GEORGE HERBERT: SACRED AND PROFANE

edited by

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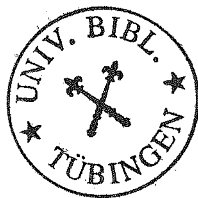

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the short poem 'Superliminare' that prefaces 'The Church', the central section of his masterpiece *The Temple* (1633), George Herbert quotes Virgil, *Aeneid* 6: 258 ('procul este profani'):

> Avoid profaneness; come not here ...

The address is not to the reader but to profaneness itself, 'Avoid' here carrying the imperative sense to the profane: 'Be off with you.' Both Herbert's injunction and its echo of Virgil remind us, as does Diane McColley in Chapter 3 of this book, of the etymology of 'profane' itself, that it refers to everything in front of (*pro*), and thus outside, the Temple (*fanum*).

The theme of this book may therefore initially seem puzzling to readers of George Herbert, even though Mario di Cesare, in Chapter 1, does approach 'Superliminare' from a liturgical perspective. Yet if one considers the book's contents as a whole, one is forced to conclude that many worldly, profane things do indeed feature inside *The Temple*: these are not just such obviously worldly things such as food (Heather Ross, Chapter 9) and wit (Helen Wilcox, Chapter 10), but equally challengingly, relationships with the secular world as well, such as sacred parody (Elizabeth Clarke and John Ottenhoff, Chapters 2 and 4 respectively). The lyrics, in other words, may be sacred but they clearly exist in relation to the ordinary secular world: to its money, its proverbs, its emblems, its politics. In one of his best-known poems, George Herbert describes prayer as 'Heaven in ordinary', and we can understand the constituent lyrics making up *The Temple* as experience of the sacred in secular dress.

Perhaps the 'profaneness' that is told to 'avoid' is an attitude that lacks sympathy with the activities of *The Temple*: there is no sense that the profane items and traditions, and even rhetorical skills, such as bargaining, which occur in the poems themselves, are to be excluded. It is in fact the mingling of sacred and profane that is one of the fundamental characteristics of Herbert's writing: it is part of that approachable quality that marks these lyrics out even among other religious texts. The chapters that follow explore the interplay of secular and devotional elements in *The Temple* from a wide range of perspectives: from overview, whether liturgical (Mario di Cesare, Chapter 1) or analogical (R.V. Young Jr, Chapter 7) to such captivating details as the lyrics' titles (Matthias Bauer, Chapter 8);

pertingere ad hoc ut eadem ratione sunt in diversis, sunt eis communia secundum rationem substantiae sive quidditatis, sed sunt distincta secundum esse. Quidquid autem est in Deo, hoc est suum proprium esse; sicut enim essentia in eo est idem quod esse, ita scientia idem est quod scientem esse in eo; unde cum esse quod est proprium unius rei non possit alteri communicari, impossibile est quod creatura pertingat ad eamdem rationem habendi aliquid quod habet Deus, sicut impossibile est quod ad idem esse perveniat. Similiter etiam in nobis esset: si enim in Petro non differret homo et hominum esse, impossibile esset quod homo univoce diceretur de Petro et Paulo, quibus est esse diversum; nec tamen potest dici quod omnino aequivoce praedicetur quidquid de Deo et creatura dicitur, quia si non esset aliqua convenientia creaturae ad Deum secundum rem, sua essentia non esset creaturarum similitudo; et ita cognoscendo essentiam suam non cognosceret creaturas. Similiter etiam nec nos ex rebus creatis in cognitionem Dei pervenire possemus; nec nominum quae creaturis aptantur, unum magis de eo dicendum esset quam aliud; quia ex aequivocis non differret quodcumque nomen imponatur, ex quo nulla rei convenientia attenditur.'

8 *Summa Theologiae* 1: 13:10 ad 4: 'Philosophus largo modo accipit aequivoca, secundum quod includunt in se analoga.' For the sense of degrees of likeness, see the body of the article as well as the passage from *De Veritate* quoted above and in note 7.

