Notes

Erce and Dew

Since the Æcerbot is the best known of Old English charms, it has generated the most controversies, the most persistent of which has been the identification of the name (word, perhaps) *erce*, repeated thrice in the first line of the earth-hymn section: *Erce, erce, erce eorpan modor*. What follows is my solution to the problem, offered not so much in final refutation of the others[1] but in the hope that another will enlarge for us the range of possible interpretations in the mind of a practitioner of the charm, who likely did not himself know for certain the word's meaning.

Shifts in language seem to have been important for magic: the abundance of Latin and the sprinkling of Celtic in the Old English charms comprise evidence enough to make this statement axiomatic. I suggest that somewhere in the history of the Æcerbot charm a practitioner decided to find an exotic, i. e., magical, substitute in this line for the everyday Old English word, *deaw*, "dew." It is a common Germanic word traceable back to Indo-European *dhawo* with versions in Old Frisian (*daw*), Old Saxon (*dau*), Old High German (*tou*), and Old Norse (*dögg*) and related to Sanskrit *dhaw*, "to flow."[2] He could have chosen Latin *ros* — a word too close, perhaps, to the decidedly infertile Old English *rostian*, "to roast, to dry," for use in a fertility charm. A language less widely disseminated than Latin but still known in Anglo-Saxon England was Greek, and the Greek word for "dew" is 'έρσ η, *hersé*. Greek was accessible to the highly educated: Archbishop Theodore and his colleague Hadrian established a Greek school at Canterbury, and there is ample evidence that Aldhelm and Bede knew the language.[3] This availability, combined with the incom-

[1]The various theories are as follows: (1) *Erce* is the name of a Germanic fertility goddess, Dame Harke; see Jacob Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, 4th ed., James Stallybrass, trans.: (1883; rpt. New York: Dover, 1966), p. 1264. (2) *Erce* is not a name but a nonsense syllable used for incantation: see Felix Grendon, "The Anglo-Saxon Charms," *The Journal of American Folk-lore*, 22 (1909), p. 220; and Andrew Welsh, *The Roots of Lyric: Primitive Poetry and Modern Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). pp. 143–144, 151–153. Compare C. Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), p. 98, who notes that the repetition is not only incantatory but also magical, because a persistent motif in magic is theeness. (3) *Erce* is a Celtic loanword, possibly the name of a Celtic deity: see Storms, p. 185; and Audrey R. Duckert, "Erce and Other Possibly Keltic Elements in the Old English Charm for Unfruitful Land," *Names*, 20 (1972), 83–90. (4) *Erce* is related to Indo-European *ero*, "earth," and is thus a survival of Indo-European religion, specifically the mythic marriage of sky and earth: see Gert Sandman, *Studien zur altenglischen Zaubersprücken*, Diss. Munich, 1975, pp. 152–154. (5) *Erce* is a corruption of Latin *ecce*, "behold:" see John D. Niles, "The Æcerbot Ritual in Context" in John D. Niles, ed., *Old English Literature in Context* (Totowa, N. J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980), p. 55.

[2]See the entry "Dew" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

[3]For Theodore and Hadrian, see Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, Book IV, Chapters 1 and 2 and Book V, Chapter 20. Aldhelm studied with Hadrian at Canterbury where he most likely learned the language; Greek terms are sprinkled liberally about his writings. See an anonymous student's letter to Aldhelm in Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren, trans. and eds., *The Prose Works of Aldhelm* (Totowa, N. J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1979), p. 164. Bede quotes Greek words continuously in his various commentaries on New Testament books. For the availability of Greek texts in Anglo-Saxon England see J. D. A. Ogilvy, *Books Known to the English 597–1066* (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1967), pp. 146–148. There is some inconclusive evidence

prehensibility of Greek among the less-educated clergy and the uneducated laity, would have given a work like 'έρση a magical value that the Old English *deaw* would not have had.

The shift from 'έρση to *erce,* moreover, can be posited on sound paleological grounds. First, the normal transliteration for ε, and ρ are e and r respectively, with the rough breathing disappearing in the same way 'Ελλήνη became the Old English *Elene*. Second, from antiquity to the beginning of the ninth century,[4] the exclusive hand of Greek literary texts was uncial script, in which σ was always written "C," identical in form to the Latin "C" and Old English "C," letters representing, of course, different phonemes. Third, the normal transliteration for η into Old English is long e, again as in 'Ελλήνη/*Elene*.

