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VIGILANT THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT:
THE WATCHMAN IN GERMAN MEDIEVAL
SPIRITUAL POETRY

Introduction

To men and women of the Middle Ages
the figure of the watchman
in serious literature symbolized
the highest spiritual authority,
a role in good keeping with his lofty station,
looking down and watching over all¹.

This article aims to analyze three activities that take place during the night. These are watching, sleeping, and expecting. As a literary study, it will ask to what extent the nocturnal setting enables these activities, based on ideas and views about them outlined in medieval German spiritual poetry. Crucial for the following argument is the differentiation in literal meaning versus a metaphorical usage of these three activities and of night and day. Spiritual poetry, in this case spiritual poetry of the German-speaking fifteenth century, heavily relies on the interplay between both spheres.

As will be shown, the dependencies of time, light, and daytime are at the core of all metaphorical uses of night in spiritual poetry: Night and darkness coincide and both constitute one end of a spectrum, which is traversed over a certain period of time. Dawn and twilight signal a turning point as well as a transitional

1. *Eos. An Enquiry into the Theme of Lover's Meetings and Partings at Dawn in Poetry*, ed. Arthur T. Hatto, London et al., Mouton & Co., 1965, 433.

state of both night and darkness to day and light. Arthur Hatto gathered evidence for this being a focal point of poetic interest in his collection of dawn songs from around the world, which bears witness to a continuous fascination with the night throughout time and various cultures.

With its focus informed by literary studies, this article aims to add another facet to the collected essays on the brighter side of the night. To uncover the positive attitude toward night exhibited in fifteenth-century spiritual song, it will analyze the watchman as the main enabler of cherished activity. It is the spiritual *tageliet*, dawn song, that most prominently features the watchman in medieval lyric, flourishing in the fifteenth century². While in the romantic love form of the *tageliet* the arrival of morning is feared, the spiritual form displays several attitudes of expecting the arrival of the morning³. In the following, I will explore the concept of the watchman using medieval spiritual poetry originating from the southern German-speaking regions, Bohemia, and Alsace. Here we find examples in which the watchman plays an important role in the quest for salvation and as such receives a positive evaluation for his watchfulness throughout the night.

As a literary figure, he represents less the historical activity of the watchman⁴. He performs as a «figure of the Third», which

2. Jan Mohr, «Tagelied», in *Handbuch Minnesang*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021, 534–42, see 540. Since the literature on dawn song is vast, this article will reference the newest overview by Jan Mohr, and add references where additional information is needed. For an overview of the research on the spiritual dawn song, see Marianne Derron, André Schnyder, «Das geistliche Tagelied des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit. Eine Bilanz und ein Projekt», in *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein Gesellschaft*, 12 (2000), 203–28.

3. It is important to note that the variety found within the genre has led to a broad variety of attitudes towards the morning. In its spiritual form, the *tageliet* does not only portray the coming day as something positive and therefore something that means that the night is filled with delighted expectation. It also portrays fear and denial, since the coming of the light is also used symbolically for the arrival of God and the Last Judgement. The poems selected for this argument, however, portray the expected morning as something positive.

4. The literary figure represents an idea of a watchman's task without considering specific periods of history or a certain kind of settlement, which would require specific tasks carried out by watchmen. Since the watchman's duty and his portrayal in German poetry of the fifteenth cen-

externalizes otherwise implicit information and undermines oppositions⁵. In Middle High German poetry, this watchman has roughly three main duties. The first two go together: expecting and announcing the literal «bright side of night», signs of the morning, signaling the end to the night. In this way, he observes and contemplates the passing of time⁶. This entails waiting and could be described as a mode of transitive attention, an attention form that is object-based. In focusing on one object, in this case the horizon, and in searching for the absence or presence of light, the watchman applies transitive attention. Contemplating any changes of light, he awaits «the appearance of the morning star to bring his freezing to an end»⁷.

But he not only reports on the changes of light as time passes but, thirdly, looks out for danger as well. Enjoying the night as a time to rest is possible only because of the presence of the watchman. As the very essence of the watchman's duty is to remain awake and thus observant, others are able to rest. In this fashion, he exercises a mode of intransitive (objectless) attention. In anticipation of any potential danger that is not yet visible or audible, the watchman's attention is intransitive, since the danger

tury as a poetic figure are the main focus of this paper, it might suffice here for historical background to refer to the description of the watchmen's task in sources on fifteenth-century Strasbourg. These duties include providing an indication of what time it is («morgens zû thorglocken, die ir jegelicher mit sin selbes hant, und nieman anders von sinen wegen, lûten sol»; «In the morning, at the time of the gate bell, which the one shall ring by his own hand, and no one else for him») as well as raising the alarm in the case of fire («wo ein für uszgot, das got lange wende, das sü das zû rehter zit verkündent, als verre sü können oder mögent»; «Where a fire breaks out, which may God avert for a long time, that they may proclaim this in due time, as far as they can»), in *Strassburger Zunft- und Polizei-Verordnungen des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*. Aus den Originalen des Stadtarchivs ausgewählt und zusammengestellt von J. Bruckner, Strassburg, Karl J. Trübner, 1889, 507-9.

5. See Christian Kiening, «Poetik des Dritten», in Id., *Zwischen Körper und Schrift. Texte vor dem Zeitalter der Literatur*, Frankfurt, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2003, 157-75, see 160.

6. Here we already encounter a slight discrepancy between poetic portrayal and historical reality, as the guards on Strasbourg Cathedral were given an hourglass in order to measure the time rather than relying on the stars and the change of light (*Strassburger Zunft- und Polizei-Verordnungen*, 508).

7. *Eos*, ed. Hatto, 434.

is irregular and may not materialize at all. It is evident that both, transitive and intransitive, coincide in as much as the watchman is looking out for something that is not yet there, without knowing how it will occur. The difference between them lies in the certainty of something to come: while the night might pass without something dangerous happening, day will most certainly break and day will come⁸.

