, then, does Oswald single out not the Prince, nor Martin Jäger, but Sabina as the person at whose feet the blame for his and his family's troubles is to be laid? One reason could be that the poet wished to stylise his unfortunate experiences as the sorrow which inevitably follows love. This well-known theme is given an unusual twist in the passage quoted above, in that here it is not the poet himself who is to suffer, but his children. We shall take particular note of these two points, Oswald's bias against his former mistress and his use of literary conventions, in considering his version of what befell him in the autumn of 1421.

In one of the poems he wrote at that time Oswald tells us that he has been captured by a woman:

so ward ich ir gefangen man;
mein wolgetrauen ir kirchvart übersach.²
(K2, 65-66)

This enigmatic comment is expanded in a later account of the same incident:

1. See above, p. 102.

2. Übersehen: the basic meaning of this word as Oswald uses it here is 'gering achten' - cf. K39, 42: 'mein touff und fiermung übersich (violate)'; the implication of K2, 66 and K59, 21, seems to be: 'I paid too little heed to the pilgrimage which she proposed, mistook its true intention, and submitted to it trustingly.'

Auff wolgetrawen ich mich verschosz¹
zu ir von rechter liebe grosz,
des hab ich mangel herten stosz
desselben gangs erlitten,
Do ich ir kirchfart übersach,²
die si wolt reitten, als si sprach
(K59, 17-22)

Evidently Sabina had sent word to Oswald that she was going to make a pilgrimage,³ and had asked him to accompany her. He interpreted her request as an invitation to a tryst and joined her, only to find himself in an ambush. He says that in complying with her wish he acted out of rechter liebe grosz. It is perhaps significant, however, that this detail is mentioned only in the second passage. Are we to believe that it was 'true love' which impelled him to go? There is one more reference to Sabina's betrayal, which puts the incident in a more realistic perspective. In a later poem, written during a visit to Pressburg,⁴ where he hoped to obtain financial help from Sigismund, Oswald, now preoccupied with the debt he owed to Frederick, made the following comment:

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1. Schatz (Sprache, p. 65) gives 'verliebt sein' for sich verschiezen, as in K66, 7. But the sense here (and also in K25, 61) seems to be 'to rush hastily, and mistakenly (into trusting her)'. Cf. Grimm, 12, 1, 1078 ff., section 8; also J.A. Schmeller/G.K. Frommann, Bayrisches Wörterbuch, 1966 (2. Neudruck der Ausgabe München, 1877), II, 478.
 2. See above, p. 298, note 2.
 3. Kirchfart: 'Wallfahrt nach einer Kirche, oder Bittgang aus einer Kirche nach der anderen' (Lexen, I, 1587).
 4. See below, pp. 341ff.

Ich hoff, mein sach möcht werden güt,
liesz herzog Fridrich seinen strausz ...¹
Segs tausent guldin wil er han,
die bülschaft kām mich sawer an.
do sis verbott, hett ichs gelan,
so törft mein rugg jetz gen der banck nicht krachen
In Ungerlant die lange nacht.

(K55, 34-35, 38-42)

This line, which seems to have been generally overlooked, is the only real clue to the relationship between the poet and his mistress immediately before his imprisonment. It appears that Sabina had broken off their liaison, perhaps after Oswald's marriage, and that he had tried to prolong it. This would not have been out of character, for in another poem, where he describes how he set out on an amorous adventure, only to return covered in bruises,² he quotes

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1. Strausz (strûz): 'Streit' (that is, his struggle against Oswald).
 2. Ulrich Müller (op. cit., pp. 65-71) takes this poem as a 'Schwank-Fassung der ersten Gefangenschaft Oswalds'. It is an interesting interpretation, but it is based on a few similarities between the two episodes which are probably coincidental. The chief of these, and the only one which carries any weight, is the mention of a kirch-fart, which in the poem is question (K102, 47 f.) could, it is true, be an allusion to Sabina's sham pilgrimage. On the other hand the eisen in K102, 70, is clearly a weapon with which Oswald was beaten, whereas in K1, K2, K26, and K59 - all referring to his imprisonment - it is the iron of his fetters. Also, the comment 'si gerten der meinen hab' in K102, 85 is too vague to be certainly identified with the Jägers' demands (K2, 43 ff.; K59, 41). The slender evidence of these similarities is further undermined by the differences between the two incidents. Oswald describes his adventure in some detail: it took place in St. Lorenzen (in the Puster-tal), whence he returned home to Bruneck (i.e. to Castle Neuhaus - see above, p. 118). The Jägers, on the other hand, imprisoned him near Meran, before he was taken into custody by Prince Frederick. Also, his amorous escapade happened in May (K102, 2), whereas Sabina practised her deceit in the autumn, as he tells us in K60, 28 ff.

the reaction of his wife on his return home as follows:

si sprach: 'das sein hie alte mër,
doch junget sich ir blüt.'

(K102, 99-100)

The Jägers, doubtless familiar with Oswald's weakness and in particular with the flame which still burned for Sabina, had the perfect bait with which to trap him.

The abduction itself is described by Oswald only once, in a later poem:¹

Gevangen und gefüret
ward ich ainst als ain dieb
mit sailen zû gesnüret;
das schüff meins herzen lieb,
von der ich hab erworben
mein aigen leiden swër.

(K23, 73-78)

Here he assigns the responsibility for the attack only to his mistress; similarly, in the poems he wrote during and after his sojourn in prison, it is always this woman, and she alone, who is his tormentor:

nu tüt si mir den grössten ungemach,
Der baine sterck
spannt si mir herter in wann ainem pferde
(K2, 60-62)²

Again, are we to take this literally? Historical documents tell us that die Hausmannin was only one of a group of people who captured and imprisoned him at Castle Forst.

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1. In this poem (K23) Oswald describes seven occasions on which he had a narrow escape from death. This incident is one of them.
 2. Cf. also K1, 15 f., 44, 47 f., 103 ff.; K2, 67 ff.; K26, 113 f.; K55, 7 ff.; K59, 9 ff., 37 ff.

Their leader was Martin Jäger, or so it would appear, for he was always their spokesman.¹ Of these others and their demands Oswald makes no mention, apart from one oblique reference in a prayer:

hilf allen, die mich tötten,
das si gebüssen hie ir schuld,
die si an mir begangen haben hert (K1, 118-120)

In his account of his imprisonment, then, Oswald assigns the role of chief villain to Sabina Jäger, and sees himself as the victim of a faithless mistress. One interpretation of this could be that she was indeed a cruel and scheming woman, and he the innocent lover who had been duped; another, that the part played by his former mistress in his capture suggested to Oswald a convenient way of stylising his experience, and also of distracting attention from his own blame in the Hauenstein affair. The truth will lie somewhere between these two points. Bearing this in mind, we shall now examine in more detail the poems he wrote at this time. We shall look first at K1 and K2, which record his immediate reactions to his imprisonment. The remaining poems will be considered in two groups: the first comprises a number of religious and didactic songs inspired by his

1. Cf. Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), pp. 166 ff., especially documents 6, 11, 12.

experience of prison; the second is a group of three poems in which Oswald looks back on this event and describes his misfortune and its consequences in greater detail.

(b) Imprisonment¹ (K1, K2)

Ain anefangk (K1)² was probably the first of the poems Oswald composed whilst he was detained by the Jäger party in the winter of 1421. Its date can be ascertained from the poet's description of the ill-treatment to which he was being subjected at this time, and also from the prayer to St. Catherine (line 9), whose feast was celebrated on November 25th.³ It is, as Wachinger has noted, among the most personal and earnest of his poems, though it is doubtful whether this accounts for its position at the head of all

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1. The imprisonment referred to here is the time which Oswald spent in the Jägers' dungeons from his capture in the autumn of 1421 (at some time between September 14th and November 20th) until he was handed over to the Prince of Tyrol on December 17th. It was during this period that he suffered the indignities which he describes in his poems. Though he afterwards remained in the prince's custody until March 1422, he was probably only under house arrest, and was not subjected to any hardship.
 2. See also Wachinger's translation, Reclam, No. 18.
 3. As Schatz pointed out (1902, p. 115).

three manuscripts.¹ There is a more obvious reason why a poem whose first line consists of the words Ain anefangk should appear at the beginning of a collection. Here is another small detail which warns us not to underestimate the formal side of Oswald's art.

Oswald begins with the pronouncement that without God's help the wisest man's labours will come to a bad end, if at the beginning he was full of sin and lacking in the fear of God (1-6). For this reason he himself is sick in his soul, and confides his fear of death to St. Catherine, whom he asks to plead for him before Christ (7-12). He thanks the Lord for the sign of favour he has received, in that the very woman with whom he has sinned is the instrument of his atonement (13-16). From this anyone can see that joy must eventually lead to sorrow (17-18. Stanza I).

The poet now takes up the allusion of lines 13-16, and tells of how he has devoted so much time, over thirteen years, to a lady. He has remained constant and has suffered for love of her, never forgetting her, however far he has travelled (19-30). He has spent many blissful nights in her arms (31-34). This joy he must now pay for with sorrow, since his arms and legs are in chains (35-

1. As Wachinger suggests: Reclam, p. 116. In the picture which decorates MS. A the poet holds in his hand a scroll on which is written (though it is no longer clearly legible) the opening line of this poem; see Schatz 1904, p. 22.

36. Stanza II). Out of love they often caused each other pain, but their love never really ended; since he is her prisoner, his life now hangs in the balance (37-42).¹ Through her, God has cast him down because of his great sin. She causes him atonement and grievous torment so that he cannot express half his misery (43-48). He lies before her, bound with rope and iron, and she imposes burdens on him which deny him joy (49-52). The time has come for God to make him atone and to purify him (53-54. Stanza III).

Oswald now elaborates on the themes of sin and worldly love. No man, he says, can refuse to travel the path of life which the future will bring him, for predestined things can never be changed (55-60). The sinner's path is wondrously beset with snares, which no master could invent except God, who weighs out each man's share in life (61-66). He is jealous and wishes to be loved the most. If any man neglects to do this, his sins grow ripe and God lets him run free until a trap (latz) catches him (67-72. Stanza IV). Love is the most valuable treasure; it constrains the Lord God to ease the distress of the sinner (73-78). But he, the poet, has failed to repay with his love the one who died for him and many other sinners. If he had only succeeded with

1. I follow the punctuation in Schatz (1902, p. 51) - semicolon after line 39, comma after 41 - in preference to Klein, where the sense of 39-41 would be: 'our love never ended properly (?), since I am her prisoner.'

half his zeal in directing to God the love which he has given to the lady who treats him so harshly, he would die free of sin. How heavy are the bonds of worldly love! (79-90. Stanza V). He now regrets having persisted in his wickedness, thus arousing the wrath of one who has been patient for so long (91-95). Because of this, five iron fetters (lätz) were prepared for him. By God's will he has fallen into these with both feet, his left arm, his thumbs¹ and his neck. Thus did his lady embrace him unlovingly with her cold white arms. Though he complained to her of his heart's grief, she showed him no pity (96-108. Stanza VI).

The poet concludes by describing his great anxiety at the thought of death and of the fate of his soul (109-114). He prays to Maria kind to stand by him, and to help those who are killing him to atone here on earth for their guilt against him (115-120). He swears by his death that he never bore the lady any malice in his heart. If he should die, he prays that God should not make her pay for it (121-126. Stanza VII).

It is clear that this poem was inspired by a particular experience, of imprisonment and ill-treatment. Oswald does not say how he came to be in this situation or

1. Daumen is plural here; presumably both thumbs were locked together (otherwise six fetters would be needed!).

why he is being treated thus, but mentions just two details of what has happened: first, that his captor is a woman, and second, that he has been put in chains:

Vor ir lig ich gebunden vast
mit eisen und mit sail
(49-50)

He describes his bonds in detail:

so viel ich in die zwen mit baiden füssen,
in ainen mit dem tengken arm,
mein daumen müssten büssen,
ain stahel ring den hals erwarb
(98-101)

Beyond this we learn nothing of the circumstances of the incident. For most of the poem Oswald is concerned with two points arising from his experience: his relationship with the woman who is directly responsible for his misfortune, and his own sinfulness.