This lineage for the perplexing *erce* makes sense conceptually as well as linguistically. Several scholars have called our attention to the connection in the charm between dew and the Holy Water prescribed in it:[5] dew, a natural fertilizing agent, finds its ecclesiastical equivalent in Holy Water as the originally pagan charm becomes christianized. An address to dew personified would thus be appropriate in the charm. The magic *erce,* no longer recognizable as the Greek translation of *deaw* would, of course, escape the christianizing into the hypothetical — and nonsensical — *halig wæter, halig wæter, halig wæter, eorppan modor*. But dew personified does establish a parallelism with the other hymn in the charm — the hymn to the sun (*Eastwearde ic stande*. . . .): dew stands in the same relationship to the earth as the sun to the sky — both fertilizing agents within a given sphere. In short, it makes sense to translate the line, "Dew, Dew, Dew, mother of earth."

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Why *raskól* 'split, schism' in the Name *Raskolnikov?*

Raskolnikov, the name of the main character in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* is well known to derive from *raskól* 'split, schism'. The main symbolism here seems obvious to me (Raskolnikov was schizophrenic), but Brody's 1979 detailed article on names in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot* makes no mention of this possibility. Could other scholars of Dostoyevsky have overlooked it too?

Here, first, is what Brody (1979: 121–122) has to say:

> 'The name . . . Raskolnikov is serived from *raskol* "schism, dissidence, heresy", and it thus means "schismatic, dissident, heretic". Dostoevsky might have first thought of the name while writing a polemical article "Schism Among the Nihilists" in 1864. For the understanding of the implications which the novelist wished to convey with this name, it is necessary to look into the root of the word. *Raskol* is a compound noun consisting of the prefix *ras-* (originally *raz-*) and the root of the verb *kolot'* "to break, to split". It is the full form of the verb — although appearing truncated, frozen, and passive in

that the *Andreas*-poet translated his poem directly from the Greek rather than the hypothetical lost Latin intermediary; see my dissertation, "*Andreas* and Doctrinal Controversy in the Early Middle Ages," Diss. Rutgers, 1978, pp. 2–3. There is even evidence that linguistic features of Greek influenced some variants of the runic *fuporc;* see Kjell Meling, "The Cross as a Principle in the Formation of Certain Old English Runes," *Neuphilogische Mitteilungen,* 80 (1979), 36.

[4]See Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 9.

[5]See Grendon, p. 155, note 2; Stroms, p. 180; and Bruce A. Rosenberg, "The Meaning of Æcerbot," *The Journal of American Folklore,* 79 (1966), 435; but see Niles, p. 55 for the opposing view.

the noun — which supplies Raskolnikov with his burst of physical energy and assigns his action a symbolic significance. This modern Prometheus breaks the eternal law of morality by breaking the head of the old pawnbroker and her sister in a dubious attempt to become a benefactor to mankind.

. . . In creating this name, Dostoevsky may also have had in mind Rastignac, the hero of Balzac's novel *Father Goriot,* whose name is somewhat similar to Raskolnikov. It is also their concept of the temptation to an extraordinary man to transgress the moral law which brings Rastignac and Raskolnikov together.[1] The Russian novelist knew Balzac well and his first literary venture was a translation of Balzac's Eugenie Grandet in 1844. Some of his qualities — his Napoleonic pride, his great lust for power — clearly derive from Hermann, the hero of Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades.*'

ON RASKOLNIKOV'S SCHIZOPHRENIA

The clearest evidence that Raskolnikov has two distinct personalities comes in Chapter 4, when he first vigorously tries to prevent a dazed girl from being led off by a man for immoral purposes but then suddenly changes his attitude. The sincerity of Raskolnikov's initial desire to help is abundantly clear in his conversation with the policeman:

(pp. 66–67): ' "You're just the man I want, he exclaimed, seizing the police constable by the arm . . .'

'And seizing the policeman's arm, he dragged him to the seat.

"Look there, she's quite drunk . . . And now look there: that fine gentleman with whom I was just about to have a fight is unknown to me. I see him for the first time in my life. But he . . . saw she was drunk and incapable, and now he badly wants to go up to her and get her before anyone else does and, as in her present condition she wouldn't be likely to offer any resistance, take her somewhere . . . Believe me, officer, I'm not mistaken . . . What can we do to save her from him? How are we to get her home to her parents? Please, think what it means!"