After this theoretical overview, I will now outline the argument. It will start with a short introduction to the figure of the watchman in medieval German poetry, focusing on the genre of *tageliet*, dawn song, in its romantic as well as its spiritual form. The next step will analyze a spiritual *tageliet* from the fifteenth century, Heinrich Laufenberg's *Stand vf, du sünder, laß din clag*. The focus will be on 'watching' as an activity during the night. In this poem, the watchman uses dawn as a metaphor for the story of the Incarnation in order to announce it to a so-called sinner. Although the sinner first responds with a defense of his right to sleep, the nightly activity of the watchman, watching out for the signs of light, here applied metaphorically, is the precondition for the sinner's chance on salvation. While sleep in this context is a metaphor for sin, in a literal sense it is cherished in medieval prayer practice and teachings. This will be shown in the third step, which will focus on 'sleeping' as a nightly activity. It will look at the evangelical admonition to a life of constant vigilance in the writings of different Christian writers throughout the antics up to the Middle Ages. The Ambrosian Hymn *Aeterne rerum conditor*, which entails praise for the regular change of day to night, will exemplify the outcome. This third point will end with an excerpt from the sermon *De navitate Domini* (thirteenth/fourteenth century). It shows that even a positive evaluation of sleep does not make the watchman obsolete. Returning in the fourth step to the realm of metaphor, an anonymous song, *Ich siech den margensterne* from the Hohenfurter Liederbuch (fif-

8. For a detailed discussion on the two modes of attention, see Lucy Alford, *Forms of Poetic Attention*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2020, 5-9. She approaches the topic from a literary perspective: «what is formed by and in poetic language is an event of attention generated in the acts of both reading and writing» (*ibid.*, 3).

teenth century) will be analyzed. It applies the use of metaphor to the moon, dawn, and sunrise. In praising those, God and Mary as Mother of God are being praised. Here, night is the time of 'expecting.' It is portrayed as a joyous activity, since the arrival of the day, metaphor for salvation, is assured by the regularity of the alternation of day and night.

The Watchman in Medieval German Poetry

To introduce the watchman as a figure of medieval German poetry, one genre sticks out as promising. Dawn song, *tageliet*, as shown above, is a genre of world literature⁹. Dawn song is characterized by a small, unchanged set of motifs in combination with a broad spectrum of variety¹⁰, ranging from romantic love poetry to spiritual songs. Although the focus of this paper is on the spiritual *tageliet*, the profane romantic form helps to illuminate the watchman as a poetic figure in Middle High German poetry. Discussion has been rife throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on whether the watchman in medieval German songs originated in the *alba*, the romance dawn song¹¹. In order to learn more about the watchman's genesis, Ulrich Knoop looked at the occurrence of the watchman in Middle High German literature before 1200. Starting with «heroic epic poetry» (*Heldendichtung*), Knoop presents several passages that contain a watchman (*späher*) and describe the watchman's task of

9. It includes Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Mongol, Turkic, Indian, Burmese, Siamese, Indonesian, Malay, Dyak, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Kurdish, Armenian, Georgian, Classical Greek, Modern Greek, Latin, Iberian, French, Italian, Rumanian, Medieval German, Dutch, English, Icelandic, Danish, Welsh, Irish, Czech and Slovak, Polish, Wend, Yugoslav, Bulgarian, Russian, Albanian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Hungarian, Estonian, Livonian, Finnish, Votyak, Quechua poetry as well as poetry from the Marquesas Islands. See also Ulrich Knoop, *Das mittelhochdeutsche Tagelied. Inhaltsanalyse und literarhistorische Untersuchungen*, Marburg, Elwert, 1976, 183; Kiening, «Poetik des Dritten», 157.

10. See Mohr, «Tagelied», 536.

11. See *Eos*, ed. Hatto, 76; Knoop, *Das mittelhochdeutsche Tagelied*, 7. The most concise summary can be found in Mohr, «Tagelied», 536. In order to describe the dependencies between the different genres, he suggests the term «Familienähnlichkeit»; see also *ibid.*, 184.

looking out for daybreak and informing others of its occurrence¹². Early variations of this thematic nucleus suggest that by 1200 the plot was well known among courtly audiences¹³. From this perspective, 1200 appears as a watershed, since Wolfram of Eschenbach and Otto of Botenlauben are said to have had a major impact on the development of the «Wächterlied», the dawn song that contains a watchman in addition to a couple in love¹⁴.

From then on, watchmen often feature in love songs, especially in dawn songs¹⁵. Dawn songs usually have the following plot (with some variations): After spending the night together, morning is accompanied by pain for a couple in love as it is the moment at which they must separate. Was it not for the watchman announcing the arrival of the day, the couple would continue enjoying each other's company until the sun pierces through the window, revealing the connection between them, which would be viewed as illegitimate by society. The figure of the watchman qualifies poetically as a «figure of the Third»¹⁶, standing on the border between their love and separation, their security and the scorn of society, therefore being a potential friend as well as a potential enemy¹⁷. The concept of the «Third» tries to do justice to the phenomenon of the watchman provid-

12. Knoop claims the oldest description to be found in the «Kaiserchronik», vv. 11722, where the larch announces daybreak and the watchman features. However, he does not announce daybreak but the return of the king. Also, the night is not spent together, dedicated to acts of love. Instead, Crescentia frees the king's brother only in the morning, whom she had imprisoned during the absence of the king (her husband) in order to guard against the brother's hostilities.

13. See Mohr, «Tagelied», 537.

14. It is, however, important to note that with regard to the medieval German dawn song, it remains impossible to determine a chronological order. Mohr shows this regarding the interdependencies between the different German speaking poets such as Heinrich of Morungen, Reinmar, Walther von der Vogelweide, Wolfram of Eschenbach, Otto of Botenlauben, Markgraf of Hohenburg (Mohr, «Tagelied», 537 sg.).

15. See *ibid.*, 535.

16. Kiening, «Poetik des Dritten», 168.

17. A good summary is provided by Pia Selmayr, «Warne, ob ich entslāfen bin. Die Rolle des Wächters im Tagelied nach Wolfram», in Beate Kellner, Ludger Lieb, Stephan Müller (eds.), *Höfische Textualität. Festschrift für Peter Strohschneider*, Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag Winter, 2015, 189-210, see 191-92; see also Mohr, «Tagelied», 535.

ing a third figure in addition to the loving couple. In this understanding, the watchman materializes and offers the possibility of an externalization of that which would stay implicit without him¹⁸. He symbolizes the forthcoming painful separation of the couple, but at the same time enables them to reach the peak of their time spent together. When the end of their time together is signaled, their desire multiplies to enjoy their love fully in the little time left before sunrise¹⁹. This is often described with love scenes as seen in the following example, the fifth verse of Wolfram's *Sine clawen*:

*Von den blicken
die der tach tet durh div glas
vnd do wahtære warnen sanch
si mv̄se erschrischen
durh den der da bi ir was
ir brustlin an brust si dwanch
der ritter ellens niht vergaz
des wold in wenden wahtærs don
vrloup nah und naher baz
mit kusse vnd anders gab in minne lon²⁰.*

18. See Kiening, «Poetik des Dritten», 160, 165.

19. Much discussion ensued on the question of whether erotic dawn song is the opposition to courtly *Minnesang* (medieval love song), as it portrays the fulfillment of the plea to be united in love, which in courtly love song remains unfulfilled. More recent research has agreed that it instead offers an addition to the spectrum of poetry on love. This moment of highest possible intensity and intimacy does not solve the problem posed in courtly love poetry, but rather chases it to a painful peak, which leaves the couple still unfulfilled owing to its finiteness, postponing the unfulfillment often portrayed in courtly love songs. One solution to this offered by Wolfram of Eschenbach is marriage, as it enables a legitimate and undisturbed love beyond daybreak (MF 5,34). In general, it is to be noted that the watchman as an announcer of the day appears in many of the more than 50 dawn songs from the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries onwards (Selmayr, «Warne, ob ich entslāfen bin», 193). However, there are also many dawn songs that do not include a watchman. For critical views on the qualification of the watchman as an essential element, see Ralf Breslau, *Die Tagelieder des späten Mittelalters. Rezeption und Variation eines Liedtyps der höfischen Lyrik*, Berlin, Diss. masch., 1987, 288 sg., 295 sg., 298, 339 sg., 344 sg., 382 sg.