As has been observed already, it is difficult to decide how much truth there is in Oswald's avowal that he has been devoted to this woman for many years. His description of their love in this poem is characterised by the commonplace theme of lieb und laid, introduced in the final line of stanza I: '... lieb an laid die leng nicht mag ergen' (18). He goes on to relate that

... mir auf erd kain mensch nie liebers ward.
(24)

mein leib hat vil erlitten
nach ir mit seinklichem hasz.¹

(28-29)

and he contrasts the earlier joy of their love -

Durch si so han ich vil betracht
vil lieber hendlin los,²
in freuden si mir manig nacht
verlech ir ermlin blos

(31-34)

with the sorrow he must now endure:

mit trauren ich das überwind,
seid mir die bain und arm beslagen sind
(35-36)

There is a notable similarity between the technique he employs here and the method we observed in the (later) poem on his imprisonment by Frederick. Again the poet takes a real detail from his present situation: there it was sitting at table with a common stoker (K26, 19 f.), or being tied to his horse (K26, 23 f.) - and recalls contrasting events

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1. Mit seinklichem hasz: this phrase has been variously translated as 'von zorniger Sehnsucht nach ihr' (Wachinger, p. 53), and 'unter dem Widerstreit meiner Gefühle, die mich voll Sehnsucht zu ihr hinzogen, aber auch von ihr forttrieben' (Schwarke, p. 55). But seinklich is almost certainly an alternative form of seinlich, 'weary, slow'; the phrase therefore means '(I was) slow to hate (her)', that is, 'constant in my love'.
 2. Wachinger (p. 53) translates: 'In Liebe zu ihr habe ich oft anmutige Händlein betrachtet'. But Schatz's interpretation is more convincing (Sprache, pp. 76, 86): he takes los as the noun 'Los', and hendlin as 'kinds of' (cf. K40, 3; K91, 55; K92, 16; K99, 21; K106, 5; K123, 54); the sense would then be, 'because of her, I have striven for many (kinds of) delights.'

from the past, in order to emphasise its grievousness. Just as the chains which weighed down his legs in the prince's dungeon were contrasted with the spurs he had formerly worn, here the cold steel ring round his neck is associated with the embraces which his mistress once bestowed upon him:

Also hiels mich mein frau zu fleisz
mit manchem herten druck,
ach husch, der kalten ermlin weisz,
unlieplich was ir smuck¹

(103-106)

Oswald views his wretched plight not only as the pain which inevitably follows love, but also under a religious aspect, as retribution for sin; it is God, whom he chose to ignore for so long, who has brought about his downfall (13 ff., 44 ff., 91 ff.). He begins the poem with an observation on man's sinful ways, and then cites his own case as an illustration of what happens to the sinner who lacks the fear of the Lord:

Des bin ich kranck
an meiner sel ...

(7-8)

On two further occasions he explains his present situation as the consequence of his foolishness in failing in his duty to God:

das ich mit lieb dem nie vergalt ...
des wart ich hie ...

(81 ff.)

1. Smuck: 'Umschmiegen'.

das ich den hab so frävelich erzürnet ...
des wurden mir fünf eisni lätz bereit.
(91 ff.)

The two themes of his relationship to God and to his frau are interwoven. She is now the instrument of his punishment: 'so hat mich got swërlich durch si gevellet' (44) - a role for which she is well suited, since she was his accomplice in the crime itself:

mit der ich mich versündet han,
das mich die selber bösst
(15-16)

His fault was that he wasted his love on her, and had none left for God (79-90).

By dwelling on the religious significance of his experience, Oswald shifts the focus of his poem away from the reality of what has happened to him. Despite this the poem can justifiably be called Erlebnisdichtung. Although he does not recount his experience in detail - whatever else he suffered at his captor's hands is hidden in the vague statement

durch manchen grossen überlast
emphrembt si mir die gail
(51-52)

- it is nevertheless quite clearly recognisable. It may be true that in describing his situation the poet had in mind a conventional motif, the 'slavery of love'.¹ But this does not alter the fact that he was concerned with a very

1. See Wachinger, Reclam, p. 116.

real occurrence; there was nothing unreal or literary about the chains which held him fast in the dungeon (96 ff.).

Oswald's reaction to this experience reveals also familiar traits of his character. It has been said that the conclusion of the poem is impressive as a moment in which he overcame vanity and selfishness, 'um sich demütig Gott zu beugen, und grossmütig seinen Feinden und auch der Geliebten zu verzeihen.'¹ It is true that Oswald bows humbly before God, but he is never unwilling to do this. His generosity to his enemies, on the other hand, does not go beyond asking God to let them atone on earth for their crimes; instead of forgiving them himself, he emphasises their guilt towards him:

hilf allen, die mich tötten,
das si gebüssen hie ir schuld,
die si an mir begangen haben hert. (118-120)

Similarly, though he prays that Sabina should be forgiven for what she has done to him (125 f.), he implies also that she is very much in need of forgiveness, for she has abused his tender love:

Hett ich mein lieb mit halbem füg
got nutzlich nach verzert,
die ich der frauen zärtlichen² trüg,
die mir ist also hert ... (85-88)

It is worth noting also that the only fault Oswald does

1. Schwarke, p. 73.

2. Zärtlichen: clearly an adverb, qualifying trüg.

acknowledge, his sinful love, is not equated with adultery, but only with worldly, as opposed to religious, love. We have observed before his habit of retreating from the question of his own guilt towards his fellow-men into the refuge of religious thoughts. Here again he is not at a loss for a humble confession of his sin in the eyes of God, but this is kept quite separate from the reality of personal affairs, where he remains unshakably self-righteous.

The second poem which Oswald composed at this time, Wach, menschlich tier (K2), also begins on a religious note, with a call to man - the menschlich tier - to use his powers of understanding and realise his sinfulness. Whilst there is still time, he should seek God, who alone can save him (1-10). The poet proceeds from this warning to a long account of the wonders of nature which God has created (11-36). In the third stanza he sums up this description, before turning abruptly to himself:

Der aller frucht,
mensch, tier und vich ain underschaid kan geben,
das ains dem andern nicht geleicht,
der gnad¹ mir an dem leben
und weisz² die fraun gütlicher beicht,
in der gebot man mir zerbricht die schin
(37-42)

Oswald devotes the remainder of the poem to an account of

1. Gnad: a verb, 'sei gnädig'.

2. Weisz: 'weise', i.e. 'let him teach (the lady confession ...)'.
(37-42)

his imprisonment. This is for the most part the same story he told in Ain anefangk, though one or two new details are included. We hear of how his shins were bruised, apparently a form of torture,¹ and of how his mistress demanded money from him. Again he employs a technique of antithesis, measuring Sabina's behaviour against the norm of womanliness, from which it diverges:

An weiplich zucht
kompt si mir selden immer ausz den oren,
wie si die barschafft von mir drung;
si tüt mich vil betoren,²
und das si als ain zeisel sung³
(43-47)

He represents her demands for money as a deafening noise, as opposed to the sweet singing which would be more becoming to her. A melodious voice was a gift which Oswald prized highly, and it is noteworthy that he often refers to the sound of a person's voice in speech and song.⁴

He continues this description of Sabina's un-
womanly behaviour, saying she will soon squander the money she is demanding from him: 'zwar meinen schatz, den hat

1. Cf. K59, 29-32.

2. Betoren: here 'deafen'; cf. K30, 4 f.

3. The sense is probably: 'She ought to (I wish she would) sing like ...' Cf. K105, 33: 'ich wolt, und wer ich auff dem Lech ...'

4. Cf. K12, 44 ff; K41, 24; K43, 37 f.; K61, 15; K71, 11 f.; K87, 14 f.; on his own voice: K5, 16 ff.; K30, 18; K45, 33.

si pald dahin^o (48). Though he has reminded her of her former love, she refuses to remove even one of his bonds:

Was ich si man der lieben mër,
die si ainst an mich lait,
und das si mir ain eisen swër
von meinen füßen têt
und liesz die andern dannocht stan,
da mit traib ich si ferr von mir hindan
(49-54)

The odd use of legen an, with reference to the sweet words she once offered him, is not for the sake of the rhyme, as Schatz suggests,¹ but is a metaphor, from 'putting on' chains, for the sake of the past-present antithesis.

The final stanza (IV) begins with a lament on the impermanence of worldly love (55-56). Once she (her love?)² would have reached out across a hundred miles to sustain him, but now she causes him great pain, harnessing his legs more firmly than a horse, so that he cannot stand (57-63). Through great treachery³ he became her prisoner, because he mistook the true intention of her pilgrimage (64-66). She has enclosed his thumbs, arm and neck in iron (67-68).

1. Schatz, Sprache, p. 85.

2. MS. A has lieb. B and c both have leib. Oswald often uses dein leib periphrastically for du: see Schatz, Sprache, p. 85.

3. Mit groblichem gevërde (64): this phrase occurs also in K11, 10. Schatz (Sprache, p. 71) translates gevërde as 'Gefährdung'; but I think that in both cases it means 'cunning, treachery' (cf. Lexer, I, 956). Here this phrase describes the attack on Oswald, and the misleading punctuation in Klein (and Schatz) should be amended: full-stop after gestän (63), omit full-stop after gevërde (64).

Oh woman, he says, how bitter is your salt!¹ She weakens his limbs (69-70). In the concluding couplet he returns to his religious theme:

erst han ich funden, was ich sücht;
nu walt sein got, der mir den rock gedücht.
(71-72)

But what had he sought? In line 7 he exhorted man to 'süch ihn [got] schier', but the use of was and the wording of line 72 make it unlikely that God is meant here. Oswald is probably referring to the opportunity for penance which he has now found. The image in the final line is also puzzling. Earlier the poet had described how God decorates 'perg und tal, die löch [forests] mit manchem klaid' (29 f.), but there is no apparent link between this idea and the 'coat' which God made for him. Oswald may be thinking of a penitent's robe, as in the poem he wrote during his imprisonment in 1427, where he says he is wearing the 'wat, darinn ich büssen sol'.²

This poem is much looser in its structure than Ain anefangk. Whereas before he had woven together the

1. Wie bitter ist dein sals!: the poet is probably thinking of his situation in terms of the saying 'mit jdm. einen Scheffel Salz essen', i.e. 'mit ihm längere Zeit näheren Umgang pflegen' (Grimm, 8, 1706), rather than of such phrases as 'im Salze liegen', 'ins Salz reißen': 'to be in, get into, a fix' (ibid.). Salz could also mean 'gesalzene Brühe' (A. Götze, Frühneuhochdeutsches Glossar, 2. Auflage, Berlin, 1930, p. 182), and therefore, metaphorically, 'your hospitality'.

2. See above, pp. 199 ff.

themes of sin and personal experience, now he leaves them separate. The appeal to the sinner with which he begins and the subsequent praise of God's power take up over half of the poem, but they have virtually no connection with the narrative which follows. Oswald does not speak in the first person until the fortieth line; here the transition from the general and religious to the personal is quite sudden, as the poet turns his attention from the breadth and variety of creation to the subject of his sore shins. He returns briefly, and with equal abruptness, to the question of sin in the last two lines of the poem, where he leaves his fate in God's hands. But by abandoning the religious viewpoint he succeeds in making the description of his plight in prison even more direct and realistic than in the previous song.

In these two poems Oswald combined, in different ways, the description of his imprisonment with the expression of religious thoughts which it provoked in him. The remaining poems which he wrote during and after his captivity can be divided into two groups: the first consists of a number of religious and didactic songs, in which he surrendered himself to the mood of piety - the accuracy of this term will be discussed shortly - to which his experience gave rise; the second is a group of three poems in which Oswald looked back with some detachment on the unfortunate end of his love affair and described its effects on his life in real terms.

(c) Piety in Adversity (K4, K6, K9, K11, K10, K8, K5)¹

The main theme common to these poems is the rejection of worldly life in favour of goodness and penitence. Oswald urges his fellow-men to abandon the snöde werlt (K11, 1), and to turn away from irdischem gelust (K4, 6). Büsst eur sünd (K8, 58), he tells them, and live a life of poverty and humility. Such advice from the lips of a medieval poet is, of course, not unusual. Nor was it only at this time that Oswald occupied himself with religious and didactic themes. But these songs are of interest to us here because they were inspired by a particular experience, his misfortune at the hands of the Jägers.

The personal element is quite pronounced in some of these poems - K5, K6, K9, K11 - less so in others - K4, K8, K10 - where the poet is concerned above all with moralising. Hör, kristenhait (K4) consists almost entirely of a sermon on göttliche liebe (16), a subject he had touched on in Ain anefangk (K1, 67 ff.). Oswald exhorts all Christian men to reject the untraw diser werlt (14), and love God. He describes this kind of love, which is the antithesis of all things of the flesh (stanzas I-II). It must be nurtured by prayer and by penitence, in fasting and austerity (stanza III). After his initial address to the world in general -

1. The question of the date of these poems will be discussed below, p. 326.

Hör kristenhait!
ich rat dir das mit brüderlichen treuen ...
(1-2)

- the poet withdraws behind his discourse, and does not speak in the first person again until the very last line of the poem. Having described the mode of life essential to the cultivation of gaistlich prunst (37), he concludes:

wann leiden swennt der sünden gall;
des lig ich Wolkensteiner inn der fall.
(53-54)

As in the two poems discussed immediately above, we find here a combination of religious homily and personal detail; but in this case Oswald gives only a brief and enigmatic reference to his own situation. In order to explain the 'trap' in which he finds himself, we need to look beyond this poem. There are two clues, from quite different sources. First, Oswald's words here are reminiscent of K1, where he interpreted his suffering in prison as penance imposed by God, who catches the sinner in his snares (latz, K1, 63, 72). Second, we know that Martin Jäger's wife, Barbara von Hauenstein, possessed an estate near Tisens called In der Vall, named after a tower, die Vall.¹ Oswald is almost certainly playing on the name of this place, to which he was no doubt taken when he was first captured.