. . . "Listen," said Raskolnikov, "here" — he fumbled in his pocket and produced twenty copecks . . . "take this, please, get a cab, and tell the driver to take her home . . .

"The main thing is," Raskolnikov pleaded, "not to let her fall into the clutches of that scoundrel! I'm sure he intends to rape her! It's easy to see what he wants. Look at the swine! He isn't even going away!" '

SUDDEN EMERGENCE OF THE SECOND ATTITUDE

After a little more of this conversation the girl staggers off with no desire to be helped, pursued by the dandy. Then:

(p. 58): ' "Don't worry, sir, I won't let him have her," said the policeman . . . in a firm voice, and went after them. What terrible goings on!" he repeated aloud, sighing.

At that moment something seemed to sting Raskolnikov; in an instant he became quite a different man.

"I say! Hey, there!" he shouted after the policeman with the moustache.

The policeman turned round.

"Leave them alone! It's not your business! Let them be! Let him" — he pointed at the smartly dressed gentleman — "have his fun! What do you care?"

The policeman stared at him uncomprehending. Raskolnikov laughed.

. . . and [the policeman] . . . walked off after the dandy and the girl, probably taking Raskolnikov for a madman or worse.'

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[1](Brody's footnote): "George Lukacs mentioned first the anecdote of the Chinese madarin in Balzac's novel and pointed to the relationship of Rastignac and Raskolnikov. *Der russische Realismus in der Weltliteratur* (Berlin, 1949), p. 178."

[2]The debate concerned 'Whither Russia?' Was Russia a backward country that could best progress by imitating the culture of Western Europe? Or should Russia set aside Western European culture as being unsuitable or perhaps even immoral and concentrate instead on its own native culture? A 20th century version of this debate has recently convulsed Iran and it simmering in several other Mid-East countries. For 'Western European' read 'Western' (= West European and U.S. cultural influence).

ORIGIN OF RASKOLNIKOV'S SCHIZOPHRENIA

Raskolnikov's schizophrenia and his recovery from it are central to the novel's theme, viz. a free-swinging attack against the Westerner position in the Westerner-Slavophile debate.[2] From Raskolnikov' dreams of his childhood and the recollections of his mother, it is clear that he had been a healthy boy prior to his going to the university in Petersburg. The unhealthy atmosphere in Petersburg (Peter the Great's 'window on Western Europe', coupled with the unrelieved nonsensical coursework at the university, particularly on Western European psychology and ethics,[3] had a profoundly noxious influence on Raskolnikov's mind. This influence did not totally replace Raskolnikov's good instincts/upbringing, but it did gain the ascendancy and left him with a dual personality. It takes the whole novel for Dostoyevsky to exorcise the evil in Raskolnikov and return him cured to Mother Russia. Cf. Sonya's urging that Raskolnikov kiss the ground, and when he finally comes to his senses he is on the ground with Sonya. Cf. also the monk Zossima in *The Brothers Karamazov,* who in his dying moment kisses the ground passionately.

Raskolnikov is therefore the 'split (schizophrenic) man' through most of the novel, and Dostoyevsky, following the spirit of Jesus' words ('I am come not to treat the healthy but the sick') devotes himself to making Raskolnikov whole again.

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[3]It was hedonistic utilitarianism which ultimately led Raskolnikov to murder the old woman.

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REVIEW NOTES

Nomina, No. 5 (1981), edited by Peter McClure, English Department, University of Hull, England HU6 7RX (128 pp.; $6.00), contains articles and research news on publications in onomastics, with emphasis primarily on the Council for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland, although the bibliography lists articles from *Names, Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie, Namm och Byrd, Beiträge zur Namenforschung, Onoma,* and others. Formerly a newsletter, *Nomina* has been promoted to a journal as of the present issue, writes McClure. The articles include Alan Binns, "Hull Fishermen's Place-Names," an account of flat-water naming; Richard Coates, "On *cumb* and *denu* in Place-Names in the English South-East"; Margaret Gelling, "On Looking into Smith's Elements," a critique of Hugh Smith, *English Place-Name Elements;* Hywel Wyn Owen, "English and Welsh Place-Names in Three Lordships of Flintshire"; Doris Jones-Baker, 'Nicknaming in the Popular Nomenclature of English Places"; and Peter McClure, "Nicknames and Petnames: Linguistic Forms and Social Contexts," a general article that also summarizes related studies in personal name variation. "Souris" the house-pseudonym, continues the discussion of nicknames, floating in commentary on animal names (How about Czumczucz as a "pussy-handle"?), courtesy titles (Why is Mr. used for thieves?), John Doe, and a "toponymic tail-piece." The appendix serves space for all the nicknames of Jay Ames, a well-known ANS member.