9 C.S. Lewis and E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Personal Heresy* (London: Oxford UP, 1939), 97. See also McInerny, 'Metaphor and Analogy', in *Studies in Analogy*, pp. 81-83; and 'Metaphor and Fundamental Ontology', *Studies*, pp. 92, 93-94.

10 *Finnegans Wake* (1939; rpt. New York: Viking, 1959), 214.

11 See Cajetan, *In de Ente et Essentia D. Thomae Aquinitatis* 2: 21, edited by P.M.-H. Laurent (Turin: Marietti, 1934), 37: 'Substantia et accidens sunt analogata primo modo sub ente.'

12 *Agudeza y arte de ingenio* 4, edited by Arturo del Hoyo (Madrid: Aquilar, 1967), 248: 'Hizo Augustino centro de su agudeza a aquella Señora, que lo fue de la sabiduría infinito, y dijo: Dignose el Verbo Eterno de trocar el seno del Padre por el sagrado virginal vientre de su Madre, y pasó esta Señora, de esposa de un pobre carpintero, a serlo de Arquitecto del Cielo.' Gracián quotes Augustine from a Nativity sermon of questionable authenticity, *PL* (Appendix) 38-39: col. 1987: 'Exsultemus in fide et ad partum Virginis, quae dum desponsaretur fabro, coeli nupsit Architecto.'

13 *Prayer and Power*, p. 256. Janis Lull, *The Poem in Time: Reading George Herbert's Revisions of the Church* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1990), 49. See also Chana Bloch, *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1985), 339.

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'A TITLE STRANGE, YET TRUE': TOWARD AN EXPLANATION OF HERBERT'S TITLES

MATTHIAS BAUER

George Herbert's contemporary readers, who, 360 years ago, first looked into the little duodecimo volume of *The Temple*, may well have been surprised by a fact we tend to take for granted in collections of poetry. Every poem of this collection has a title, and, what must have been even more surprising, nearly every title consists of a single noun with or without an article.

Glancing through Elizabethan or Jacobean anthologies, we come to realize that individual short pieces of poetry, as a rule, did not have titles like those Herbert gave to his poems. In the Renaissance, the majority of shorter poems (of sonnets, for example) were not headed by titles, especially when they were part of a cycle. In most cases, titles were labels for mainly practical purposes. They could help to identify individual poems, as well as indicate the genre, addressee, or occasion ('An Ode. To Himselfe') or the dramatic situation of the speaker ('The lover complayneth the unkindness of his love'). Titles, of course, have a long tradition,[1] but the conspicuous absence of this subject from poetological treatises of the English Renaissance shows that the title was not regarded as an essential part of a poem. Puttenham, for instance, who deals with nearly every aspect of the poet's craft, has nothing to say about titles. As regards poetic practice, Donne may be listed as an exception (and before him, for instance, Southwell), but then the titles of his poems mostly seem to be later additions by others.[2] In each of Herbert's poems, however, the title is an essential part of the poetic message, and in many cases it is, to put it metaphorically, the germ as well as the quintessence of the poem.

The enigmatic or hieroglyphic nature of Herbert's titles has been pointed out, for example, by Joseph H. Summers, Mary Ellen Rickey and John Hollander,[3] who has stressed that 'it is only in the early seventeenth century in England that the ... "essential" title form appears at all' (pp. 217-218). Hollander recognizes that 'Herbert's titles, like his forms, are amazingly radical, in that their expressive character is in each case part of the poem's fiction' (p. 223).[4] But while the extraordinary nature of Herbert's titles has repeatedly been noticed, only a few of them have been analysed closely and we are only just beginning to understand their function and relationship to literary tradition. One of the first to have done so is Anne

Ferry, who has recently compared Herbert's titles with those of preceding or contemporary English poets, especially with collections of religious verse.[5] The closest model she finds, however, does not belong to sacred poetry but to a predominantly secular or humanistic genre. The characteristic one-word titles of *The Temple* are remarkably similar to the headings of Renaissance commonplace books, the *topics* under which related entries were grouped together by their compilers.[6]