Though the position of this allusion, in the

1. See Georg Töchterle, 'Zu Oswald von Wolkenstein', in Der Schlern, 16 (1935), p. 441.

final line, throws emphasis upon it,¹ in the context of the poem as a whole personal experience is reduced to the function of an example - the relevance of which is not explained - in an otherwise quite impersonal sermon. By contrast, Ich spür ain tier (K6) seems a more personal poem, for Oswald does not digress at all to moralise generally, but speaks throughout in the first person. He begins by depicting hell² as a fearsome animal, with broad feet and sharp horns, which is bearing down upon him, ready to gore him and gobble him up. He must join a dance (the poet jumps in a typically carefree manner to another metaphor), in which he will be offered a big garland of all his sins. He will have to pay the bill for these (!), but hopes that God will strike out his account (stanza I). If only he could live sensibly in this world for one year, he would be able to pay off his debt painlessly. Now the payment is going to be hard for him, for death is at hand, and his heart is full of fear. Where, he asks his soul, will you be tomorrow? He calls for help from his friends, who take his property, and leave him to his fate (stanza II). He ends with a prayer to God and to the Virgin Mary that he

1. Cf. also K7, 54; see above, p. 199.

2. It is specifically hell and the devil he is thinking of here, not death (thus Beyrich, Untersuchung über den Stil Oswalds, 1910, p. 32; Schwarke, p. 104): see line 42, der helle slauch.

may be saved from the jaws of hell. He bids farewell to the world, wishing he had served the Lord instead, to whom he addresses a final plea: 'got, schepfer, leucht mir Wolkensteiner klar!' (54. Stanza III).

In its main theme - fear of death and damnation - this poem also takes up a line of thought from Ain anefangk, and culminates in a similar prayer for mercy (K1, VII; K6, III). Oswald manages at the same time to include amid his pious supplications to God a further thrust at certain of his fellow-men:

O kinder, freund, gesellen rain,
wo ist eur hilf und rat?
ir nempt das güt, lat¹ mich allain
hin varen in das bad,
da alle münz hat klainen werd,
neur güte werck, ob ich der hett gemert
(31-36)

The general plea in the first couplet of this passage sounds rhetorical, but not so the accusation in the next three lines. The poet may well be alluding directly to the agreement he made with his brother Michael and his cousin Hans von Villanders in March 1422, whereby he insured them with his own property against their bail for him, and to the exploitation of this agreement by the same cousin

1. Bad: cf. K19, 38 - do wart gehaisset im ain bad, where Oswald plays on the meaning of 'jdm. ein Bad bereiten', 'to lay a trap for' (see Müller, p. 134, note 2). See also Grimm, 1, 1069, quoting Luther: 'wenn die lieben engel nicht weren gewesen, solt dir der teufel ein bad haben zugericht', and Lexer, I, 134, quoting Thomasin, Der wälsche Gast, 6762: 'des tiuvels bat'.

less than a month later.¹

This experience of the treachery of his so-called friends, on top of his treatment at the hands of his enemies, would certainly account for the depression and bitterness which characterise the next three poems. In O welt, o welt (K9) Oswald delivers a sharp attack on the emptiness of worldly life, by which he has been deceived. He enumerates the pleasures and possessions he has enjoyed in the past, now revealed in their true worth, and includes an obvious allusion to his unfortunate love affair:

Was hilft mich, das ich manig nacht
in grossen freuden han gewacht
in dreuzehenthalben jaren!
nu müsz ich wachen, seufzen, zittren ellentlich.
(9-12)

Repeating this same phrase, 'was hilft mich',² he contrasts, in a familiar manner, his past joy with his present wretchedness:

Was hilft mich nu mein raisen fremder lande
in manig küngrich, das mir ist bekande,
was hilft mein tichten und gesangk
von manger künigin schöne?
Was hilft mich manig klüghait fremder sinne,
seid ich bin worden gar zu ainem kinde ...
(16-21. Stanzas
I-II)

He advises his fellow-men against the pursuit of worldly things, whose vanity he can guarantee from his own

1. See W.-R., p. 47.

2. On Oswald's frequent use of anaphora, see Beyrich, op. cit., pp. 59 f.

experience. He warns everyone to guard their possessions:

Hatt ainer güt, zwar des bedarf er hüten ...

der Neithart liesz ain nicht ain fesen,
kôm neur ain ungewitter

(35, 37-38)

The sense of these last two lines seems to be: 'if a storm came (i.e. in troubled times) the envious person would take your last penny.' But as this is the only time Oswald uses the word Neithart, it can scarcely be a coincidence that one of his enemies in the Hauenstein feud was a man called Neithart,¹ especially in view of Oswald's predilection for such word-plays.

The poet then returns to the subject of love, to draw a banal moral from his experiences:

Ich sprich es wol auf meinen aid,
ie grösser lieb, ie merer laid
kompt von den schönen frauen.

(39-41. Stanza III)

Finally, after repeating that all worldly joy turns to sorrow, as youth, strength, beauty and wisdom must perish (stanza IV), he advises his hearers to abandon the base world, and to pray to God for the forgiveness of their sins (stanza V).

Although there is nothing original about Oswald's contemptus mundi, there is no mistaking the personal note in the disillusion he expresses here. The

1. See above, pp. 99 f.

same note is audible in O snöde werlt (K11), which follows a similar pattern. Again the poet elaborates, at even greater length, on the vanity of der werlde dienst (35), and on the treachery and wickedness of man. Though he speaks mainly in the first person, this ich is usually the voice of the preacher, and frequently alternates with the collective wir (1 ff./13 ff.; 19 ff./25 ff.; 61 ff./68 ff.). Yet on several occasions where Oswald may appear to be speaking generally, he is almost certainly thinking of the recent events in which he himself was involved, as in his comments on the treachery of his fellow-men (19 ff.), and their self-interest:

Die freunde mein,
solt ich vor in erkrumben und erlamen,
e das mir ainer gäb sein nar ...
ich müsst vor im ee als der sne zergän.
(61 ff.)

The poet's references to his own experiences become more explicit towards the end of his discourse, in the rhetorical questions which repeat the laments of the previous poem:

Was hilft mein gier
zu grossem güt und nach der eren geude?
was hilft mich silber oder gold?
was hilft der frauen minne,
seid werltlich freud pald ist enwicht,
und wais gar wol, das ich schier müsz darvon?
(79-84)

and especially in the reflections of the final stanza:

Mich wundert ser,
das wir auf diser werlt so vil entpauen,
und sehen wol, wie es ergät ...
Mich wundert mer,

das ich mich nie kund mässen meiner frauen,
die mich so lang betrogen hat
mit grossem ungevellen.
mich hat geplennt mein tummer sin
und nie bekant, das si mir was gevar.

(109-111, 115-120)

The implication of these last lines seems to be that Sabina had deceived him over a long period of time, perhaps in preparation for the trap she wished to lay for him. Though Oswald acknowledges again here that he too was at fault, he still separates on to different levels his own blame and that of his mistress: she was guilty of deceit, he, as the parallel phrases introduced by mich wundert, das ... make clear, of (general human) sin, in trying to build on the insecure foundations of worldly life.

This poem has a particularly intriguing combination of subjective feeling and objective thought. What really moved Oswald to his attack on the world was, on the one hand, his resentment against his enemies, especially Sabina Jäger, and on the other, his anger at his own folly. These feelings he declares openly only in momentary flashes - 'die mich so lang betrogen hat' (117), 'und nie bekant, das si mir was gevar' (120) - but they nevertheless pervade the whole poem, despite his efforts to redirect them against the treachery of man and the vanity of worldly life in general.

In Wenn ich mein krank vernunft (K10) Oswald covers much of the same ground. He begins this song by

telling that he has seen for himself how the pursuit of worldly things achieves nothing, and repeats a wish he has expressed before (K6, 20 f.), that he could live for just one year according to the will of God (stanza I). This leads on to a sermon on the futility of knowledge (stanzas II-III), the corruption of the world (stanza IV), the emptiness of honour, joy and possessions (stanza V). He compares man unfavourably with animals, who do not kill their own kind, or take more than they can consume (stanza VI). In conclusion he offers advice on how to live a good life (stanza VII). Despite the similarity in theme, this poem does not have the same urgency of feeling as the previous one. There is no allusion to any particular event, and after the initial reference to his own acquaintance with the world's sinfulness, Oswald does not speak in the first person again, except in formal phrases - ich hör (16), ich wil klagen (60), ich main (76). He gives the impression of wishing to elaborate further on a theme, rather than, as before, reacting to his own experience. The same is true of Du armer mensch (K8), in which the poet calls on his fellow-men to repent of their sins. In this poem, however, he is concerned with the goodness of God as well as with the wickedness of man. He describes at length how all creatures recognise God and are grateful to him (5-28). Only the tummer mensch (29), to whom God has given so

much, does not acknowledge the favour he has received (29-40). Even though Christ has saved man from hell, the Adams kind is blind to God's power and does not fear his wrath, much to the joy of the spirits who have fallen from heaven and who lead him into sin (41-56). He ends with a renewed plea to all men and women to seek God's help and to atone for their sins (57-60).

All of the poems we have considered in this section must, with one exception (K6) have been written before 1425, for according to Schatz they were already in MS. A in this year.¹ Only one of them, K4, contains a clear allusion to the time when Oswald was taken prisoner by the Jägers in the autumn of 1421. The rest cannot be dated with certainty; both Schatz and Marold assigned them to Oswald's second period of imprisonment, that is, after he was taken into custody by the Prince of Tyrol at the end of August 1422.² But it has been demonstrated in an earlier chapter that this second detention probably lasted only a month or two, nor for a whole year and more, as had hitherto been assumed. It is worth noting here in support of this, that of the three periods which Oswald spent in the custody

1. See Schatz 1904, pp. 22 ff. K6 may have been composed before 1425, and copied into the MS. later. But one could also make out a case for assigning it to the time of Oswald's imprisonment in 1427, together with K7 (see above, p. 200).

2. Schatz 1902, p. 116; Marold, Kommentar, p. 22.

of Frederick or the Jägers - 1421-22, 1422 (~23?), 1427 - the second is the only one to which there is no explicit reference in his poetry. It is therefore more likely that the religious poems discussed above were written during or not long after Oswald's first imprisonment, especially in view of the similarities in theme between them and Ain anefangk (K1) and Wach, menschlich tier (K2).

It has been said of Oswald that at this time he became 'earnestly religious', even that he underwent 'eine tiefgehende Wandlung seiner Lebensauffassung'.¹ We shall now consider briefly whether the attitude which he expresses in these religious poems justifies such a view.

The immediate effect of the poet's misfortune in 1421 was to induce in him a mood of humility and of repentance for his sinful life. The contrition of his early prayers in prison (K1, K6) sounds sincere enough, but here already it is mingled with the resentment he feels towards his enemies. As the fear of death receded and he had more time for reflection, so this feeling became dominant and found an outlet in his reviling of humanity and the world:

1. Schatz 1902, p. 116. Cf. also W.-R., p. 49; Walter Salmen, 'Werdegang und Lebensfülle des Oswald von Wolkenstein', Musica Disciplina, 7 (1953), p. 151.

falsch, untreu, böse zuversicht
wir gen ainander tragen,
kind, vatter, mütter, swester, brüder, all geleich,
möcht wir mit liegen, triegen in das himelreich,
so wër es uns ain eben veld ...

(K10, 55-59)

O snöde werlt,
wie lang ich leib und güt in dir vorslisse,
so vind ich dich neur itel schwach
mit wort, werk und gepërde;
der untreu bistu also vol ...
Falsch bösen gelt
fürstu luglich, truglichen gar zu flisse.

(K11, 1 ff.)

Such 'religious' sentiments reveal Oswald to be not a humble and pious man, but a proud and worldly one. Among the sinful passions he condemns is anger:

Wer sich den zoren binden lat,
der gleicht sich ainem vich ...

(K11, 103-104)

But it is anger which is at the root of his outbursts against worldliness, anger at having been deceived: 'das mich der werlde schein so gar betrogen hat!' (K9, 27). He is angry because it has been suddenly and drastically brought home to him that worldly joy does indeed lead to sorrow. He directs his resentment against his enemies, especially Sabina Jäger, and against mankind in general. It is true that he does not spare himself in these assaults, as, for example, in the following arraignment of (his own) courtly life:

mach kurzweil vil, treib hoflich ding,
verdrä dich als ain katz,
und wenn der schimpf all da ergat
gee wider dar, so vindst ain öde stat.

(K11, 87-90)

However, this is hardly a reproach of himself as an individual, but is rather designed to show that he is not excluded from the Adams kinder (K11, 26) he condemns in general. Equally impersonal are many of the pleas for humility and love of God; usually Oswald addresses his advice to others: 'Ach freunt, gesell ... dien got ...' (K11, 91 ff.); 'Freund, ... la dich elend, armüt underweisen.' (K10, 91 f.). It is worth noting also that when it comes to the question of his own personal atonement, either the change in his mode of life is a fait accompli - he is in prison, and thus obliged to do penance (K1, 16; K4, 53 f.) - or he talks of how he will or should live a good life (K6, 19 ff.; K10, 9 ff.).