End matter of *Nomina* includes a long article by Cecily Clark, "Nickname-Creation: Some Sources of Evidence, 'Naive' Memoirs Especially." Filled with public explanations of nicknames, it serves as a rich document for the earlier McClure article. "Dutch" Reagan derives from a hairstyle, "the Dutch bob" that Reagan wore as a boy. Reasons for nicknames are taken from off-hand remarks and explanations in fiction, non-fiction, newspapers, and magazines, where such material serves as "color" background for the journalist who cannot think of anything else to write. After this, McClure reviews Jan Jönsjö, *Studies in Midle English Nicknames, I Compounds* (Lund Studies in English, 55, CWK Gleerup: Lund, 1979), and Jane Morgan, *et al., Nicknames: Their Origins and Social Consequences* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), which rounds out the nicknaming portion of this issue, a section that brings into focus the importance of the cultural and historical aspects of nicknaming, a sometimes neglected area in onomastics. Also included are reviews of books written by John Field, C. Stella Davies and Jon Levitt, H. D. G. Foxall, Gisela Ruckdeschel, Leslie Alan Dunkling, and Ronan Coghlan.

A different type of text is *Gazetteer of Somalia* (Washington, DC 20305: Defense Mapping Agency, Building 56, U. S. Naval Observatory, 1982, prepared by Charles L. Burgett and Charles M. Heyda. Part of the on-going series of place-name documents, the names approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names, these gazetteers contain "official names used within the Federal Government and serve as attempts to standardize names elsewhere. *Somalia* "contains approximately 12,500 entries for names and features" in an on-line format. Each line contains the name, designation, latitude and longitude, area code, UTM grid reference, and JOG Sheet number. A glossary of generic terms helps English readers interpret some of the names. No price is listed, but requests for copies should be addressed to Director, DMA Office of Distribution Services, Attention: D01, Washington, D. C. 20315.

Personal Names in Old and Middle English Poetry, a dissertation by Mark Edward Allen, Department of English, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, directed by

Professor Jackson J. Campbell, is an analysis of personal names in *Beowulf, Exodus, Piers Plowman, Confessio Amantis,* and *Testament of Cresseid,* plus several others. One of the conclusions is that allusive names in the poetry indicate "nascent literary self-consciousness"; that is, the artist was supplanting the moralist. Allen provides a richness of material and exegeses that make this perhaps the most important work in the study of names in Old and Middle English. It is also a major contribution to literary onomastics. Copies probably will be available from University Microfilms International.

"Bulgarian Personal and Family Names" is a chapter in Assen Nicoloff, *Bulgarian Folklore: Folk Beliefs, Customs, Folksongs, Personal Names* (Cleveland, Ohio 44106: 1990 Ford Drive, Apt. 1115; pp. 133; $5.00; paper covers). The text is, first, a popular study of Bulgarian folklore, including folksongs, beliefs, and customs. The long chapter on personal names accounts for the large number of Bulgarian names that are of Christian origin, dating from 865 A. D., when "Christianity was introduced in Bulgaria by its Khan Boris, who adopted the name of Mihail when christened by Greek missionaries acting on behalf of the ten Byzantine Emperor Michael III." Some Proto-Bulgarian names probably exist, but are difficult to identify; and even those are tinged with Christian usage. *Dragomir, Radoslav, Vladimir, Vladislav,* and their shortened forms "date from the coming of the Slavs to the Balkan Peninsula at the beginning of the sixth century."

Nicoloff notes that many of the names "are principally of Greek, Jewish, and Latin derivation." Some oddities appear, such as *Ninel* (Lenin spelled backwards), Hitler (for a boy born in 1935; later changed to Hristo), *Roosevelt, Mao Tse-tung, Vladilen* (anagram of Vladimir Ilich Lenin), *Stalin, Singapore, Rangoon, Gramofon, Telefon, Edison,* and others that reflect events and inventions. Next, after the history of Bulgarian naming, Nicoloff presents small sections on meaning of names, how they originated, how selected, most common names, female names, family names, and a selected alphabetical list of Bulgarian personal names and their "Meanings." In all, this is a valuable contribution to the literature of naming customs.

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