Since the formal and functional differences between his titles and the group-headings of contemporary anthologies is not to be overlooked, however, it is more than likely that Herbert used and transformed other models as well. One of the differences is Herbert's frequent use of the definite article, as in 'The Sinner', 'The Collar', or 'The Glimpse'.[7] These titles are not quite the same as typical commonplace-book headings like 'Of God', 'Of Hope'[8], or 'Hearbes', 'Of Trees', 'Rivers'.[9] The common title 'Of ...', which is conspicuously absent from *The Temple*, follows the Latin convention of calling a work 'De ...' (as a short form of 'Liber de ...', 'Tractatus de ...'). Herbert was more than aware of the Latin roots of the English language, but he also recognized the opportunity offered by the article as a 'new' part of speech[10] for giving his titles a function quite different from the Latinate 'Of ...' convention and the collective plural headings of contemporary anthologies.

Beginning with the title of the whole book, *The Temple*, followed by 'The Dedication', 'The Church-porch' and (after the Latin title 'Superliminare') 'The Church', 'The Altar', and 'The Sacrifice', Herbert draws special attention to the definite article, making his readers aware of *the* as a word, i.e. a sequence of letters. The reference to architecture, as well as the definiteness of the titles (there are only five titles with an indefinite article), suggests the lemmata or *topoi* of the house of memory.[11] Places of memory may also be indicated by those titles which consist of abstract nouns without article, such as 'Miserie' or 'Obedience'. In whichever case, Herbert's titles do not announce thoughts, reflections or witty phrases *on* or *about* something, nor do they group together a number of examples or related instances. They rather point out the thing or matter itself, calling it by its *nomen appellativum*.[12] The difference is quite similar to the distinction made by Quintilian (8: 6:47) and other rhetoricians between *permixta allegoria* and *tota allegoria*; Herbert's titles, like *tota allegoria*, present matters and things without explanatory additions. 'Miserie' and 'Obedience' can be read as personifications as well as announcements of poems on particular themes. When he uses the definite article, Herbert makes the objects of his titles appear as if they could be individually identified (such as 'The Altar' in the imaginative space of 'The Church') or—even at the

same time—as if they were the type or quintessence of all things or matters of their kind.[13] This property of Herbert's titles points to another literary genre flourishing in his time which may have influenced his method of giving titles to his poems: the scientific inventory naming parts of the body, animals, plants, or stones, such as the 'Anatomy' and the 'Herball' that Herbert recommended every country parson to consult.[14] Seen in this light, Herbert's titles indicate that each poem has a particular place to fill in the poetic cosmos of *The Temple*.

When one tries to understand the function of Herbert's titles it seems helpful to remember that his own usage of the word 'title' testifies to his being quite aware of its origin and multiplicity of meaning. In 'The Sacrifice', Christ on the cross refers to himself as a text or image over which a title has been placed:

> A king my title is, prefixt on high;
> Yet by my subjects am condemn'd to die
> A servile death in servile companie: (233-235)

The meaning of 'title' as an appellation of honour is indicated by 'king' as well as the complementary 'subjects'. But the very word *subject* also points to the realm of language or composition, where title and subject are closely related. This connection makes the preposterousness of the event all the more conspicuous: a person's subject, so to speak, turns against his title; the *logos* is confronted with dumb illogicality. The reference to language is emphasized by the grammatical term *prefix* in 'prefixt', which also draws attention to the original meaning of *title* ('inscription placed on or over a subject, giving its name or describing it', *OED* 1.†a.). *Title* in its earliest use represented Latin *titulus*, the inscription on the cross.[15]

Herbert thus refers to the letters INRI forming a title in the sense of a superscription as well as a personal appellation or name. Similarly, when Herbert in the first line of 'The Thanksgiving' speaks of 'a title strange, yet true', he alludes to this inscription at the head of the cross, which stands in marked contrast to the tormented body of Christ. The truth made visible by this contrast finds expression in the oxymoronic address with which the poem begins: 'Oh King of grief!'