One further poem, of a quite different kind, also throws light on Oswald's religiousness at this time. Ich sich und hör (K5) consists mainly of an elaborate portrait of the poet's decrepitude in 'old age'. Oswald laments the passing of his youth, describing how he can feel his age in every part of his body, his head, his back and all his limbs. His eyes are red, his skin pale, grey and wrinkled. His heart and his tongue are afflicted, he walks with a stoop. His limbs are weak and trembling, his tenor voice broken (stanza I). Once he had blond curls, now his hair is black and grey, with bald patches. His red mouth is turning blue, his teeth are rotten. He is short of

breath, so that he can no longer run and jump, and coughs when he tries to sing. He is ripe for burial (stanza II). His hearing and his eyesight are failing (stanza III).

This description has been generally accepted as a realistic picture of the ageing poet. Hennig Brinkmann called it 'ein durchaus naturwahres Bild'.¹ But one should beware of taking Oswald's words literally here. Whereas we saw earlier that he lived an active life until well after his sixtieth year, this poem must have been written while he was still in his forties, because it was copied into MS. A in 1425.² He may have been feeling a little old and frail when he wrote it, especially if he had just been released from prison, but he would scarcely have lasted another twenty years in such a condition. It is therefore far more likely that his 'self-portrait' is based on a stock description of old age;³ it presents the negative counter-

1. Zu Wesen und Form mittelalterlicher Dichtung, Halle, 1928, p. 173.

2. See Schatz 1904, p. 28.

3. See George R. Coffmann, 'Old Age from Horace to Chaucer. Some Literary Affinities and Adventures of an Idea', Speculum, 9 (1934), pp. 249 ff. Cf. especially the quotation from Innocent III: 'Si quis autem ad senectutem processerit, statim cor eius affligitur et caput concutitur, languet spiritus, et fetit anhelitus, facies rugatur et statura curvatur, caligant oculi et vacillant articuli, nares effluunt et crines defluunt, tremuit tactus et deperit actus, dentes putrescunt et aures surdescunt' (p. 255).

part of an ideal of youth and beauty.¹ Of particular interest to us here is the moral which he appends to the picture. 'Take heed, young man', he says, 'don't trust in your beauty and strength' -

Ach, jüngelingk,
bei dem nim war, tröst dich nit deiner schöne
gered noch sterk!² halt dich embor
mit gaistlichem gedöne!
wer du jetzund bist, der was ich vor;
kompst du zu mir, dein güt tat reut dich nicht.
(37-42)

He again declares his wish to lead a good and proper life -

Für alle dingk
solt ich jetz leben got zu wolgevallen,
mit vasten, betten, kirchengän,
auf knien venien vallen.
(43-46)

but he is in such a bad physical condition that he cannot help anyone:

so mag ich kainem bei bestän,³
seid mir der leib von alder ist einwicht.
(47-48)

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1. See the account of this Schönheitsideal in Alwin Schultz, Das höfische Leben zur Zeit der Minnesinger, Leipzig, 1889, I, pp. 211 ff. One stock feature of the handsome person was blond hair; Oswald says here that he once had fair curls (K5, 19), but the artist who painted the realistic portrait of him in MS. B (1432!) gave him long brown locks; see the cover of W. Schmied, Oswald von Wolkenstein (Stiasny-Bücherei, Band 70), Vienna/Graz, 1960.
 2. I have amended the punctuation in Schatz and Klein in accordance with the suggestion of W. Türlér, Stilistische Studien zu Oswald von Wolkenstein, 1920, p. 116.
 3. Wachinger (Reclam, pp. 66 f.) reads bei gestan (as in MS. A), and translates: 'Doch vermag ich bei all dem nicht auszuharren'.

Both children and die freulin rain (52) make fun of him. All this has been caused by his own foolishness, he says, and adds a final warning: 'junck man und weib, versaumt nicht gottes huld!' (54).

Whether Oswald himself realised it or not, the regret he is expressing here is not really at having lived a life of pleasure, but at being now too old to continue it! Thus it is somewhat ironical that he should solemnly advise his young hearers to spend their time in prayer (39 f.) and good deeds (42), instead of enjoying themselves, as he has obviously done. What this poem, like most of the others we have considered in this chapter, reveals above all about Oswald's piety is its limitations. His worldliness is never more apparent than when he is condemning it.

The question as to whether the poet underwent at this time a change in his outlook on life is not easily answered. That the period of captivity and its aftermath were for him a profoundly moving experience, cannot be doubted, but he certainly did not abandon the world and devote himself to religious subjects from now on. In fact, the particular mood of bitterness which characterises three of the poems we have considered (K9, K10, K11) does not seem to have lasted far beyond this time. Though Oswald again turned to religious thoughts during his imprisonment in 1427, he shows in the poem he wrote then (K7) a more

gentle piety, praising God instead of disparaging man. Just as he was able to live an active life long after he was, according to his alarming portrait in K5, at death's door, so too could he shake off the disillusion which afflicted him after his first imprisonment, and be reconciled again with the world.

(d) The 'Rewards' of Love (K60, K59, K55)

The poems discussed in the previous section were dominated by the religious reflections which Oswald's experience of prison evoked; the experience itself remained in the background. In three other poems he describes in some detail his imprisonment and its aftermath. In each case he attributes his misfortunes to the treatment which he received from the woman who had once returned his love.

The easiest to date of these is Es nahet gender vasennacht (K60), which was obviously written for the occasion of Shrove Tuesday. The Fastnacht in question must have been that of 1422, because the poet tells us that he is still feeling the effects of his maltreatment in prison.¹

The structure of this song is simple and clear, and the poet uses his favourite technique of antithesis to good effect. He begins by announcing the approach of

1. He was at this time still in the custody of the Prince of Tyrol; see above, p. 303.

Shrovetide, an occasion for all to be gay and happy, in couples, 'recht als die zarten teubelein' (1-4); but not for him:

doch hab ich mich gar schon gesellt
zu meiner krucken,
die mir mein bül hat ausserwelt
für lieplich rucken,¹

(5-8. Stanza I)

In the second verse he elaborates on the theme of the joys which this feast brings. Since the birds are paired off together, young people too should not be slow to kiss and embrace (stanza II). In conclusion he again compares an aspect of this season with his own situation. Now, as in May, everything comes out in the open,

doch hat mein frau ir tück gespart
mit falschem wincken
all gen dem herbst; ich schraw² ir vart,
seid ich müsz hincken.

(28-31. Stanza III)

The last line of the poem reveals clearly the experience behind it: Oswald had suffered so badly from the torture to which his legs had been subjected that he could not walk properly. In describing this, he passes over the dungeon episode and attributes his injury directly to Sabina's sham pilgrimage. His old love affair thus provides a link between the Fastnacht theme and his own situation:

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1. Für lieplich rucken: 'instead of a loving embrace'; Oswald uses rucken in this sense also in K20, 34; K42, 92.
 2. Schraw: probably an alternative form of schreie, 'call out (in accusation) at, curse'; see Schatz, Sprache, p. 11.

he contrasts the happy couples around him, who are enjoying the traditional mating-season of Shrovetide, with himself and his own partner, a crutch. It is possible that he invented this crutch for the sake of his poem, but more likely that it was a real object - like his fetters in the dungeon, and the spurs which were tied to his horse - which his imagination seized upon and made good use of. In the refrain (9-15) he describes how he hugs it lovingly, then squeezes it so that it cries out in pain, a detail which evokes the treatment he himself suffered at the hands of his false lady.

Although Oswald devotes much of this poem to the theme of Fastnacht and its delights, its real subject is his recent painful experience. It is in fact the only song in which he celebrated the carnival season, which in this particular February provided him with a suitable framework for the expression of personal feelings.

In this song Oswald's bitterness is still evident, but it is tempered by a touch of melancholy and a measure of self-irony. A similar mood informs Solt ich von sorgen werden greis (K59), which Schatz assigned also to the winter of 1421-22.¹ This dating can be narrowed down a little further. The poet's consistent use of the past tense when describing his ill-treatment in prison,

1. Schatz 1902, p. 115.

and his relatively detached attitude point to the time after he was handed over to Prince Frederick by the Jägers on December 17th 1421. It is possible also to see in Oswald's use of the word kerren in the Fastnachtslied, when he describes how his crutch whines with pain when he squeezes it -

ich gib ir mangel herten druck,
das si müsz kerren.

(K60, 11 f.)

a direct allusion to a passage in the present poem:

... do mich der smerz
macht kerren an dem strange.

(K59, 42 f.)

This would mean that these lines were written before Shrove Tuesday (February 24th) 1422.

In this poem Oswald gives his fullest account of what had happened to him in the previous autumn. He expands (17 ff.) his earlier hint (K2, 66) about the fateful kirchfart, and gives more details (29 ff., 39 ff.) of the torture he had referred to before (K1, 103 f.; K2, 42). Three further points are mentioned for the first time. The poet is dismayed that his former mistress is now directing her affections towards one of his enemies:

Und ich den tratz müsst sehen an,
das si ain andern treuten kan,
der mir vil laides hett getän

(13-15)

It is possible that the Prince of Tyrol is the 'other man' of line 14, for Sabina will certainly have endeared herself

to Frederick by her successful action against one of his chief enemies; but there are no grounds for the common assumption of a long-standing love triangle before 1421.¹ The second new detail is the exact extent of the demands made by Sabina: 'viertausent marck ... und Hauenstein' (41 f.). Finally we learn that the poet had once worn a gold bracelet in honour of his lady-love (5 ff.).

Unlike the Fastnachtslied, this song was not composed for a particular occasion, nor does it have a refrain. Indeed it contains little beyond the narration of recent events. Oswald begins with a saying, 'durch Schaden wird man klug', but he uses this only as a convenient way of setting his story in motion. He refrains from any trite generalisation on this subject, and instead adapts the proverb to a simple and quite apposite observation on his own experiences:

Solt ich von sorgen werden greis
und nach dem schaden klüg und weis,
des danck ich meines bülen breis,
den si mir hat gemessen

(1-4)

The second theme introduced here, which runs through the whole poem, is a familiar one - love. The poet continues:

1. See above, pp. 74 ff.

Der ich zu willen ainmal trüg
ain guldin kettenlin gefüg,
haimlich am arm verslossen klüg,
des hett si rain vergessen.
Seid mir mit solcher underschaid
ain eisen, dreier finger brait,
von iren züchten eng bereit
was an die stat gesessen

(5-12)

He again puts the whole episode in the perspective of his affair with Sabina, and again we may wonder how literally we are to interpret his story. Is it not possible, for example, that the guldin kettenlin (6) he claims to have worn on his arm for Sabina was a product of his imagination, invented for the sake of a contrast with the eisen (10) which she placed there later? The other details of his narrative are so convincing that it seems more likely that the duplication of chains was a real coincidence, of which the poet made skilful use.

The effect which Oswald achieves by using vocabulary drawn from the tradition of Minnesang is irony. The shackle on his arm was the 'prize' with which his lady rewarded him for his love;¹ it was put there von iren züchten (11), and 'embraced' him (47). It was 'her heart' which demanded money from him (41). Irony is in fact the most prominent feature of the style of this poem. Oswald

1. It is possible that Oswald is playing on another meaning of Preis; see Schmeller/Frommann, Bayrisches Wörterbuch, 1966, I, 36: breisen, 'schnüren'; ibid., I, 471: Preis, Breis, 'Einfassung, z.B. der Hemdärmel'.

says that no saint would have held it against his mistress if she had not gone on that pilgrimage (23-24); he had misinterpreted her intention:

Doch hab ich es also betracht,
die rais wër mir zu güt erdacht,
wann hett si mich gen himel bracht,
so müsst ich dort für si bitten ...
(25-28)

His line of thought here seems to be: 'I looked at the matter thus: that journey was invented for my own good, for (it could help me to achieve salvation, and) if I reached heaven because of it, I would have to offer a prayer for her ...' But next comes an ironic twist: his prayer would not be an expression of gratitude for her help, but a plea that God should not punish her for ill-treating him:

... Dorumb das si mir an gevër
mit ainer boien, michel swër,
die schinbain freuntlich hin und her
hiesz reiben ane sitten.
(29-32)

He employs a similar technique in declaring that what she has done to him was done out of love (33-35), only to illustrate his point by giving details of her torture:

ain liebt ich ir getrange,¹
Das prüfft ich wol, wann si ist stät,
untäsche lieb wil han gerät,
des ward ich hübschlich aufgedrät
mit füssen an die stange.
(36-40)

Here Oswald seems to have made up a proverb to sum up the love shown to him by Sabina. Untäsche is a dialect word

1. 'I alone was loved dearly (getrange: innig) by her.'

meaning 'not stupid',¹ and if gerät means 'Beratung, Überlegung',² the sense of his epigram would be: 'prudent love needs deliberation.'³ He is probably playing also on other meanings of the word gerät, that is, 'Gerätschaft', and also, ironically, 'Zierat, Schmucksachen',⁴ thinking of the instrument of torture which was applied to his legs. He goes on to describe her demands as playful; he realised that this was so when she made him whimper with pain:

Viertausent marck begert ir herz
und Hauenstain, es was ir scherz,⁵
das prüfft ich wol, do mich der smerz
macht kerren an dem strange.
(41-44)

Finally he adds a humorous metaphor:

Do si mir pfaiff der katzen lon,
do därret ich ir der meuse don.⁶
(45-46)

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1. See Weber, Gedichte Oswalds, p. 449; J.B. Schöpf, Tirolisches Idiotikon, 1866, p. 738.
 2. Lexer, I, 871.
 3. Cf. also the phrase 'genesch wil haben sleg': K123, 18.
 4. Grimm, 4, 1, 2, 3567.
 5. Es was ir scherz: the sense of scherz in Oswald's poems is usually 'loving behaviour': cf. K46, 2; K99, 26; K107, 18; K121, 18.
 6. Schwarke (p. 91) interprets: 'Sie sang wie eine Katze von der Beute, und ich klagte dazu wie eine Maus'. Cf. also Oswald's use of pfeiffen in K19, 63 f., 135 f.; K23, 117 f.; K105, 73 f. Schatz (Sprache, p. 56) translates därren as 'gestalten', but the meaning here must be 'to sing': see Lexer, TWb., p. 30.