20. Text transcribed by Christian Kiening, see Id., «Poetik des Dritten», 164. He claims this song to be among the most famous medieval love songs (*ibid.*, 161). Source: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibl., Cgm 19.

At the bright glances day was darting through the panes and at the watchman's warning song, she started with dread for the man beside her. She pressed her breast to his. Nor did the knight spare his mettle, though the watchman had meant to forestall him with his singing! Close and closer with kiss and otherwise their parting brought them love's reward²¹.

The watchman serves as the personification of a contradiction, which results from dawn as a focal point of the complex dependency of time, light, and daytime. In opposition to several other figures of annunciation of the morning, such as for example the cock, the watchman verbalizes the passing of time. This adds a level of reflection to the songs, which is demonstrated in conversations between the watchman and the couple in love and in verbal expressions of empathy from the watchman's side²². Already here it is evident that the figure of the watchman has the potential for a symbolic meaning, representing the judgement of society on illegitimate love connections²³.

As mentioned above, in addition to 'secular', 'profane', 'romantic', and 'erotic' dawn songs, there also exist 'spiritual' dawn songs. Not only the watchman but sleep, too, is one of the elements that both spiritual and erotic forms of dawn song share. The difference lies in the use of the small nucleus of motifs. In spiritual songs, the different motifs used have a metaphorical meaning²⁴. While sleep has a literal meaning in erotic dawn songs, it boasts a metaphorical one in the spiritual form. Sleep symbolizes a life lived in sin²⁵. The watchman also has a spiritual

21. Translation by Arthur Hatto, see *Eos*, ed. Hatto, 452 sg.

22. For example, see verses 1-4 of *Sine clawen* and Breslau, *Die Tagelieder des späten Mittelalters*, 293. See also Breslau, *Die Tagelieder des späten Mittelalters*, 194 as well as Kiening, «Poetik des Dritten», 160.

23. For discussion of 'symbolic', see Breslau, *Die Tagelieder des späten Mittelalters*, 290.

24. The use of 'metaphor' relies on Hans Blumenberg's study on light as a metaphor; see Id., «Licht als Metapher der Wahrheit. Im Vorfeld der philosophischen Begriffsbildung [1957]», in Id., *Ästhetische und metaphorologische Schriften*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 2001, 139-72.

25. See, for example, Gerhard Hahn, «Es ruft ein wachter faste oder 'Verachtet mir die Meister nicht!'. Beobachtungen im geistlichen Tagelied des Hans Sachs», in Johannes Janota, Paul Sappler, Frieder Schanze (eds.), *Fest-*

dimension. Instead of guarding the city from its tower or a castle from on top of its wall, warning the sinner of this life becomes his main task. Most of the time, the uncovering of this transported meaning seems not to produce great surprise and to be rather foreseeable²⁶. This common trait of late medieval poetry can be described positively as 'Ästhetik der Konventionalität'²⁷ or, since the metaphorical use of the wake-up call is widespread in German spiritual poetry dating from the fifteenth century, it could also be stated that it had lost all the tension a metaphor would be able to provide. The «paradox of metaphor»²⁸ tries to refer to «what is simultaneously ordinary and spectacular about metaphor»²⁹. In this sense, the watchman in spiritual poetry has different dimensions of meaning, as several influences converge in this figure. The genesis of the watchman figure in spiritual poetry remains unclear. Past research is filled with different viewpoints on whether the romantic form of dawn song influenced the spiritual one, or the other way around³⁰. Simplification in one direction, of course, brings with it the danger of covering up complex aesthetic and literary-historical links³¹. The theme of erotic love, as well as the doubt relating to the watchman's reliability, seldom finds equivalents in the spiritual realm³². Since dawn song in its spiritual form is characterized by a great variety, general statements need to be tested with the help of individual songs. We will therefore look at two examples in the following:

schrift Walter Haug und Burghart Wachinger, II, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1992, 793–801, see 797 and Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller, Schlaflose Nächte. Der Schlaf als metaphorische, moralische und metaphysische Größe im Mittelalter, Hamburg, HHL-Verlag, 2002, 38.

26. See Hahn, «Es ruft ein wachter faste», 799.

27. Manfred Kern, *Weltflucht. Poesie und Poetik der Vergänglichkeit in der weltlichen Dichtung des 12. bis 15. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin et al., De Gruyter, 2009, 25.

28. Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr., «Metaphor and Thought», in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008 [Reprint 2010], 3–13, see 5.

29. *Ibid.*

30. See Mohr, «Tagelied», 540.

31. See Kern, *Weltflucht*, 266, note 28 as well as Kiening, «Poetik des Dritten», 166.

32. See Hahn, «Es ruft ein wachter faste», 794.

Heinrich Laufenberg's *Stand vf du sündler laß din clag* and *Ich siech den margensterne* (anonymous) in the *Hohenfurter Liederbuch*.

Heinrich Laufenberg: Stand vf du sündler laß din clag

The bright side of the night, understood literally as brought about by the slow start of morning light, is a very common topic in spiritual poetry dating from the fifteenth century. Using Heinrich Laufenberg's song as a first example, I will show how the bright side of night is used in this literal sense as the dawn that brightens the night, as well as in a metaphorical sense. In spiritual song, the use of light serves as a metaphor mostly for divinity. This has its roots in Greek and Latin philosophy³³, religious rituals, biblical writings³⁴, and theological thought³⁵, to name but a few influences.

As a poet without work³⁶, Heinrich Laufenberg is known owing to scattered mentions of him as a poet in manuscripts, which have survived until today³⁷. It is certain that Laufenberg first lived and worked in Freiburg im Breisgau, as is evidenced by several mentions³⁸. As a cleric, he was employed as a chaplain in the cathedral of Freiburg from 1421 onwards³⁹. After 1433 he worked in Zofingen, Switzerland, moving to the Commandery of the Order of Saint John 'Zum grünen Wörth' in Strasbourg in

33. See Blumenberg, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, 139-46.

34. See John William McKay, «Psalms of Vigil», *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 91/2 (1979), 229-47, see 229.