The *titulus* can thus be seen as a model or type of Herbert's own poetic titles, with which it has several characteristic features in common: it is a mystical abbreviation which secretly, and yet most plainly, points out truth; only at first sight may it appear inappropriate to the text or body to which it is 'prefixt'. *Titulus* as an abbreviation mark corresponds to English *tittle* (formerly also spelled *title*)[16] which may be well implied in Herbert's use

of the word since it refers to the small stroke or dot that 'shall in no wise pass from the law' (Matt. 5: 18). In the context of 'the law', the spelling of the English Bible, *title*[17], has juridic connotations, for *title* (as well as titulus) has of course a legal meaning as well.[18] This, in the sense of 'An assertion of right, a claim' (*OED* †7c) is also suggested in 'A King my title is'. How subtly Herbert sometimes alludes to the legal sense of *titulus* and *title* can be seen in 'Obedience', a poem whose title is never directly referred to in the text. The speaker of the poem comes to realize that the paper which he first draws up as his 'speciall Deed' (p. 10) does not in fact document his own 'gift or donation' (p. 34) but Christ's purchase; accordingly, the only legal title he may claim his own can be gathered from looking at the title of the poem.

A further use of *titulus* is its reference to a proper name, of which the title the cross is a case in point.[19] As the example of 'The Odour' will show, this individual signification is an essential feature of Herbert's titles. *Tituli* were also used for purposes of memorizing, since they were regarded as the starting-point to which everything else in a text is linked.[20]

Last but not least, the *titulus* confirms a connection which has repeatedly been pointed out but—as far as I can see—has not been regarded in the light of the relation between title and text:[21] the *titulus* at the head of the cross is a special form of the text-image combination which also characterizes the *impresa* and the emblem.[22] In Herbert's time, the connection is verified, for instance, by Johann Heinrich Alsted, who calls the motto of an emblem *titulus*.[23] Common to both the 'title strange, yet true' of the cross and the emblem or impresa is the tension between *inscriptio* and *pictura*: the inscription endows the picture with a particular meaning which is often unexpected; or rather, the meaning is the result of an unexpected or even strange connection of verbal and visual elements.[24] In the case of the emblem the *subscriptio* or epigrammatic poem may be part of the reciprocal process of illustration, mystification, and explanation. Samuel Daniel, in his translation of Paolo Giovio's treatise on *imprese*, stresses that 'the figure without the mot, or the mot without the figure, signifie nothing, in respect of the intent of the author'.[25] This mutual dependence is also characteristic of the relation between title and poem in Herbert, while of course the analogy concerns the nature of the relationship rather than the parts themselves. In *The Temple*, the 'mot' or word of the title may indicate an object that is to be imagined by the reader and is therefore closer related to the *res picta* of the emblem than to its motto. This is the case, for example, with the title 'The Cross', while the poem itself is neither a description of nor a meditation on Christ's cross (as might be expected from the tradition of meditative poems on the signs of the crucifixion)[26] but an account of 'crosse actions'

experienced by the speaker. On the other hand, the title may be an abstract term resembling a *topos* or lemma, such as 'Obedience', whereas the poem is concerned with a specific action made manifest in 'this poore paper' (line 5; cf. 10: 'And here present it as my speciall Deed'). In both cases, there is a tension between title and text which may be compared to the meaningful tension that characterizes the baroque conceit. Herbert's titles, as distinct from the traditional headings of prose or poetry or the topics of commonplace books, do not just indicate the subject in question, but are stumbling blocks intended to set off a process of signification.