This phrase is probably also a coining by Oswald himself, an acoustic representation, as it were, of a game of cat and mouse.

The restrained, ironic style of this poem makes an impression of realism and of truth. Oswald draws no general moral from his story, nor does he touch on the subject of sin. Where his report ends, with yet another recollection of the five fetters, the poem ends also:

fünf eisen hielsen mich gar schon
durch iren willen lange.

(47-48)

Although his description of the events of his imprisonment is dominated by the theme of love, he does not discourse on love's joys and sorrows, but keeps to the story of his own love affair, pausing once to generalise:

es schadt nicht, was die liebe tüt
ie zarter kind, ie grösser rüt

(34-35)

As in his introduction, here too the proverbial phrases strike the reader as spontaneous comments on the events described (even though we may doubt whether Oswald was really the zartes kind, ill-used by his beloved). In this poem his experiences are in the foreground, not the maxims which they illustrate.

The same can be said of the last of these three poems, Wes mich mein büß ie hat erfreut (K55), in which Oswald recounts a visit to King Sigismund in Pressburg. He begins by describing how his mistress made him pay

dearly for whatever joy she had brought him before. He has had little good fortune since she hung him up by his feet on an iron rod, not to mention other burdens which she lovingly inflicted upon him. She will have to wait a long time before he will thank her for it (stanza I). In the second stanza he turns abruptly from this matter to the subject of his business in Pressburg, where, he says, he and der Ebser took counsel before the stove. He stoked the heating until he drove the king from his chamber, and then presented himself. Sigismund told him that his troubles had been caused by the woman who turned against him because his 'strings no longer sounded'. Oswald replied that, had he had a heavy purse at the time, he would have fared better at his lady's hands (stanza II). From this scene the poet moves on, in the final stanza, to his immediate situation. He hopes that Duke Frederick will refrain from his hostility, otherwise the game will be over. Frederick is demanding six thousand guilders, so the love affair has really turned sour. If I had stopped when she forbade it, says Oswald, my back would not now need to crack all night against the boards in Hungary, where they make pillows from saddles. Every lover should therefore endeavour to love in such a way that he is still laughing at the end (stanza III).

Like the Fastnachtslied, this song too has a refrain (13-21), in which the poet tells of how he is being

plagued by the kinder . . . genant mit siben flüssen (fleas¹). The description of his discomfort in the hostel provides a suitable background to the story of his recent uncomfortable experiences, and will also have served to establish a rapport with his original audience. From the tenses he uses in the refrain and in the last stanza it is clear that he was still in Ungerlant (42) at the time of writing. He doubtless composed the poem soon after the audience with Sigismund which it describes. His laconic remarks in the final stanza sound particularly spontaneous:

Ich hoff, mein sach möcht werden güt,
liesz herzog Fridrich seinen strausz;
wie er desselben nicht entüt,
so ist dem schimpf der bodem ausz.
Segs tausent guldin will er han,
die bülschaft kām mich sawer an.

(34-39)

But although Oswald gives here a realistic appraisal of his present crisis, he still interprets the whole course of events as the consequence of his bülschaft. His troubles are the sorrow with which his beloved made him pay for his earlier happiness:

Wes mich mein bül ie hat erfreut,
das han ich seider wol verdeut

1. This is the meaning according to Mayr (p. 94), Schwarke (p. 121: 'Siebenflüsslein') and Müller (p. 223). None of them gives an explanation. In another poem Oswald refers to the vich, presumably unvich, 'Ungeziefer', which troubled him in Hungary (K30, 29).

mit mangem ungefegten rost,¹
den ich durch iren willen kost;
und ist das laider ane zal.

(1-5)

He dates all his misfortunes from the time of her betrayal:

gelückes hab ich klainen val,²
seid das si mich mit grossem qual
hieng mit den füssen lieplich an ain stange,
An andern grossen überlast,
den mich ir lieb hat angetast.³

(6-10)

Even the flea-bites he now had to suffer are blamed on her ('Von ir ich dol ...'), and he later offers his story as a warning example to all lovers:

dorumb ain jeder minner tracht,
damit er bül, das er des schimpfs⁴ müg glachen.
(44-45)

The love theme is also prominent in Oswald's account of his interview with Sigismund, whose words he quotes as follows:

er sprach zu mir: 'dein ungemach
leidst du von der, die an dir brach,⁵
dorumb das dir die saitten nimmer klungen'
(27-29)

1. The 'unscoured rust' was presumably that on the chains with which she had bound him.
2. Literally: 'ich habe kleine Glücksfälle', I have had no luck.
3. Angetast: see Götze, Frühnd. Glossar, 1930, pp. 10, 12; antasten, angreifen, 'zusetzen, zumuten, nicht schonen'.
4. In his use of schimpf here Oswald combines the meanings of 'enjoyment' (especially of the joys of love, as in K123, 9; K99, 1) and 'joke'.
5. Die an dir brach: the word Treue is probably understood: cf. K12, 89 = 'die ir treu nicht an mir bricht'.

What is the king saying here? Though playing on stringed instruments is used elsewhere by Oswald with a sexual connotation,¹ Sigismund will hardly have suggested that the poet's mistress betrayed him because he was no longer adequate (or willing) as a lover. It is more likely that the reference is to Oswald's inability to pay the money Sabina demanded. It is tempting to associate this phrase with his earlier complaint of how his purse was emptied by the publicans and freulin zart of Constance:

wenn ich von Costnitz schaiden sol,
des emphind ich an der seitten.
(K123, 75 f.)

that is, '... I shall feel the difference (in the weight of my purse) by my side.' It would accord well with Oswald's reply to the king (31 ff.), if Sigismund's words meant 'your sides no longer jingled', that is 'you had no money to give her.'² But this would be a somewhat hold word-play, inasmuch as the vowel sounds in saite and seite would not normally be the same in Oswald's own dialect,³

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1. See K54, 13; Müller (pp. 221 ff.) tries to establish a link between this and the present poem.
 2. Weber (Gedichte Oswalds, p. 415) translates line 29 (without comment): '(dass du) kein Geld mehr zu spenden hattest.' Cf. also the phrase auf der letzten Saite spielen, 'wenn es zu Ende geht mit Leben oder auch mit Vermögen': Grimm, 8, 1667.
 3. See Schatz, Sprache, p. 30; F. Maurer, Beiträge zur Sprache Oswalds von Wolkenstein, Giessen, 1922, pp. 24, 73; K. Zwierzina, 'Mittelhochdeutsche Studien', Zs. f. dt. A., 44 (1900), p. 395. Though Oswald often rhymes ei from old ei with ei from old i, this has been explained as Augenreim (Schatz, Maurer) or as a foreign borrowing (Zwierzina).

though on one occasion the one occurs as a variant reading for the other.¹

In his answer to the king, Oswald took up the reference to his mistress:

Ich antwurt im an als gevër:
'hett ich gehabt ain peutel swër,
als euer genad vernempt die mår,²
von meiner frauen wer mir bas gelungen.'
(30-34)

Here the poet continues to give the impression that the widow Hausmann was the main topic of discussion. But although she was probably mentioned in the course of the conversation between these two ladies' men, the main issue at their meeting was Oswald's need of money to help him out of his straits. It is therefore likely that the poet's version of the interview stylises it in accordance with his Minne theme. His own words were probably: 'if I had had enough money at the time, I should have been able to rid myself of the debt to my enemy, the Prince of Tyrol'; for this was the crux of the matter, as Oswald's comments in the final stanza make clear (34 ff.). This poem thus illustrates how the poet was able to make use of the Sabina

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1. In K54, 13, seytn is given as a variant for saitten (=spil). Otherwise Oswald usually distinguishes saite, 'string' (K19, 25; K21, 42; K22, 117; K45, 45) from seite, 'side' (K26, 62; K111, 201; K112, 332) in spelling.
 2. The sense seems to be: 'as Your Grace hears', that is, 'as I now inform you', 'let me tell you'.

affair to provide a conventional framework for the narration of events only tenuously connected with it.

The question of the date of the journey Oswald describes here has long been regarded as settled. On the evidence of K23, 81-97, where the poet refers to a visit to Hungary which took place two and a half years before his imprisonment in May 1427, the present poem has been unanimously assigned to the autumn of 1424. However, one or two doubts have been raised. Ferruccio Bravi discovered in a catalogue in Meran (dated 1887) a record of a safe-conduct made out for Oswald by King Sigismund in Pressburg much earlier in this year, on February 12th 1424. But Mayr has rightly pointed out that on that day the king was not in Pressburg, but some distance from there, in Ofen.¹ The discrepancy can, however, be explained: the document in question is without doubt the safe-conduct which Oswald received from the king in the following year, for the purpose of attending a hearing of his case in Vienna. It was issued at Hornstein, near Pressburg, on February 14th 1425.² This same letter was the subject of an error by Beda Weber, who also gave its date as 1424, and who may in fact have been responsible for the incorrect date

1. Mayr, p. 87; cf. F. Bravi, 'La vita di Osvaldo Wolkenstein', Archivio per l'Alto Adige, 50 (1956), p. 393.

2. See C. Fischnaller, Urkunden-Regesten aus dem Stadtarchiv in Sterzing, Innsbruck, 1902, p. 27, No. 205.

recorded in the Meran catalogue.¹

There is a further anomaly, which is less easily accounted for. On December 15th 1424 Sigismund replied to a letter - now lost - from Oswald, and agreed to assist him in his case against Frederick.² It will have taken some time for these two letters to travel to and fro between Hungary and Tyrol.³ If the poet had been in Pressburg that autumn, why should he need to send a written request on this matter?

Be that as it may, this is not the only possible date of the Ungarnlied. Hitherto the possibility that Oswald travelled to Hungary before this time (and after 1421) has been ruled out, on the grounds that in the two winters prior to 1424 he was not a free man. But if, as was suggested in an earlier chapter, Oswald's second period of imprisonment was in fact quite short, then this objection is no longer valid for the winter of 1422-23.⁴ It has always seemed strange that Sigismund made out a safe-conduct for Oswald in Pressburg on November 11th

1. Weber, p. 376. See also Oswald Zingerle, 'Ein Geleitsbrief für Oswald von Wolkenstein', Zs. f. dt. A., 24 (1880), p. 270. According to Zingerle, Weber saw the original document but misread the date.

2. See Appendix No. 4.

3. As Schatz pointed out (1902, p. 116).

4. See above, pp. 109 ff.

1422, at a time when he was supposedly in Frederick's dungeons.¹ From the documentary evidence, then, it seems quite possible that Oswald was in Hungary in the winter of 1422-23. If we look again at our poem, there are two details in Oswald's narrative which point to this date rather than to the long-established one of 1424. First, the man who accompanied the poet on his journey, der Ebser (K55, 23), has been identified as Wilhelm Ebser, an agent of the Starkenbergs, Oswald's allies. In this capacity he appears in a letter dated January 1423, this same winter.² Second, what was uppermost in Oswald's mind when he wrote the poem was his debt to Frederick - 'Segs tausent guldin wil er han' (38) - and this burden had been imposed upon him on his release from the prince's custody in March 1422. If the interview which Oswald describes in this poem was in fact the occasion for which Sigismund issued the safe-conduct on November 11th of this year, then we may see also in the decree made by the king just less than four weeks later, in which he declared the claim for 6,000 guilders invalid,³ the fruits of this same meeting.

1. See above, p. 112.

2. See Anton Noggler, 'Hat Oswald von Wolkenstein im Jahre 1424 Tirol verlassen?', Zs. f. dt. A., 27 (1883), p. 181, note 1.

3. Dated 6th December 1422. See Appendix No. 2.

iv. Conclusion

It is not hard to see why the affair between Oswald von Wolkenstein and Sabina Jäger has held a strong fascination for writers of the popular historical novel. In the poems discussed above Oswald tells in a series of fragmentary pictures a story which reads like romantic fiction. To penetrate to the reality behind this story is, however, no easy task.