35. See Blumenberg, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, 154-67.

36. Horst Brunner, «Dichter ohne Werk. Zu einer überlieferungbedingten Grenze mittelalterlicher Literaturgeschichte (Mit einem Textanhang: Die Dichterkataloge des Konrad Nachtigall, des Valentin Voigt und des Hans Folz)», in Konrad Kunze, Johannes G. Mayer, Bernhard Schnell, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Editionen und Studien zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters. Kurt Ruh zum 75. Geburtstag*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer 1989, 1-31. Laufenberg is author of the 15000-verse long translation of the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, which he completed in 1437 but is now lost save a few verses.

37. Balázs Nemes, *Das lyrische Œuvre von Heinrich Laufenberg in der Überlieferung des 15. Jahrhunderts. Untersuchungen und Editionen*, Stuttgart, Hirzel, 2015, 9.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*, 10.

1445, where he eventually died on March 31, 1460. It is questionable whether Laufenberg's songs and his œuvre had any impact outside this monastery⁴⁰. While in 1979 Burghart Wachinger doubted whether any of the songs did actually exceed this small circle of readers⁴¹, Balázs Nemes argued in 2015 that a few songs and prayers might well have reached audiences beyond Laufenberg's direct circle during his lifetime⁴². Most of the manuscripts containing his poetry show an audience outside Strasbourg, in monasteries of nuns, in songbooks compiled by citizens and educated Latin-speaking recipients⁴³.

The song *Stand vf du sündler laß din clag*⁴⁴ was in one of the manuscripts housed in the Strasbourg Library that fell victim to a fire in 1870⁴⁵. The song was most probably written between 1421 and 1430⁴⁶. It exists today thanks to copies made before 1870 by Philipp Wackernagel, who included it in a collection of church songs⁴⁷. The song under scrutiny has nine verses, each verse consisting of fifteen lines. It starts with the watchman calling out:

40. *Ibid.*, 22.

41. See Burghart Wachinger, «Notizen zu den Liedern Heinrich Laufenbergs», in Dietrich Huschenbett et al. (eds.), *Medium Aevum Deutsch. Beiträge zur deutschen Literatur des hohen und späten Mittelalters. Festschrift Kurt Ruh zum 65. Geburtstag*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 1979, 349–79, see 379.

42. See Nemes, *Das lyrische Œuvre von Heinrich Laufenberg*, 23.

43. For a detailed discussion on his impact, see *ibid.*, 81–88.

44. 'Rise up, sinner! Quit complaining'; German text taken from André Schnyder, *Das geistliche Tagelied des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit. Textsammlung, Kommentar und Umriss einer Gattungsgeschichte*, Tübingen et al., A. Francke, 2004, 127. A thorough discussion of the poem is found in *ibid.*, 312–16. Translations by A. R. if not indicated otherwise.

45. Strassburg, ehem. Stadtbibliothek, B 121 4°, cc. 23r–25v. The library was destroyed by the fire during the attack of the Prussian army on 24 August 1870, see Nemes, *Das lyrische Œuvre von Heinrich Laufenberg*, 17 sg.

46. See Wachinger, «Notizen zu den Liedern Heinrich Laufenbergs», 353 and Nemes, *Das lyrische Œuvre von Heinrich Laufenberg*, 75.

47. See Schnyder, *Das geistliche Tagelied*, 312 relying on K. E. Philipp Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von Martin Luther bis auf Nicolaus Herman und Ambrosius Blaurer*, Stuttgart, Liesching, 1841, n. 747 and Id., *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zu Anfang des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, II, Leipzig, Olms, 1867 (2nd reprint: 1990), n. 702.

*Stand vf, du sündler, laß din clag
vnd bis in gnoden munder!
die naht erluchtet hüt den tag,
vernim min sag,
hör wunder über wunder. (1, vv. 1-5)*

Rise up, sinner, leave your lament and be cheerful in grace! The night illuminates the day today, hear what I say, hear miracle upon miracle.

The first of the nine verses continues this same theme, urging the sinner to wake up (and be on his way). In the middle, it reveals that the great event illuminating the night is the birth of a child, without yet revealing its identity as Jesus (*tû vf din ougen heiter: / hinacht ist dir ein kind geborn*; «Open up your eyes joyfully: tonight, a child was born for you»; 1, vv. 7 sg.). Despite the enthusiastic calling of the watchman, the sinner is reluctant to get up as he claims he has only just fallen asleep:

*Jst es ein kind noch menschen art,
blos, luter vnd auch pure,
so darf ich nit so grosser wart,
won es ist zart
von blöde der nature. (2, vv. 6-10)*

If it is a child after the manner of men, naked, pure, and also innocent, there is no need for me to expect it greatly, for it is fragile and weak by nature.

In the third verse, the watchman provides further information on the child: heaven and hell submit to its reign, it is able to heal any sickness, it is entirely human and God. He then continues to verbally guide the sinner through the history of salvation, describing the child's impact on the old covenant, claiming that it played a role in the story of Moses (3, v. 13), Adam (4, vv. 1 sg.), Abraham (4, vv. 3-5), the Exodus (4, vv. 6-10), Joshua (4, vv. 11 sg.), King David (5, vv. 1 sg.), Solomon (5, vv. 3-5) and Maccabaeus (5, vv. 6-10), summarizing all of this as follows: *vil wunder in der alten e / tet es vnd me* («It performed many miracles in the Old Covenant and more»; 4, vv. 13-15). By relating all of

the above, the watchman shows the close connection of the story of Israel as God's people to this child's birth⁴⁸.

He then, in the sixth verse, announces Jesus's birth in Bethlehem, referring to Jesus as *Der sunnen glantz von einem mon* («The sun's glow from a moon»; 6, v. 6). This metaphor signals that it is still nighttime, since the moon is shining. Although the sun's light is the subject in this sentence, it describes the moon as radiating the light it originally receives from the sun. This metaphor is used to illustrate the belief that, in the same way that the moon receives the sun's light, Mary conceives Jesus from God and gives birth to him. Heinrich Laufenberg hereby refers to a common way of describing Mary's relationship with divinity in German medieval spiritual poetry. When Mary is praised for being both a virgin and a mother, she is often referred to as the (morning) star and the receiving luminary. Although describing her as «moon» is part of a comparably wider tradition, this is usually used to praise her majesty rather than her status as a virgin⁴⁹. Therefore, Laufenberg praises Mary with an attribute that usually signifies her majesty, hereby marking her role as beyond being a vessel for another life. The seventh verse then explicitly praises Mary and the Immaculate Conception. In verse eight, the watchman goes on to describe the nativity scene and how the shepherds were called to the cradle. The song ends with anti-Jewish polemical remarks (8, vv. 9-15; 9, vv. 1-10)⁵⁰.