The 'new' quality of Herbert's titles is perhaps most easily perceived in cases which refer to the established convention of the formal or generic title. Titles like 'Song' or 'A Sonnet' were quite common, but, as a rule, they just meant that the ensuing poem was a song or a sonnet.[27] Herbert's titles of this kind, however, do not confine themselves to indicating the genre or form. In his 'Prayer' poems, for example, most obviously 'Prayer (II)', the text is a prayer and, at the same time, a poem about prayer. 'Prayer (I)' is an extended definition of the word that forms its title. The poem, so to speak, gives an answer to the question 'What is a prayer?' by means of paraphrase and synonymy. There is a traditional type of poetry beginning with 'What is ... ?'[28] but then Herbert never explicitly asks this question. Instead, the one word of the title unfolds itself and is transformed in the poem. We are told by the text itself why this poetic method is so appropriate to its subject. In one of the paraphrases of 'prayer', 'The soul in paraphrase' (3), the act of personal prayer is described as an exercise in giving definitions of—or coming to terms with—one's soul. Accordingly, 'Prayer (I)' with its rapid sequence of definitions is a mimetic representation of an ejaculatory prayer, as well as an attempt at finding words for the essence of what prayer is.[29] For our present purposes, it is of particular interest that the rhetorical device of *synonymia* (or *interpretatio*)[30] plays an important part in the relationship between title and text.[31]

Few cases, however, are as obvious as 'Prayer (I)'. In other poems, the definition of a poetic form may be the subject of a hidden game going on between the title and the text. One of the most intriguing examples is 'The Quidditie'. The poem presents a series of negative definitions of a verse, finally turning to a positive, sacred one. All this takes place in the spirit of *serio ludere* reflected by the title, which ambiguously refers to the essence of all definitions, the *quidditas* of a thing, and to a sophistical play upon words, a quibble. But this is just stating the obvious. As every schoolboy used to know, questions concerning definitions begin with 'quid'.[32] Accordingly, keeping in mind that 'verse' is just a another word for 'dittie', we come to realize that our title is identical with the very question answered

directly in the first line the poem: 'What is a verse?' 'MY God, a verse is not a crown ...'.[33] Herbert here combines synonymy with paronomasia, another rhetorical device characteristic of the subtle interplay between his poems and their titles. In addition, 'The Quidditie' shows that Herbert's use of synonyms is not confined to the English language. The allusion to Latin synonyms or homophones of English words, in particular, is typical of Herbert's titles.

Objections might be raised to this on the basis of 'The Sonne', where the speaker declares (pp. 3-4): 'I like our language, as our men and coast: / Who cannot dresse it well, want wit, not words.' Still, I am not convinced that the great neo-Latin poet and Orator at Cambridge set aside his knowledge of Latin when he came to write the poems of *The Temple*. Moreover, Latin did not belong to 'foreign nations' but was the *lingua franca* of all learned people[34] (besides being one of the roots of the English language itself). Even in 'The Sonne' Herbert's wordplay is not entirely home-made. The pun on 'sun' and 'son' was far too common in his time to be a special sign of wit. Herbert succeeds in extending it, making it refer to his own art, the transformation of secular poetic forms to sacred purposes. The form of this poem is actually announced by its title, to which one only has to add the sign of the son, the cruciform letter T, in order to spell out the (Italian, and ultimately Latin) word 'sonnet'.[35] Thus 'The Sonne' is an example of yet another way of referring both to the form and the subject of a poem by means of its title.[36]

The use of Latin again provides the key to the mysterious title 'The Pulley'. At first sight, it has little to do with the imagery of the poem, which centres around the pouring of blessings from a glass vessel.[37] 'Rest' is the only blessing which is kept back. This last gift will not be bestowed upon God's creature before 'wearinesse' will 'tosse' man to God's breast. Then, however, it will be the lifeline or rope by which he is saved, the pulley by which he is lifted up to heaven.[38] In language, the connection is established through the fact that the Latin word for the *rope* that makes a pulley work is *restis*. Thus, the Latin near-synonym of the title turns out to be a homonym of the central word of the text. This is confirmed by the validity of the reciprocal process since a homonym of the title is the synonym of the central image of the poem. 'Pulley' echoes Latin *ampulla*, which is a synonym of the 'glass' or vessel from which the blessings are poured.[39] A tacit synonymic link between 'rest' and the title of the poem is also established by the verb *to tire*, which not only denotes weariness and the need for rest but is also an obsolete synonym of *to pull*.[40]