In assessing the accuracy of the poet's account of his imprisonment and its consequences one must allow first of all for his own bias in the Hauenstein feud. As we saw earlier, Martin Jäger had cause to complain about Oswald's own behaviour in this affair, and had Sabina herself been able to reply to Oswald, she would doubtless have given a different view of the events he describes.

Sabina remains a mysterious figure, never quite emerging from the shadows in the Jägers' dungeons. Attempts to abstract details of her relationship to Oswald from his early love poems have often been hasty, ignoring the conventional language and style of these songs. She may be the eighteen-year-old girl to whom he addressed his love, and also the lady whom he 'served' for many years. Though he may have loved her, there is unlikely to be any truth in the story of her refusal to marry him or of his pilgrimage undertaken at her bidding. Nor can we be sure that she was as wicked as the poet would have us believe.

One further poem which has without doubt influenced the opinion of biographers about her character is Wenn ich betracht (K3). That this diatribe against unweiplich zucht (11) was directed against her is clear from the final stanza, where, after listing the famous men in history who have been laid low by the wiles of woman, the poet adds his own name:

... ouch ward betoubet,¹
gevangen durch ains weibes list
der von Wolkenstein, des hanck er manchen tritt.²
(46-48)

But one must beware of interpreting the poem literally, as a character-sketch of Sabina. As in his 'self portrait' (K5), Oswald was working from a literary model.³

This song gives further confirmation that in his poetry Oswald's feelings on the Hauenstein affair are polarised around traditional concepts such as fortune and misfortune, sin and atonement, good and evil, all of which he brings to bear on the subject of love and in particular his own love affair. We noted in the Ungarnlied (K55) his tendency to spin out the story of this affair, so that it could encompass all his later misfortunes. This is apparent also in his references to Sabina in a later poem,

1. Betoubet: 'betört'.

2. Cf. K60, 31: '... seid ich müsz hincken'.

3. See Friedrich Maurer, 'Der Topos von den Minnesklaven', in his collected essays, Dichtung und Sprache des Mittelalters, 2. Auflage, 1971, pp. 224 ff. (especially p. 247).

where he describes seven escapes from death (K23), Oswald holds his mistress responsible for two of these. The first, his capture in 1421 (73-78),¹ one can accept; but when he goes on to blame her for an incident during a journey to Hungary, when he narrowly escaped being drowned (81-96),² then here, as in the case of the flea-bites in Pressburg (K55, 13 ff.), for which he had held her responsible, he is stretching the Minne theme a little too far. As in the courtly romance, love becomes a substitute for other motivation.³

When all such allowances have been made, however, there remains a considerable residue of truth in Oswald's version of the Sabina affair. Though the poet certainly overstates the role of his mistress, to the exclusion of the rest of the Jäger party, she would not have been a true daughter of Barbara, last of the Hauensteins, had she not fought tooth and nail for what remained of her family's lands. Also there can be no doubt that the events of the winter of 1421 made a profound impression on Oswald. Whereas this could be accounted for by the pain of torture and his fear of death, it

1. Quoted above, p. 301.

2. This probably occurred on the journey which Oswald mentions in the Ungarnlied (K55), but we cannot be sure.

3. See Erich Auerbach, Mimesis, translated by Willard Trask (Doubleday-Anchor), 1957, p. 123.

is often impossible to separate, in the closely-woven texture of his poems, this experience from his reaction to Sabina's treachery. One cannot be certain that it was only the poet's imagination or his style which identified these feelings so closely together.

Looking back over the poems which were the fruits of Oswald's relationship with Sabina Jäger, one is again impressed, as in the 'political' poems, by their variety. The greatest divergence is between the songs written before and after his imprisonment in 1421. Until this time, one may assume, his love affair took a course which he could describe adequately in love songs of a conventional type. But his experience in 1421 could not be contained by literary conventions, and it is for this reason that we can identify the affair with certainty only in poems written after it had ended. It is in these poems too, many of them, in particular Ain anefangk and the three poems considered in the final section, quite unique compositions, that Oswald's personality manifests itself most distinctly. When he was in a penitent mood he was as passionate in his denunciation of worldly life as he was at other times in his devotion to it. Though fear of death caused him to bow humbly before God, it could not destroy his self-righteousness before his enemies. After his release from prison his spirit was unbroken, but the experience left its mark in the melancholy and self-irony of his later poems.

IV. CONCLUSION. THE MYTH RECONSIDERED

This thesis has demonstrated that many features of the 'myth of Oswald' have escaped close attention since the time of Beda Weber. The only way to a new appraisal of the personality of Oswald von Wolkenstein lies in a reassessment of his poems and of the documents which record his life. The above chapters have attempted to contribute to this task.

Several additions or amendments to his biography have been proposed: these concern his office as the Bishop of Brixen's 'captain' (1409), his allegiances in the struggle for Tyrol (1416-17), his communications with King Sigismund (1422-23, 1431-32), his second imprisonment (1422), his connections with the Counts of Görz (1425, 1434 and after), his travels (1396, 1422, 1434, and his pilgrimage - 1414?), and the Sabina affair. The conclusions drawn here have often been tentative, because it has been necessary to emphasise that the information about Oswald's life, both in historical documents and in his poems, is more fragmentary and uncertain than his biographers have made it appear.

On the subject of his personality, the first misconception which must be dispelled is that Oswald was a German Don Quixote, preoccupied with chivalry, Minnedienst, and outmoded political ideals. He was proud of being a knight, of his service to kings and princes, as a soldier, travelling companion and entertainer. Being a

'frummer, piderer ritter'¹ also distinguished him from the peasants and townsmen who were his neighbours, and frequently his enemies. Knighthood was his way of life, his profession and his status, but nowhere does he hold forth about the ideals and customs of chivalry. Indeed, by comparison with contemporary poets, this lack of a preoccupation with the subject of chivalry is quite striking. Hugo von Montfort, for example, wrote a long poem in which, at an imaginary meeting, he compared notes with Ritter Parzival on the state of knighthood in their respective ages.² In spite of Beda Weber's long account of Oswald's supposed enthusiasm for Arthurian legends, his poetry contains not a single mention of an author or figure from the literature of chivalry.

The question of Oswald's attitude to Minnedienst is rather more complex. His poetry certainly owes a debt to the conventions of the courtly love lyric, and he tells us that he 'served' Sabina Jäger and wore a bracelet in her honour. Yet here also he stands apart from his contemporaries, in that he does not theorise about love³ or

1. See above, p. 140.

2. J.E. Wackernell's edition, No. V. Cf. also Peter Suchenwirts Werke, edited by A. Prümmer, Vienna, 1827 (reprinted 1961), pp. xxiv ff.

3. See Wachinger (Reclam), p. 104.

praise the name of woman in general.¹ He is usually concerned with his own feelings for a particular woman - though she may be anonymous - and his love is physical, not spiritual.² Also he wrote several parodies of Minnesang, including one hilarious dialogue between a peasant, Hainzel Trittenbrei, and his noble lady-love.³

Oswald's supposed political idealism is also mythical. The main national and international issues of his time were religious ones, the papal schism and the Hussite revolt. Oswald took the orthodox view, and the one for which King Sigismund stood, without discussing or justifying it. He joined wholeheartedly in the cheering for Sigismund on his triumphant journey through France, and supported him in condemning the Hussite heretics. Later, however, he reproached the king for his failure to act in a matter obviously more vital to the poet, his feud with the Prince of Tyrol. If Oswald's attitude seems narrow, this reflects the age in which he lived. At this time matters of imperial power and prestige were less important than regional struggles for supremacy. His poems confirm the impression given by historical documents that it was

1. Compare, for example, the repetitive, impersonal praise of reine wip, the sole theme of the poems of Suchensinn (circa 1400). See Suchensinn und seine Dichtungen, edited by Emil Pflug (Germanistische Abhandlungen, 32), Breslau, 1908.

2. See K21, K33, K42, K53, K63, K66, K76, K83.

3. K79; cf. K82, K43.

such a struggle which concerned him above all else. Oswald's view of politics, like his attitude towards chivalry and Minne, was rooted in reality, not in ideals.

Oswald was bound to his homeland not only by practical and family ties, but also emotionally, as we can observe from the Hauenstein songs. But to proceed on this basis to explain his personality as the expression of a 'tirolischer Wesenskern'¹ is to substitute one myth for another. Like the majority of his fellow human beings, the poet was too complex an individual to be reduced to one imaginary core from which all his thoughts and actions radiated. The need which many scholars have felt to penetrate to the 'zentralen Menschen' in him has inevitably been frustrated,² and a typical conclusion has been that such a man can no longer be understood today.³ The modern reader may have to make adjustments for the time in which Oswald lived, a time when men reacted more strongly to the changes of the seasons, to fluctuations of fortune and threats to their material security, when the conflicting elements in human nature manifested

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1. K.K. Klein, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Wirkendes Wort, 13 (1963), p. 10; cf. also above, p. 16.
 2. H. Mumelter, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein', Der Schlern, 21 (1947), p. 6: 'es ist schwer, des ganzen und zentralen Menschen in ihm habhaft zu werden und sein Wesen zu deuten.'
 3. See Heinz Rupp, 'Oswald von Wolkenstein: "Es ist ain altgesprochner rat"', in Philologia Deutsch, 1965, p. 81.

themselves more sharply than today.¹ Such contrasts are characteristic of Oswald von Wolkenstein: his concern for law and order and his own lawlessness; his humility before God and his self-righteousness before his fellow-men; his worldliness and his religious fervour;² his love of adventure and his attachment to his home. All these characteristics are capable of being embraced within one single personality. It is perhaps by contrast with earlier medieval poets, who tell us little about themselves and for whom biographical data are lacking, that Oswald has seemed to be an abnormally complex figure.

Klein has insisted that all interpretation of Oswald's personality should be subject to the test of historical documents. He rejects, for example, as absurd the idea that Oswald should, on the evidence of certain poems, be described as 'altersmüde' at a time when historical records show him to have been a very active man.³ On such a point it must be borne in mind that Oswald

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1. See J. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, Penguin Edition, 1955, Chapter I.
 2. Fritz Martini finds in Oswald's poetry 'die ... zerstörende Spannung von rückhaltloser Hingabe an den Sinnenreiz der Welt, ... und von einer stark moralistischen, religiösen Verinnerlichung': Das Bauerntum im deutschen Schrifttum von den Anfängen bis zum 16. Jahrhundert, Halle, 1944, p. 82.
 3. Klein, Wirkendes Wort, 13 (1963), p. 5, taking issue with Otto Mann 'Oswald von Wolkenstein und die Fremde', Deutschkundliches, 1930, p. 58. Mann made the mistake of interpreting the supposed Altersmüdigkeit in a literal, biographical way.

was both a practical man and a poet. There is no reason why he should not have pursued his interests in local politics whilst at the same time expressing in his poems signs of old age in his attitude to life. The letters and documents are concerned almost exclusively with legal and business matters, the poems with thoughts, feelings, impressions. These different perspectives do not, however, present us with two incompatible images of Oswald. In both we can discern the same mixture of religiousness and worldliness, the same self-righteousness, the same preoccupation with his own immediate interests. Whilst a knowledge of the documents which record his life contributes much to our understanding of Oswald and is invaluable for the interpretation of his autobiographical poems, ultimately it is only through his poetry that we have access to his mind, to the person behind his official seal and signature. In many of the poems which we have considered the autobiographical element is allied with, or subordinated to, an intention such as entertainment, polemic, seasonal celebration, prayer, or moralising. Nevertheless, in all of these songs he talks about his own life, communicates personal experience. In what he tells us, and in the way he tells it, he reveals himself. His outlook was narrow, his preoccupations often trivial, and he had no significant intellect; but he experienced life intensely, through his senses. His songs abound in

impressions of sights and sounds and in concrete details from the reality of his life, both on his travels and at home. When he reflects on his experiences, his mind is drawn to concrete examples and images. He lacks totally the fondness of many of his contemporaries for personifying abstract concepts. Oswald illustrates sin by listing numerous examples of sinful behaviour (K10, K11); he represents the vanity of the world by a collection of worthless objects (K19, 220-221). Particularly striking is the number of similes and metaphors drawn from the animal kingdom: the sinner, the courtier, and the wicked woman (K10, K11, K3) are all compared with wild beasts; hell is a ~~fearsome~~ creature with sharp horns and open jaws (K6); man himself is the menschlich tier (K2).

The constant reference to his own life and to the living world around him is a main source of the strength of Oswald's poetry. But this strength derives ultimately from Oswald himself: he was a poet of the senses because he was a sensual man; he told often of his own experiences because he was an egotist.¹ There is surely in the uninhibited egocentricity which he displays in so many poems an aspect of his personality which one can associate with the elusive concept of Renaissance. When he pauses to reflect on his way of life, however, he judges

1. Unlike Oswald, almost all the contemporary poets to whom reference has been made - Hugo von Montfort, Peter Suchenwirt, Johannes Englmar, Thomas Prischuch - apologise for their inadequacy as poets.

it in a manner which binds him to the Middle Ages. At such moments one particular phrase seems to come readily to his lips:

so nimt mich immer wunder,
wes ich mich selber zeich,
das ich mein tödlich leben
hie büsslich nicht vertreib
und lasz mich überstreben
den krancken, snöden leib
Mit sünd, grosz, mitter, klaine,
und swachlichem gelust.