Throughout the song, continuous reference is made to prophecies and prophets. In referring to them, the watchman situates himself within their biblical tradition: *Von disem kindelein so zart / verkündent all wissagen* («All the prophecies have foretold

48. The birth of the child, as well as its conception by Mary, was announced by prophecies, see 5, 11-13 und 6, 11-12; see below.

49. For more examples of Mary praised as virgin by using the moon, see Anselm Salzer, *Die Sinnbilder und Beiworte Mariens in der deutschen Literatur und lateinischen Hymnenpoesie des Mittelalters. Mit Berücksichtigung der patristischen Literatur. Eine literar-historische Studie*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1886-1894 (Reprint: 1967), 79, l. 12-16, where Laufenberg is the only reference. In comparison, Salzer fills six and half pages with references to 'moon' used to praise Mary as majestic (*Sinnbilder*, 377-84). For the Virgin Mary as 'star', see *ibid.*, 35, l. 23-36, l. 21.

50. See Schnyder, *Das geistliche Tagelied*, 315.

this tender little child»; 5, vv. 11 sg.), *Die edel magt, die es gebar, / ist ie vnd ie fürsehen* («The noble virgin who gave birth to it has been foreknown from time eternal»; 6, vv. 11 sg.) and finally *dis wisent all propheten gar* («All the prophets distinctly indicated that», 9, v. 8).

This analysis concentrates on the watchman, although much more could be discussed with regard to this poem⁵¹. It is not the sinner who is expecting daybreak, but the watchman. He is portrayed as having witnessed the events leading up to Jesus's birth, starting with the creation of man, as well as having borne witness to the birth itself. He is also present after Jesus's birth and death, as indicated by the prayer at the end, which asks the child for guidance to God's kingdom after death (9, vv. 10-15). Therefore, in this song written by Laufenberg the watchman is portrayed as a figure who continues the waiting of the prophets in the liturgical year. Just like the prophets throughout salvation history, he carries on the task of announcing the arrival of God: *verslof nit sin zuokunfte* («Do not oversleep his arrival»; 1, v. 15)⁵². Simultaneously to referring to the past event, Jesus's arrival is announced as reoccurring every liturgical year. Even though Christmas and Advent repeat on a regular basis, the sinner, in contrast to the watchman, seems unprepared. The watchman is needed to make the sinner aware of the importance of being conscious of this certain time (passing): the sinner should be *munder* (awake), listen, alert his heart, and open his eyes (1, vv. 1 and 6 sg.). The first verse finishes with:

*Brich dinen slaf, wach in gemüt
in willen vnd vernunfte,
sich vmb dich mit din selbes hüt
durch sine güt
verslof nit sin zükunfte. (1, vv. 11-15)*

Interrupt your sleep, be awake in mind, will and reason, look around prudently, for the sake of his goodness do not oversleep his arrival.

51. For a commentary on this song, *ibid.*, 312-16; and Theodor Kochs, *Das deutsche geistliche Tagelied*, Münster, Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1928, 83, 98.

52. Schnyder suggests that prophets could be understood as 'Metamorphose' of the Watchman (Schnyder, *Das geistliche Tagelied*, 316, note 254).

In waking up the sinner, the watchman also calls him to be fully aware and responsible for himself and his quest for salvation.

Resting During the Night

Without the watchman, the sinner would sleep through the arrival that is supposed to bring salvation. Although it is a special night: *die naht erluchtet hut den tag* («the night enlightens the day today»; 1, v. 3), the sinner claims that his sleep is righteous because of the night. It is therefore necessary to further explore the meaning of the night in its literal sense, providing sleep, as this entails positive attitudes toward the night. As said above, sleep, similar to the watchman, can be viewed for analytical purposes from two angles: a literal one, which is physical, and a metaphorical one. Its literal meaning is evaluated positively and viewed as part of creation as well as recreation⁵³.

In his study on attention in Christian medieval thought, Peter von Moos shows that even though the admonition of ceaseless prayer is present in monastic teachings, praying itself was not necessarily expected to last forever⁵⁴. Incessant prayer is an ideal proposed by the New Testament⁵⁵. But how is this to be understood? Early apostolic fathers believed this should be taken literally. In accordance with this literal interpretation, the desert fathers gave pragmatic advice on how this could be achieved⁵⁶.

53. See Peter v. Moos, «*Attentio est quaedam sollicitudo*. Die religiöse, ethische und politische Dimension der Aufmerksamkeit im Mittelalter», in Peter v. Moos, Gert Melville (eds.), *Rhetorik, Kommunikation und Medialität. Gesammelte Studien zum Mittelalter*, Münster, LIT, 2006, 265–307, at 277, especially relying on Thomas Aquinas; see also Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte*, 39.

54. See Moos, «*Attentio est quaedam sollicitudo*», 277; Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte*, 68–72.

55. Direct and indirect admonitions are, for example: Luke 18:1; 21:36; 23:36–37; 1 Thess. 5:17; Phil. 4:4; Rom. 1:9; Eph. 6:18; For an extensive list, see Radbert Kerkhoff O.S.B., *Das unablässige Gebet. Beiträge zur Lehre vom immerwährenden Beten im Neuen Testament*, München, Karl Zink, 1954, see 18–22 (citations in Ancient Greek). All references to Scripture rely on *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. Robert Weber, Roger Gryson, Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007.

56. See Kerkhoff, *Das unablässige Gebet*, 9 sg., as well as Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte*, 50.

Prayer was a weapon to employ against evil forces⁵⁷, and formed «the battlefield where the struggle between the demons and angels is decided»⁵⁸.

Radbert Kerkhoff's close reading of the New Testament claims that continuous prayer is indeed that which is sought, but not as a mathematical quantity. Instead, it expresses a new idea: one in which prayer is able to cultivate an inner expectation of the end times⁵⁹. As such, it is developed as an attitude that forms the relationship of man with God, developed by Jesus in Luke's Gospel, Paul in his letters, and John in the apocalypse, relying on the Old Testament, and Jewish rites, as well as on a Hellenistic use of language⁶⁰. How the directive to pray continuously was to be followed remained subject to interpretation: The Anchorites were characterized by their striving to follow this directive in a literal sense⁶¹. As early as the sixth century, the views of clerics and theologians on the subject were strongly opposed⁶². Thus, monastic rules attributed to the Magister Regulae and Benedict of Nursia suggest a form of life that does not regard sleep as an obstacle but rather as a means necessary in order to proceed with a life dedicated to prayer⁶³. This conflict is expressed concisely in Augustine's question: *Deus, Deus meus, ad te de luce vigilo. Quid est vigilare? Utique non dormire. Quid est dormire? [...] Somnum corporis debemus habere*⁶⁴. Therefore, in medieval thought, an acceptance of the fact that "no action can last long at its highest pitch"⁶⁵ did exist, as well as the fact that sleep during the night was a necessity. As will be shown later, the sleeping soul is a different matter⁶⁶.