Another characteristic example of the fine-spun threads with which Herbert connects the titles of his poems to the poems themselves is provided by 'Life'. In the title and first line of this poem, there is a shift from *life* to its synonym *quickness* (*OED* 1) in the sense of 'speed, fastness' (*OED* 4): 'I Made a posie, while the day ran by ...' What time itself, the speaker's life, and the flowers he has gathered have in common is the rapidity with which they 'steal away' (5). The imagery of the poem thus expatiates on lexical properties of its title word. But this is only one thread in an intricate pattern of verbal connections. The personification of the flowers, for instance, which are transformed into sentient beings and follow time's beckoning, is based upon a pun: 'wither'd' implies both their drying up and taking leave, albeit the place *whither* they go is not mentioned.

The background to this image, needless to say, is the eternal metaphor of the course of life. The affinity of *way* and *life* is mysteriously revealed in the Latin paronomasia of *via* and *vita*.[41] In Herbert's poem 'Life', *via* is etymologically present in 'a-way', while the image of the journey is also referred to in 'ran by', 'becken to', 'steal away', 'convey', 'Farewell', and 'follow straight'. A relation similar to that between *via* and *vita* exists between the animated flowers and their becoming *followers* of time (which, of course, *flows*).[42] This implicit anagrammatic wordplay in lines 4 and 5 is made explicit in the last stanza, where the speaker's 'Farewell deare flowers' goes together with 'I follow straight'. In addition, the elements *ol* and *flow* refer to the oil of the rose that is won 'after death for cures' (p. 15).

The sense of smell, which is referred to in all three stanzas of the poem, is tied up with the image of decay and the passing of time. It is also connected with the concept of mental perception, the speaker's mind smelling the figurative or emblematic meaning of the posy in his hand. The paradox of the smelling mind is an invention in the literal sense of the word, for it is to be found in the words themselves. 'Whither' contains a remote echo of Latin *vita* and a nearer one of the obsolete English word *witter*, 'knowing, cunning' (*OED* a.[1]).[43] Moreover, the meaning of the posy is understood because it is conveyed 'sweetly', a word which carries conviction, so to speak, since it contains 'weet'. 'To weet', however, as well as its parallel 'to wit', is not only another paronomasia of *vita* but the English equivalent of Latin *sentire*. *Sentire*, in turn, is the root of the English *to scent*, used as a noun in line 17 of the poem ('Since if my sent be good ...').

Thus, by means of paronomasia and etymology, the identity of knowledge and the sense of smell is pointed out twice, in 'sweet' and in 'sent'. But the s(c)ent also leads us back to the image of the course of life. 'Sent' is also the past participle of *send*, which fits logically (if not syntactically)[44] for it is the counterpart of 'follow' in line 16: the speaker follows because he is being sent (or has a mission).[45] This verbal link is reinforced by French *sentier* or *sente* 'path', derived from Latin *semita* (which also

denotes a track or trail, a scent followed by a hound, for example). Another reference to the *semita vitae* is implied in the allusion to 2 Cor. 2 in line 17. The 'good scent' is a literal translation of the 'bonus odor' (2 Cor. 2: 15) of the Vulgate, the 'sweet savour of Christ' (AV), which is the distinctive mark of the Christian's mission (or sending): 'God ... maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place' (p. 14).