(K24, 35-42)

Though he uses this expression mich nimt wunder, or mich wundert also in trivial contexts,¹ Oswald often has recourse to it in times of crisis, as in the following:

Wenn ich mein krank vernunft nërlichen sunder²
und vast bedenck der tummen welde wunder,
der ich ain tail ervaren han,
gesehen und gehöret,
So wundert mich vor allem nicht so sere,
das ich mein zeit neur lenck nach güt und ere
und dabei nie kain rü gewan;
der sinn bñ ich bedoret.

(K10, 1-8)³

In the term der tummen welde wunder Oswald crystallises his attitude to the world he has got to know so well: on the one hand it is wondrous, fascinating, on the other, stupid, meaningless. His feeling of bewilderment, which stops short of outright rejection of the world, arises from his inability to give up the kind of life he leads,

1. K30, 37; K112, 285 f.; K117, 49.

2. Nërlichen sunder: 'examine carefully'.

3. Cf. also K8, 50; K9, 58; K11, 109 ff.; K23, 153.

a life he cannot reconcile with religious teaching. It is tempting to see in this mich wundert the characteristic utterance of a man between two ages. In his lust for life, his self-assertion, Oswald was straining forward out of the Middle Ages; when he tried to come to mental grips with his life and himself, he had to look backwards for support, or look around himself helplessly.

APPENDICES

All the documents included here are reproduced by kind permission of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg. None of them has hitherto been published in full; some have been published in abstract, and the appropriate references are given in each case. Photographic copies are included of Nos. 1, 3, 7 and 10.

In the transcription of the documents all abbreviations have been written out; the spelling has not been regularised (e.g. the letters v and u are reproduced as in the original texts), but some indistinct or inconsistent superscriptions have been ignored.

APPENDIX No. 1 (Unpublished)

Draft of a letter; no date, signature or address.
Reverse blank.

[Note: The two passages in brackets are at the foot of the draft, each with an insertion mark. The corresponding marks in the draft itself are obscured in part by words which have been added or deleted, but I think I have inserted the passages correctly (cf. the photographic copy). The asterisks in the text below are explained in footnotes.]

Hochgeporner furst Mein vntertanig willigen* dinst die
sein ewern genaden alzeit vor bereit. Als mir ewer
furstliche gnad von der losung wegen des newenhausz
ettwas czweifelichen zudem nachsten verschriben hat
daruber mich yedoch lantmerweisz nemlich angelangt ist
wie daz ewer gnad gwisslich noch* von mir lösen well.
Nu ist mein sach also geschaffen daz ich leibs vnd guts
zudisem mal von meinem Herren von Österreich nit sicher
pin vnd ist mein glait auf dem vergangen Sand Jorgen
tag ausz gangen vnd pitt ewer furstliche gnad ** (ob Ir
also noch losen wolt Ir welt mich daz wissen lassen pey
meinem⁺ gegenwertigen diener*) vnd ewers briefs den ewer
furstliche gnad von mir Inn hat ain abgeschrift schiken
ab ich ew der losung nach des selben briefs sag noch
yecz* zu mal schuldig wer In ainer kurcz zeit* (wan ich
ewern genaden pey meinem gegenwurtigen diener*[†] meins
briefs den ich von ewern furstlichen gnaden Inn hab auch
des gleichen ain Abgeschrift geschickt hab) daz ich
mich darnach west zu richten da mit ich mein leib vnd
güt an solche gewarsam pringen möcht darInn mir nicht

ze kurcz peschäch. wolt mich aber ewer gnad des
verzeichen vnd solt ich leibs oder guts dann* von
meinem Herren von Östreich darInn vber griffen werden
*** dez het ich doch vmb ewer furstliche gnad nicht
verdient vnd darumb genadiger herr so tut newr an mir
Als ich des ewern furstlichen gnaden allczeit wolgetrawt vnd
verdient hab.

Notes:

Words underlined are doubtful.

* Written in above the line.

+ Written in above 'dem'.

* Replacing 'potten', which has, in both cases,
been crossed out.

** 'Ir welt' crossed out.

*** 'so waisz' crossed out.

APPENDIX No. 2

Decree by King Sigismund, dated 6 December, 1422.

Reverse: Red seal and the words, 'Ain ausspruch von Kunig Sigmunden'.

Wir Sigmund von gotes gnaden Romischer kunig zu allen-
zeiten merer des Richs vnd zu Vngern zu Behem Dalmacien
Croacien etc. kunig Bekennen offentlich mit disem
brieff allen den die In sehen oder horen lesen Als
vnser diener vnd lieber vnd trewer Osbald von
Wolkenstain In des hochgebornen vnszsz liebens Oheims
vnd fursten Herczog Fridreichs von Osterreich
gefencknusz komen was vnuerschulter sach vnd In dorüber
sein freunt von Im zu dem rechten vmb sechs tausent
gulden ausz pürgen müesten auf wider stellung die
selbigen sechs tausent gulden der obgenante fridreich
von seinen burgen also maynt zu haben des sich noch
der vnszr noch ordenung der sach So dann der obgenant
Oswald sein burgen getan hat nicht schuldig sein vnd
hat das der vnser vnd wir mit sampt Im noch allem her
chumen zu einen rechten gesaczt auf den hochgebornen
vnszm lieben Swager Herczog Ernst vnd auff den
hochgebornen vnszn Sun¹ Herczog Albrechten vnd Ir
payder Ret vnd dor nach auff vns vnd vnser ret des der
obgenant fridreich chains von dem vnszn nicht hat willen
auff nemen do pey vns eygentleich zu merken vnd zu
versten ist das solicher vnwil vnd vngnad So dann der

1. Duke Albrecht of Habsburg was Sigismund's son-in-law.

obgenant fridreich an den vnszn gelegt hat vnd noch
legen wil von solicher chrieg vnd stasz wegen so dann
tzwischen vnszr vnd des obgenanten fridreichs vorzeiten
sich verlossen haben dorIn der vorgeant Wolkensteiner
vnszr hülfer vnd diener gewesen ist auff erstanden sind
vnd dar vmb so hab wir der sach vnd ausproch vnd allen
vnwillen so der benant fridreich zu dem vnszm hat vnd
haben wil genczleichen abgetan vnd abgesprochen noch
solichen briefen ayden vnd gelobben die wir dorumb von
Im haben vnd sprechen auch das ab mit crafft disz briefs
das der obgenant fridreich oder yemant von seinen wegen
zu dem obgenanten Wolkenstainer oder seinen bürgen wie
de gehaisen sind chaynerlay vordrung noch ansproch von
der sach wegen zu In nicht mer hin für haben sol vnd
dasz er Im vnd seinen burgen alle de prieff die dann
von der gefancknusz oder von des gelts wegen
vnuerczogenlich vbergeben vnd antworten sol an al ausz
tzug vnd ob er des nicht t^at so mag sich der obgenant
Oswald hinfur als der vnszr nach auszweisung solicher
brieff vnd articulen so wir dann von dem obgenanten
fridreichen dorvmb Inn haben halten vnd gebiten dorumb
allermeinicleich wie dy genant sein das In nyemant
dorInn hindern noch Irren Sunder beholfen sein sollen von
vnszn wegen als lang pis Im genug schiehet das ist
genczleich vnsz befelhnüsz vnd ernstlich meynung
Geben zu prespurg Nach Crists geburt vierczehenhundert

Jar vnd dornach in dem czweyvndczwinczigisten Jaren
Am sand Niclas tag vnszr Riche des Vngrischen etc. in
dem xxxvi des Romischen In dem xiii vnd des Behemischen
Im drytten Jaren.

Per dominem Comitem Johann de
Lupfen Judicem curie. Franaskus
prepositus Strigoniensis.

Abstracts published in Mitteilungen des
Germanischen National-Museums, Nürnberg, 1890,
p. 99, and in W. Altmann, Die Urkunden Kaiser
Sigmunds, I, p. 380, No. 5412.

APPENDIX No. 3

Declaration by Oswald von Wolkenstein, dated 5 October,
1423.

Reverse: Remains of a seal and the words 'Ain
Erledigter brieff von Hannsen von Vilandersz'.

ICH Oswalt von Wolkenstain vergich offenleich mit
disem brief fur mich vnd mein Erben Als der edl vnd
vest Her Michel von Wolkenstain mein lieber bruder
vnd der edel vnd vest Hanns von Villanders mein lieber
vetter Inpurgschafft weisz fur mich versprochen haben
vnd ich sey von desselben gehayss wegen auff mein hab
vertröst hab nach ausweisung solcher Brieff so Sy
darvmb von mir haben Also haben Sy mir von besunder
frewntschaft wegen gegunt die nütz von derselbigen
hab Inzenemen doch also das ich In dasselbig Innemen
an Irrer versorgnüz gewer vnd Rechten gen mir noch gen
manigleich hin für dhainen sch---¹ pringen schol mit
vrch---² dicz briefs den ich In darumb gib versigelt
---einem³ aufgedruckten I-----⁴ der Geben ist Inder
Jarzal tausend vierhu=dert⁵ vnd In dem drewvndz-ain-
zigesten⁶ Jar des nachsten erchtags nach franczisy.

There are two holes in the paper. The missing words
are probably as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 1. sch(adn) | 4. I(nsige)l |
| 2. vrch(vnd) | 5. vierhu(n)dert |
| 3. (mit m)einem | 6. drewvndz(w)anczigesten |

Summarised (but not accurately = see above p. 110) by
Noggler, Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 142.

7

Ich sprache von volckensamen sprach offentlich wie dyen buche sein mich und
vorn Ende als es und west die. undel von volckensamen mein hebe den der
dort es edel und west hammers von volckensamen hebe west. hammers west
west sein nicht wprecht haben und ich sei von dessen. ich ist von west
west mein hebe west hebe nach aufweisung selb Buche so ob den west von
mein haben als haben oben. von besunder hammers west. dagesen gagesen
die nua von besetzung hab genommen das als die ist in dasselbig
genommen in den. dagesen. und hammers west. nach den ma
ungleich sein für. dagesen. sein. dagesen. sein. dagesen. sein.
ich in dagesen. gib es. dagesen. sein. dagesen. sein. dagesen. sein.
jeder parzall am. dagesen. sein. dagesen. sein. dagesen. sein.
das westen. dagesen. nach hammers.

APPENDIX No. 4

Letter from King Sigismund, dated 15 December, 1424.

Reverse: Remains of a red seal and the address, 'Dem edeln Oswalten Wo---steiner* Vnserm diener vnd lieben getruen'.
(*paper worn)

Sigmund von gots gnaden Romischen kunig
zu allen czyten merer des Richs vnd zu
Vngern zu Behem etc. kunig.

Edler vnd lieber getruer. Deinen brief den du vns
yczund gesendet hast, haben wir wol vernomen vnd als du
bittest, daz wir dein gen dem hochgeboren fridreichen
herczogen zu Osterreich gedenken wollen wenn der czu vns
komet etc. weyst du wol daz wir dir alczit gnedig vnd
geneygt gewest sein worryne wir mochten, vnd wollen das
noch gern tün, wenn wir zu dem egenanten herczog
fridreich komen. Allein bestelle, daz vns yemant doran
mane von deinen wegen was wir dir dann zu fuderung
beweysen mugen. dorczu wollen wir vns gnediglich
beweysen. Geben zu Ofen an freytag nach sannd lucie
tag vnserer Rich des hungerischen etc. in dem xxxviii
des Romischen in dem xv vnd des Behemischen in dem
funftem Jaren.

Ad mandatum dominis regis
Michael prepositus
Boleslaviensis

Abstracts published by Noggler, Zs. f. dt. Alt., 27 (1883),
p. 183, note 3; in the Mitteilungen des Germanischen
Nationalmuseums, Nürnberg, 1890, p. 99; W. Altmann,
Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmunds, I, p. 427, No. 6022.

The more detailed summary by Noggler, reproduced by
W.-R. (p. 56), is not quite accurate: the king asks
to be reminded not of his promise, but of what he can
do to help Oswald.

APPENDIX No. 5

Letter from Duke Frederick IV of Austria, dated 25 July,
1425.

Reverse: Remains of a red seal and the address, 'Vnserm
getrewn Oswalden dem Wolkchenstainer'.

Fridreich von gotes gnaden

Herczog ze Osterreich etc.