57. See Michael Marx O.S.B., *Incessant Prayer in Ancient Monastic Literature*, Rome, Scuola Salesiana, 1946, 54.

58. *Ibid.*, 56.

59. See Kerkhoff, *Das unablässige Gebet*, 58.

60. *Ibid.*, 58-60.

61. See Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte*, 50, 58-63. He closely connects sought sleeplessness to early monasticism, being systematized by Anthony of Egypt and being present for two centuries until approximately 430.

62. *Ibid.*, 63-68.

63. *Ibid.*, 51.

64. See Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum LXII*, in Id., *En. in Psalmos*, PL 36, Sp. 750.

65. See Moos, «*Attentio est quaedam sollicitudo*», 279.

66. See Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte*, 27, 40.

The following hymn will show more of the positive attitudes toward the night. Hymns formed an integral part of the monastic Liturgy of the Hours and, as regards content, composition and use, can be located at the crossroads between liturgy and poetry⁶⁷. As such they convey the contents of the daily liturgy and the Bible. Hymns are spiritual songs, meant for the praise of God⁶⁸. *Aeterne rerum conditor*⁶⁹ is attributed to Ambrose and is part of monastic morning prayer to this day⁷⁰. Originally, however, it was not situated in a monastic context but instead sung by the church community⁷¹.

Three of the four semantic oppositions of the text are 'darkness-light', 'asleep-awake' and 'sin-guilt'⁷². Here, a cock symbolizes daybreak. On the intertextual level, the animal shows the close connection to the gospel, referring to Mark 13:35, where the admonition to watch out (*vigilate ergo*) is explained by a warning that the Lord might arrive at cockcrow⁷³. It also refers to Luke 22:60, where Peter is reminded by a cockcrow that Jesus

67. See Ansgar Franz, «Aufstehen, Auferstehung, Aufstand. Der Morgenhymnus des Ambrosius von Mailand als Beispiel doxologischer Ethik», in Ulrich Vop, Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, Ruben Zimmermann (eds.), *Metapher – Narratio – Mimesis – Doxologie. Begründungsformen frühchristlicher und antiker Ethik. Kontexte und Normen neutestamentlicher Ethik / Contexts and Norms of New Testament Ethics*, VII, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2016, 403–19, see 405; see also Heike Wennemuth, *Vom lateinischen Hymnus zum deutschen Kirchenlied. Zur Übersetzungs- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von Christe qui lux es et dies*, Tübingen, Francke, 2003, 17.

68. See Wennemuth, *Vom lateinischen Hymnus*, 14.

69. A systematic interpretation can be found in Ansgar Franz, «*Aeterne rerum Conditor*», in Id., *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte. Untersuchungen zum literarischen Text und liturgischen Kontext der Tagzeitenhymnen des Ambrosius von Mailand*, St. Ottilien, EOS, 1994, 147–273; a shorter, newer version is the above-mentioned article (Franz, «Aufstehen, Auferstehung, Aufstand»).

70. It is noteworthy that this hymn, one of the 14 attributed to Ambrose, was incorporated into prayer on a daily basis, as for some time it was the only hymn used in morning prayer (see Franz, «Aufstehen, Auferstehung, Aufstand», 405).

71. See Ansgar Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte. Untersuchungen zum literarischen Text und liturgischen Kontext der Tagzeitenhymnen des Ambrosius von Mailand*, St. Ottilien 1994, 17; see also Wennemuth, *Vom lateinischen Hymnus*, 32.

72. Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 153; Id., «Aufstehen, Auferstehung, Aufstand», 408 sg.

73. Mc 13:35: «Vigilate ergo / nescitis enim quando dominus domus veniat / sero an media nocte an galli cantu an mane».

foretold that he would deny him before the cock cried three times⁷⁴. In the hymn, the cock is equipped with attributes that identify it as a metaphor for Jesus⁷⁵. For the present argument, however, the focus is on the invocation, the first verse. It praises God for the regular change of times in order to diminish man's weariness or exasperation – *fastidium*⁷⁶:

*Aeterne rerum conditor,
noctem diemque qui regis
et temporum das tempora,
ut alleues fastidium,*

Here, time is not only viewed as a series of sequences that can be added up to abstract measurements, but is qualified by the change from light to darkness⁷⁷. God is praised as being beyond time because he gives time to time (1, v. 3) and therefore reigns over night and day, which refers to Genesis, recounting this as the first act of creation⁷⁸. The regularly sung hymn and Genesis shed light on each other, since it suggests that with every morning the

74. Luke 22:60–62: «et ait Petrus / homo nescio quid dicis / et continuo adhuc illo loquente cantavit gallus / 61 Et conversus Dominus respexit Petrum / et recordatus est Petrus verbi Domini sicut dixit / quia priusquam gallus cantet ter me negabis / 62 et egressus foras Petrus flevit amare»; see Franz, «Aufstehen, Auferstehung, Aufstand», 406; 407 sg., for a summary of the references to different meanings attributed to the cock from ancient Greek and Christian literature to Shakespeare up to Umberto Eco. For a more detailed overview see Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 161–86.

75. Ansgar Franz describes this as «semantische Identität» (410) and quotes Ambrose, who describes Jesus in a Maundy Thursday homily as *iste gallus mysticus*, who calls the sinner to return and forgives sin (see 410). Franz explains this in an analysis of Ambrose's homily Hexameron 5, 88–92 (31,1,201–203), see Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 177 sg.

76. Text from Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 147. *fastidium* is «vrdruzze» in a twelfth century German vernacular version: «Ewiger der dinge scepfaere / die naht un̄ den tach dv rihtes / vñ der zite gibes zite / daz dv ringes vrdrvzze» (see Joseph Kehrein, *Kirchen- und religiöse Lieder aus dem zwölften bis fünfzehnten Jahrhundert. Theils Übersetzungen lateinischer Kirchenhymnen (mit dem lateinischen Text), theils Originallieder aus Handschriften der k. k. Hofbibliothek zu Wien*, Paderborn, Ferdinand Schoeningh, 1853, 4 sg.).