All this points to a central principle of composition: Herbert develops his poems not only along the lines of certain themes or conceits, but, first of all, he makes use of the inherent creative energy of language, which manifests itself in paronomasia, synonymy or etymology. In this process, the title is both the starting point or centre and the circumference or band which holds everything together. With respect to 'Life', this is most literally true. In lines 2-3, 'this band' within which the speaker's life is tied is identified with the 'posie' and thus, implicitly, with life itself. And again, language proves him right, since Latin *vitta* is just another word for *band.*

The numerous 'vertical' connections between the title of our poem and the text itself go together with a multitude of 'horizontal' ones between 'Life' and other texts and their titles. The band of life is woven through a number of poems in *The Temple*. As we have seen, the image of the *quick* passage of time at the beginning of the poem, which unfolds the semantic potential of *life*, goes together with the speaker's wish to 'tie' his 'life within this band'. Herbert here again works with implicit synonyms: the action of tying up life is—in accordance with the paradoxical logic of language—an attempt to make it *fast*. The same verbal complex is to be found in the poem 'Lent', where the speaker reminds us that obedience to the scriptures, which 'bid us *fast*' (p. 4), will result in 'Quick thoughts and motions at a small expense' (p. 20). The title of the poem is clearly another case of paradox or of *lucus a non lucendo* for *lent* promoting quickness and life is anything but *lento* (or *lentus*). This apparent contradiction goes together with the oxymoron of the 'feast of Lent' in line 1, which in turn draws attention to the paronomasia of *feast* and *fast*.[46]

Another line of connection exists between 'Life' and 'The Invitation', which is an offer to share the love which 'After death can never die' (p. 30). This invitation to a feast of eternal life, is, of course, the only kind of in*vita*tion true to its name. The feast of life is thus contrasted with the feasts of those 'whom wine/Doth define' (pp. 7-8) a relationship which is again 'found' in language: the similarity of *vita* and *vitis* (vine) also points to the true vine from which comes the juice 'Which before ye drink is bloud' (p. 12). In the next poem, 'The Banquet', the relationship is again referred to when 'Wine becomes a wing at last' (p. 42), indicating an upward movement which goes together with the speaker's prayer that God may 'take up my lines and life' (p. 51).[47]

As a final example, I have chosen the title of a poem which is, in several respects, a counterpart of 'Life': in 'The Odour, 2 Cor. 2', the speaker seeks lifelong employment (p. 30) in 'the breathing of the sweet' (p. 25) that comes from and returns to the Lord, just as in 'Life' his wish is directed towards a 'good' scent. 'The Odour, 2 Cor. 2' is one of the few titles in which the noun has a supplement, in this case an abbreviated biblical reference. This addition, however, is also a stumbling block, for in the relevant passage from 2 Corinthians 2, verses 14-16, the word 'odour' does not occur. Tyndale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible and the AV all have 'savour' instead, as quoted above: 'God ... maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.' Herbert's term, *odour*, once more shows that he quotes or translates from the Latin, for it refers to the 'bonus odor' of the Vulgate to which he also alludes in 'Life'.

In order to become fully aware of the verbal radiance of its title, it is useful to keep in mind that language itself is a subject of the poem, or, to be exact, a dimension of language which goes beyond the merely denotative meaning of words. Two word-pairs, *My Master* and *My servant* are shown to have an aura as if they were not just groups of letters but live beings, 'flesh' (p. 13) that 'might creep & grow' (p. 14) or persons who are engaged upon paying a visit ('*My Master* ... Shall call and meet ... *My servant*', pp. 21-24; with an obvious pun on *meat*[48]). Language is personified; it is not so much a medium as an individual and has to be experienced like a human being. The little scene in which the word becomes flesh is, of course, a literal representation of John 1: 14, a reference to the mystery of the incarnation and the sacrament. *My Master*, and, as the speaker hopes, *My servant* are formulas which will have a wondrous effect upon the 'minde' (pp. 6, 10) of the speaker and upon the person addressed. This effect is not just compared to the 'rich sent' of 'Amber-greese' (p. 2). The wonder does not just consist in the fact that the words work upon the senses but that the sensual phenomenon, the 'Pomander' of the magic formula, may speak ('A speaking sweet ... / And tell me more', pp. 17-18). The meaningful phrase will be aesthetically pleasing but what is more, the beautiful sound is also 'rich', full of 'content' (p. 4) and meaning. The synaesthetic imagery of the poem thus reminds us to 'scent' its sentences, to regard the two formulae as a case in point of mystical linguistics. We are not only called upon to admire the sweet sound of linguistic signs but to discover significance in the body of the word itself.