Getrewr Wolkchenstainer. Als du vns yetzund geschriben
hast haben wir wol vernomen Ist dir villeicht wol
wissentlich wie wir vns von gesch^afts vnd geuallens wegen
des allerdu^arl^auchtigen fürsten vnser^a gn^aedigen herren
des Romischen etc. kunigs vnd des hochgebornen fürsten
vnser^a lieben Vettern hertzog Albrecht etc. ains tags
von der Starkchemberger vnd deinn wegen zu Wyenn auf
den Suntag Quasimodogeniti veruangen vnd darauf ainn
friden vnd gelait geben vnd hinder vnsern egenanten
Vettern gelegt hetten dem wir auch also nachkomen sein
vnd vnsernthalben nicht emprochen ist sunder auch
denselben friden vntz auf hewt aber von desselben
vnser^a Vettern bete wegen verlengern liezzzen vnd vns
andrer t^ag ze laisten begeben hetten. darunder aber
vns von den egenanten Starkchembergern vnd dir meniger-
lay übergriff beschehen sind vnd t^aglich beschehen.
sunderlich daz du Martein J^ager vnd andern den vnsern
das Ir vorhaltest vnd beküumberst an Recht vnd dich
vnser^a erl^aosten g^ats von der hausmanin das vnser Erb

ist vndertzogen hast zebhalten andrer vnserer zusprüch
der wir aller vntz her geswigen haben Verstet m^aeniclich
wol ob vns darüber gleichs von dir beschicht. Geben zu
Hall im Intal an Sand Jacobstag Apostoli Anno etc. xxv^{to}

dominus dux per se ipsum

W.-R. (p. 58) reproduces the summary of this letter given
by Noggler in the Zs. Ferd., 26 (1882), p. 150, where
the date is given as July 17th. Noggler gave the correct
date in the Zs. f. dt. Alt., 27 (1883), p. 183, note 1.

APPENDIX No. 6

Letter from Duke Frederick IV of Austria, dated
22 February, 1427.

Reverse: Remains of a red seal and the address,
'Vnserm getrewn lieben Oswalden Wolkenstain'.

Fridreich von gotes gnaden Hertzog
ze Österreich etc.

Lieber getrewr. Wir schreiben yeczund allen vnsern
Rittern Knechten vnd gemeiner landschafft auf den Suntag
Reminiscere nachstkumftigen gen Botzen ze komen dahin
wir vnsselber auch fuegen oder vnser Rat mit vollem
gewalt sennden werden von allerlay leuff vnd gebrechen
wegen die vns vnsern lannden vnd leuten merkchlich
anligend. Emphelhen wir dir vnd wellen ernstlich das
du dich auf den selben tag auch dahin fugest Solche
breche helfen ze Wennden, vnd ain ordenung ze machen
damit wir vnser land vnd l^aut in frid vnd gemach gesetzt
werden vnd lassest des nicht das ist vnser maynung.
Geben ze Insprugg an Sand peterstag ad kathedram
Anno domini etc. vicesimoseptimo.

dominus dux per se

Abstract in W.-R., Regestenverzeichnis, No. 44b.

APPENDIX No. 7 (Unpublished)

Letter from King Sigismund, dated 12 August, 1431.

Reverse: Remains of a red seal and the address, 'Dem hochgeborn fridrichen Herczogen zu Osterreich vnserm lieben Oheimen vnd fursten'.

Sigmund von gotes gnaden Romischer kunig
zu allen czyten Merer des Richs vnd zu
Hungern zu Behem etc. kunig

H * * * * *¹ Oheim vnd furst, Wir haben dir
vormals offft vnd nemlich zu leczten aber geschriben vnd
durch dein Rete, die bey vns waren emboten vnd begeret
vnsern lieben getruen Oswalten von Wolkenstein in hulden
zu halten vnd Im durch vnsern willen seinen brief wider
zugeben, das aber bisher noch nit gescheen ist, wiewol
wir dir ye getrawet hetten, du soltest vns nu dorynne
zu lieb sein worden. wie dem nu sey, So begern wir noch
von deiner lieb, vnd bitten dich mit flysse, du wollest
dem egenanten Oswalten seinen brief durch vnsern willen
noch widergeben on lenger vercziehen das wollen wir gen
dir ye in grossern sachen erkennen, vnd wolt vns dein lieb
so vil zu lieb dorynne tun, daz wir dir dorumb nit mer
schreiben bedörffen das wer vns ein sunder wolgefallen.
Geben zu Nuremberg am nechsten Suntag nach sant Laurenczen
tag vnserer Riche des hungrischen etc. Im xlv des
Romischen Im xxi vnd des Behemischen Im xii Jaren

Ad mandatum dominis
Regis Caspar Sligk

1. There is a hole in the paper here. The missing words are almost certainly 'Hochgeborener, lieber'.

Sigmund von Gottes gnaden Zornischer Künig zu allen ersten
apostol des Reichs und zu Hünigern zu Reichen ic künig

Ich Oheim und fust, Irm haben die demals oft und nemlich zu letzten aber
gestorben und durch dem Heil die bey uns waren anboten und begreuet unsern Luten getreuen
Opferation von Goltensstein in hülben zu haben und im durch unsern willen seinen brief wider
zugelien / das aber bis her noch mit gestehen ist, Wollt wir die ye getrauert haben / du soldest uns
den Dozime zu lieb sein werden / Wie denn mu sey. So begreuen Wir noch von dema Lieb, und bit
ten: dich mit flusse du Wolltest dem eigenen Opferation seinen brief durch unsern Willen noch
widergeben oh lenger verzücken. Das wollen Wir gen die ye in groffen steten erkennen / und
wolt uns den Lieb so vil zu lieb Dozime tun / das Wir der Dozime mit mer stücken bedürffen
das wer uns ein linder Wollgefallen, Beken zu Murnber: am nächsten Sonntag nach dem
Laurinigen tag. Unserer Reichs des Hünigsteien ic im pl. Des Zornischen im p. und des Re
ichens im p. / aron

Adm. d. d. Steig
Lupus Augt.

APPENDIX No. 8

Letter from Duke Frederick IV of Austria, dated
15 November, 1431.

Reverse blank, paper seal.

Wir Fridreich von gotes gnaden Herczog ze Osterreich
ze Steyr ze Kernden vnd ze Krain Graue ze Tyrol etc.
Embieten vnserm getrewn Oswalten von Wolkenstain vnser
gnad vnd alles g^ot. Vnser getrewr lieber Michel von
Wolkchenstain vnser Rat dein br^oder hat vns anbracht,
wie du Im seinen tail der J^aegrin g^ots vorhaltest vnd
des von dir nicht m^ug bekomen. Emphelhen wir dir
ernstlich daz du von heut uber drey wochen fur vns
komet vnd dich darumb gen demselben deinem br^oder
verantwurttest So wellen wir ew geneinander verhorn
vnd yeglichem tail wideruaren lazzen was recht ist.
Geben ze Insprugg an Phincztag nach sand Marteinstag.
Anno domini etc. Tricesimoprmo.

dominus dux per se ipsum

Abstract (wrongly dated November 13th) in W.-R.,
Regestenverzeichnis, No. 61.

APPENDIX No. 9 (Unpublished)

Letter from Duke Frederick IV of Austria, dated 4 December,
1431.

Reverse: Paper seal and the words 'Ain geschäffts brieff
auff Oswalden von Wolkenstain'.

Wir Fridreich von gots gnaden Herczog ze Osterreich ze
Steyr ze Kärnd^aen vnd ze Krain Graue ze Tirol etc.
Embieten vnserm getrewn Oswalten von Wolkchenstain vnser
gnad vnd alles g^out. vnser getrewr lieber Michel von
wolkchenstain vnser Rat dein Br^ouder hat vns anbracht,
wie du Im seinen tail der J^aegrin g^outs vorhaltest vnd
mug des von dir nicht bekommen. Emphelhen wir dir
ernstlich daz du auf den Suntag nach der heiligen dreyr
kunigtag nachstkunftigen fur vns komest, vnd dich darumb
gen dem egenanten deinem Br^ouder oder seinem volm^aechtigen
Anwalt an seiner stat verantwurttest, so wellen wir ew
geneinander verhorn vnd yedem tail wideruarn lassen was
Recht ist. Geben ze Insprugg an Eritag vor sand
Nyclastag Anno Domini etc. Tricesimoprmo.

dominus dux per se ipsum

APPENDIX No. 10 (Unpublished)

Letter from King Sigismund, dated 10 January, 1432.

Reverse: Remains of a red seal and the address, 'Dem edeln Oswalten von Wolkenstein vnserm diener vnd lieben getruen'.

Sigmund von gots genaden Romischer kunig
zuallenzeiten Merer des Richs vnd zu
Hungern zu Beheim etc. kunig.

Edeler vnd lieber getreuer, Wann wir deiner gegenwertikeit
in disen landen zu etlichen vnsern sunderlichen geschefften
wol bedurffen. Dorumb ist vnser ernste begerung das du
dich so du eeste magest her zu vns fügest vnd tu dorynn
nit anders. Geben zu placentz am donerstag nach der
heilgen drey kunig tag vnser Rich des hungerischen etc.
xlv des Romischen Im xxii vnd des Behemischen Im xii
Jaren.

Ad mandatum dominis
Regis Caspar Sligk

Daß man von stot genaden (sonst) künig zuulenzien
 dreyer des (töge) und zu hungen) zu (desen) at künig

Feder und lieber (man) (me) (sonst) gegenwert in (desen) kunden zu etlichen unser (sonst) de:
 lichen gestheft und beduessen (sonst) ist unser erste künig (sonst) das (sonst) so (sonst) (sonst)
 der zu (sonst) (sonst) und zu (sonst) mit (sonst) (sonst) am (sonst) nach der (sonst)
 der künig auf (sonst) (sonst) zu (sonst) (sonst) (sonst) und des (sonst)
 (sonst) (sonst) (sonst)

(sonst) (sonst) (sonst)
 (sonst) (sonst)

APPENDIX No. 11 (Unpublished)

Document of Count Heinrich von Görz, date incomplete.

Reverse: 'Item daz sint meins Herrn graff Hainreichs prieff'.

Wir Heinreich Graue ze Görtz vnd zü die Tyroll etc. bekennen
offennlich mit dem brieue. Als wir vnsern getrewen vnd
sunder lieben herrn oswalten von wolckenstein zü vnserm
Rate vnd diener an hewtigem tage datum dez brieffs auff
genommen haben. Also haben wir den selben wolckensteiner
gelobt vnd versprochen geloben vnd versprechen Im auch
wissentlich Inkraft ditz brieffs vmb die obgenantten dienste
auff ein yedes jar So er vns danne hinfür dienen wirdet die sich
an hewtigem tage datum dez brieffs annachen werdent hundert
guldin tugkatten oder vnger ausszerichten vnd zegeben
angeuärde doch newr als lang doch das vnser willen vnd geuallen
ist vnd daz wissentlich widerrüffen**
auch dem egenantten wolckenstainer In allen vnser
darInn wir In danne wissentlich senden vnd
zerung allenthalben selber fürsechen versorgen
aussgenommen ober sunst zü vns auff daz ver
vnd wir Im enbotten hetten oder nicht So maine
vnd zü vns Reittend nicht schuldig zü sein
die weil vnd er bey vns ist sein zerung sp
als anderem vnserm hofgesinde darzegeben vnd
zü Vrkundt mit vnserm auffgedruckten bettscha
Vlme An sannd Margretten tag Anno domini etc. Tr

** A section of the letter in the bottom right-hand corner is missing.

APPENDIX No. 12 (Unpublished)

Document of Count Heinrich von Görz, dated 10 July, 1442.

Reverse: Mark left by red seal, otherwise blank.

Wir Hainreich von gottes gnaden Graue ze Gorczs vnd
ze Tyrol etc. Bekennen offennbar mit dem brief fur vns
vnd vnser erben daz wir vnserm lieben getrewen Oswalten
von Wolkenstain vnd allen sein erben als fur vermante
vnd vellige lehen verlihen haben die hueben In Velden
zerechtem lehen vnd leihen In die auch wissenntlich mit
dem brife mit seiner zugehorunge was wir In daran
pilleich vnd rechtleich leihen sullen vnd mugen ze
haben nuczzen vnd niessen vnd allen Irn frumen damit
zeschaffen nach lanndes vnd lehennsrechten doch vnser
vnd mainkchlichs rechten daran vnuergriffen vnd
vorzebehalten. zw vrkunt mit vnserm Aufgedrukchten
secret gebrechen halben desmals vnser Insigels.
Geben ze Toblach am Eritag vor Margarete Anno etc.
Quadragesioseculo.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Contents

1. Oswald von Wolkenstein¹
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1. This section contains all the scholarly literature on Oswald von Wolkenstein (with the exception of some reviews) known to the author. Items which were not consulted or not available before the completion of this thesis are marked with an asterisk.

1. Oswald von Wolkenstein

i. Texts

(a) Editions (arranged chronologically)

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Wortbuch und Varianten hg. von Beda Weber, Innsbruck, 1847.

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bearbeitet von Josef Schatz (Text), Oswald Koller (Musik)
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(Review: R. Wustmann, Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum,
29 (1904), pp. 227 ff.)

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Ausgabe, hg. von Josef Schatz, Göttingen, 1904.
(Review: R. Wustmann, Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum,
31 (1908), pp. 129 ff.)

Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein, unter Mitwirkung von
Walter Weiss und Notburga Wolf hg. von Karl Kurt Klein;
Musikanschauung von Walter Salmen (Altdeutsche Text-
bibliothek, Nr. 55), Tübingen, 1962.
(Reviews: B. Wachinger, Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum,
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ausgewählt und eingeleitet von Wieland Schmied (Stiasny-
Bücherei, Band 70), Graz and Vienna, 1960.

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