77. See Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 188.

78. See Gen. 1:3–5; Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 191; see also Jean-Claude Schmitt's chapter in this volume.

original act of creation is repeated⁷⁹. In the context of this article, the thankfulness for the reliable change from day to night (and vice versa) is noteworthy, as it implicitly shows an acceptance of night as something positive. Ansgar Franz believes that the reason behind this gratitude lies in humanity's fundamental desire for change, which, according to him, stems from a higher appreciation of things that are temporarily unavailable⁸⁰. The validity of this argument would require further investigation, but in this context it is sufficient to observe that night as such is viewed as something that constitutes a reason to praise God.

From the above discussion on incessant prayer and this short example from a well-known hymn, it can be concluded that appreciation of the night as a time for rest and as a necessary part of existence was nourished in medieval poetry and prayer practice. The sinner in Heinrich Laufenberg's song could be viewed as being rightfully asleep, at least from a physical perspective. Nonetheless, in the song, the watchman urgently wants the sinner to wake up. This draws our attention and needs further questioning. For the physical point of view on sleep, it was established that his watchfulness renders rest during the night possible. Rest as physical activity is seen as positive and necessary. Sleep of the soul, in contrast, is not seen as something positive; therefore, we will once again turn to the spiritual perspective on sleep as metaphor.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Anton Schönbach edited excerpts from three sermon drafts (A, B and C)⁸¹. They were composed on Psalm 97, 1, *cantata Domino canticum novum*. In these sermons dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth cen-

79. See Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 192.

80. See *ibid.*, 193: He wants «change» to be understood as follows: «not primarily in the sense of distraction, entertainment, but the human trait of being able to appreciate things only when they are withdrawn for a certain time».

81. See Anton Schönbach, «Ein Zeugnis zur Geschichte der mittelhochdeutschen Lyrik», *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, N.F. 22 = 34 (1890), 213-18 (containing 'A') and Id., «Zur Geschichte der mittelhochdeutschen Lyrik», *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, N.F. 34 = 46, 1/2 (1902), 93-101 (containing 'B' and 'C'). They include transcriptions of Graz University Library Ms 730, Nr. 53 and Ms 176.

turies, the genres of secular poetry are enumerated, with each given a corresponding spiritual genre. The first genre is that of dawn song, as presented at the beginning of this essay, as the profane version. Sermon *De navitate Domini* (Graz University Library, Ms 176; C) describes the corresponding spiritual form as follows:

primus; diei, ein taglied. istum cantum vigiles, trege leut in aurora excitando. istum debent modo cantare vigiles, hujusmodi sunt prelati et predicatores, die tregen bruder, una homines desides excitando, qui in lecto se vertunt de uno latere ad aliud sic, sicut hostium, quod vertitur in cardine. hii sunt vigiles, de quibus dicit Dominus: 'super muros tuos, Jerusalem, constitui custodes tota die, et [tota] nocte non tacebunt'⁸².

These sermon drafts portray the genre of dawn song as sung by *vigiles*, watchful ones. A singer of a dawn song therefore must be fitting to the description of the adjective *vigil*. The sermon defines the office to which this adjective may be applied: preachers and clerics⁸³. Their task is to turn the sleepers, those living in sin, away from sin and to call them to readiness for salvation. A biblical citation tries to further describe the task as «the watchman on the wall of Jerusalem». Here, the homily refers to Isaiah 62, 6⁸⁴, in which God is speaking to Jerusalem as if it were a beloved. The *vigiles*, the clerics and preachers, are hereby assigned a role that not only calls them to their duty toward their fellow Christians. This reference also lays out its eschatological and figurative meaning, as it parallels their office with the watchmen in what is described as «heavenly Jerusalem.» Dawn

82. Text from Schönbach, «Zur Geschichte der mhd. Lyrik», 95 sg. («The first: of the day/for the day, a Dawn song. Watchful ones (...) this song in order to wake idle people to the dawn. Only watchful ones must sing this, such are prelates or preachers, the indolent brethren, at the same time waking up idle people who turn from side to side in bed, like the enemy turning in the hinge of the door. These are watchful ones of whom the Lord says: 'Upon your walls, Jerusalem, I have set watchmen. All day and all night, never will they be silent'»).

83. See Schönbach, «Ein Zeugnis zur Geschichte der mittelhochdeutschen Lyrik», 216.

84. See Id., «Zur Geschichte der mittelhochdeutschen Lyrik», 96. Is 62, 6: «super muros tuos Hierusalem constitui custodies / tota die et tota nocte perpetuo non tacebunt».

song, in this context, is then intended in particular to prevent sinners from turning back to sin⁸⁵, connecting the watchman's duty with its impact on the sinners' chances of achieving eternal life, for which the here-intended Christian existence aims. In the context of the spiritual perspective on sleep, which is equated with a life led in sin, the sleeper depends on the watchman for his salvation.

Hohenfurter Liederbuch: Ich siech den marnensterne

The second poetic example describes itself in the last verse as a dawn song, set in a spiritual context. *Ich siech den marnensterne* is song number 65 in the *Hohenfurter Liederbuch*, a songbook from the fifteenth century, stored in the Cistercian monastery of Vyšší Brod in the South Bohemian Region⁸⁶. The song praises Mary using the metaphor of light, this time as the morning star⁸⁷. The song has eleven verses, each encompassing four lines. In the first three verses a voice expresses joy about the break of day, speaking of the *marnensterne* («Morningstar»; 1, v. 1) and *dy schonen marnenrötte* («the beautiful red dawn»; 1, v. 3). As the earliest signs of day, both are praised as they end the night: *Dy nacht wil sy verdringen, / den tag nach ir her weist* («She wants to dispel the night / She points to the day after her»; 3, vv. 1 sg.). Early on, it is revealed that the singer praises Mary as the queen of heaven (3, vv. 3 sg.). Verses four to nine then are apostrophes, spoken to Mary as the morning glory, asking her to slowly fill the earth with light, wishing for the ubiquity of that light. Dawn is praised as a precondition for sunrise, which symbolizes God. Just as the day announces itself gradually, so too does this song invite its reader to gradually connect the process of daybreak to the history of salvation and to interpret sunrise as the Incarna-

85. See Mohr, «Tagelied», 535.

86. Vyšší Brod/Hohenfurt, ms. 8b (I see the Morningstar). Text in *Ein deutsches geistliches Liederbuch mit Melodien aus dem XV. Jahrhundert*, ed. and introd. by Wilhelm Bäumker, Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1895 (Reprint: Hildesheim, Olms 1970).

87. For references, see Salzer, *Die Sinnbilder* as mentioned above.

tion. This is not explicitly mentioned, but this recognition is suggested to the recipient when God is referred to as *dy sunn der gerechtigkeit* («the sun of justice»; 9, v. 4)⁸⁸ and *das war licht auf die erd* («the true light on the Earth»; 10, v. 4), alluding to the first chapter of John's Gospel⁸⁹. Therefore, both Jesus and the process of the Incarnation are implied by the sunlight. The time before Jesus's birth is characterized by the wait during which dawn gradually breaks. The metaphors of dawn and the morning star, symbolizing Mary⁹⁰, are revealed throughout the song, simultaneously leaving it open to interpretation what image should be attributed to whom. The song does not provide one definitive image for Mary – that of the morning star or of the red dawn. The morning star is praised as one of the earliest signs of daybreak. This expresses a high appreciation for Mary, since the voice of the poem rejoices in praising the morning star, even if it only constitutes a faint sign of daylight. Without a doubt, the light is at the center of the praise. Because the light while dawn breaks comes from the sun, the aim of the praise therefore oscillates throughout the song between Mary and Jesus. Focusing on the light, it directs the reader toward salvation, which becomes attainable through the Incarnation – God becoming man. The song in its structure, starting with the morning star (1, v. 1) and arriving at the sun (9, v. 4), portrays daybreak as something – though strongly desired – surprisingly unexpected. This is noteworthy since the pattern in which night and day alternate is reliable and expectable, but as a topic it still enjoys a broad metaphorical, philosophical, and lyrical tradition⁹¹. This paradoxical attitude toward Incarnation plays an important role in this song, as the Incarnation in Christian doctrine is said to have taken place around 1400 years before the *Hohenfurter Liederbuch* was composed. Nonetheless, most of the song implores dawn to

88. This attribute originates from Mal 4:2: «et orietur vobis timentibus nomen meum sol iustitiae et sanitas in pinnis eius et egrediemini et saietis sicut vituli de armento».

89. See Io 1:4-5.

90. For more examples, see Salzer, *Die Sinnbilder*, 23, l. 7-24, l. 36; 384, l. 13-388, l. 18.

91. See Blumenberg, «Licht als Metapher der Wahrheit»; Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte; Eos*, ed. Hatto.

bring forth daylight. Therefore, although night is seen as a time of darkness, symbolizing a life lived in sin, this song shows how night also symbolizes a cherished devotional attitude of expectation. The twofold aim of the praise of Mary and Jesus and the different sources of light make it evident that waiting itself is something desirable and enjoyable⁹². This spiritual dawn song connects the joy of awaiting the Incarnation, portrayed as an event belonging to a certain place and time in history, to the daily alternation of night and day. This is something it holds in common with Laufenberg's *Stand vf du sündler laß din clag*. The metaphor of night and day, darkness and light hereby does not solve the contradiction between punctual event and recurring pattern. Instead, both aspects emphasize waiting in readiness as an enjoyed attitude and something to be striven for on a daily basis.

Conclusion

In German spiritual poetry of the late Middle Ages, there seem to be two ways of enjoying the night: one encompasses sleep and rest; the other entails remaining awake, in expectation of the sunrise. Both are dependent on each other and constitute the other's cherishing of the night. Thanks to the watchman, the sinner can rest. The former's watchfulness and his call would be senseless if it did not serve to deliver new information to those asleep. In addition, as has been shown, sleep as a physical activity is viewed as necessary and as one that is a cherished activity, too. With regard to a sleeping soul, however, there is a clear hierarchy between sleeping and being awake: the sinner must wake up to see the light observed by the watchman, as it signifies salvation. In this view, sleep as a state of sinfulness is an obstacle to salvation.

It is the expected light that renders the night enjoyable for the watchman and the watchfulness desirable to the sleeper. In Heinrich Laufenberg's *Stand vf du sündler laß din clag*, he calls the sinner to join in the ready watchfulness in order to celebrate

92. This is further expressed by the melody that accompanies the song. For further information on the melody, see *Ein deutsches geistliches Liederbuch*, ed. Bäumker, 71.

Christmas. In *Ich sieh den morgensterne*, the watchman describes what he sees while keeping watch for daybreak, which can be read as a description of a watchman's activity during the night. He is the first to see the morning star as a sign of the soon-to-rise sun. In being a song with a noted melody, this activity is presented as a positive and enjoyable one. This perspective on expectation is expressed with the night as metaphor. It needs the metaphor of night changing to day as an event that will assuredly take place in order to symbolize the certainty of the salvation to come.

The expectation thereby becomes hopeful: it employs the mode of transitive attention, which focuses on an object and a certainty that the expected will happen. Of metaphorical use is also the tension between the moment when the sun appears and the process of dawn that precedes the visible sunrise. This tension is depicted in Laufenberg's song as one witnessed mainly by the watchman while the sinner remains asleep for the duration of the night. Here, the watchman is situated on the border between an individual's history and the history of salvation, between a virtuous life and a life wasted. In the *Hohenfurter Liederbuch*, this tension becomes evident in the undifferentiated praise of carriers and sources of light, oscillating between (signs of) dawn, Mary, and the sun, God. This tension helps to emphasize the watchfulness performed by the singer of the song.

The vigilance of the watchman models the ideal Christian existence: one of being able to live a life spent in expectation, which itself is enjoyable owing to the belief in the salvation of humanity and the certainty of its taking place. The sinner is called to imitate the watchman's vigilance. His call helps the sinner, just as preachers and clerics are expected to help sinners as *vigils*, as shown in the sermon. The vigilant watchman in these songs is portrayed as an enabler of Christian watchfulness. Therefore, the night serves as a 'chiffre'⁹³ for the Christian existence between vigilance and sleep. Both activities can be justified in their own right, but ultimately favored is vigilance. Only when awake is a joyous awaiting of salvation possible, joyous because the arrival of salvation is believed to be as certain as the sun rising each morning.

93. Blumenberg, «Licht als Metapher der Wahrheit», 140.

ABSTRACT

Agnes Rugel, *Vigilant Throughout the Night: The Watchman in German Medieval Spiritual Poetry*

This literary study aims to show different positive attitudes towards the night as they appear in a variety of pre-modern sacred vernacular and Latin texts. With the focus on Heinrich Laufenberg's *Stand vf du sünder* and *Ich siech den margensterne* in the Hohenfurt songbook as two examples of the German medieval genre of spiritual dawn song (*tageliet*), it discusses how night and sleep are used metaphorically to depict a life in sin. However, the positive evaluation of the night as a time of rest and transition to day in Latin hymns and theological discussions is taken up in the ubiquitous figure of the watchman in German medieval poetry, who portrays the night in the light of salvation history as a time of waiting that is positively connoted by faith in the coming salvation.

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SISMEL - EDIZIONI DEL GALLUZZO