In accordance with this implied poetological statement, the meaning of the title and its relation to the magic phrases with which the poem is con-

cerned will unfold when we begin 'to hear with eyes'. The speaker hopes that the 'orientall fragrancy' of the words '*My Master*' may be complemented by '*My servant*' so that the '*cor*dials' (p. 9, emphasis added) of the first two words will be enriched by the other two in mutual exchange. One cannot but recognize in this an allusion to the abbreviated '2 Cor. 2' of the title, for the poem with its imagery of exchange echoes or parodies the topos of the *permutatio cordis*. The two formulae, '*My Master*' and '*My servant*', themselves teach us to discover such hidden meaning upon the material surface of the words, as they both contain the elements that make up a mystery, the letters M-Y-S-T-E-R. And they are mysterious indeed. *My ser*vant, by himself, is just a (rather miserable) miser who will not experience the growth of a 'new commerce'. What *My servant* needs is the 'cordial' which consists in his master's 'pardon of [his] imperfection', in other words, his *misericordia*. He has already prayed for it in the 'speaking sweet' of 'Pomander', which anagrammatically says 'pardon me'. And when the breathing of '*servant*' does 'Return to thee' (p. 28), it will of course have become an *answer*.

As we may by now expect, synonyms go together with homonyms. The servant, in this devotional poem, is a *minis*ter of the Lord. As such, how could he be otherwise than 'little' (p. 12) and in need of growth and of being told 'more' (p. 18)?[49] One of the synonyms of *odour* is *scent*, as it is used in the second line of the poem. Now, both the forms *scent* and *sent* used to be variant spellings of the word *saint* (cf. *OED*). In the light of 2 Cor. 2, this link is not out of place, since the Christians, whose distinctive mark is the *bonus odor* (the savour of the Saviour) are the 'saints' (2 Cor. 1: 1), to whom the epistle is addressed. Also, in the *Golden Legend*, there are several stories of saints who are expressly characterized by a sweet savour. The most prominent is, of course, St Ambrose, whose very name is derived from 'a stone named ambra, which is much sweet, odorant and precious'.[50] Accordingly, the sweet sound of '*My Master*', which is like 'Amber-greese', may be understood as an echo or counterpart of the Ambrosian *Te Deum*.[51]

But there is yet another saint in the *Golden Legend* who is alluded to in this poem. He was a martyr to whom the Lord appeared in prison, calling him 'my servant', and whose flesh was finally burnt by fire (cf. line 13 of Herbert's poem), 'in which fire he gave up his spirit ... . And all the people were replenished with right sweet odour ...'.[52] The saint's name is the title of our poem, Theodore, and even though this etymology is not expressly mentioned in the *Golden Legend*, it is to be assumed that the Latin word *odor* being part of his name gave rise to the story of the sweet odour at Theodore's death.[53] This onomastic interpretation of Herbert's title is supported by the fact that certain clusters of titles are characteristic of *The Temple*. In the neighbourhood of 'Mattens' we find 'Even-song' and 'Church-musick', which in turn is accompanied by 'Church-monuments', 'Church-lock and key', and 'The Church-floore'. In *The Temple*, there are (apart from 'JESU') only two poems who are explicitly headed by proper names, 'Marie Magdalene' and 'Aaron', and these two poems are immediately followed by 'The Odour'.

The case of 'The Odour' suggests that the nouns or *nomina* of Herbert's titles are to be understood not only as appellative but even as 'proper' names. A title is the name by which a poem is called,[54] identifying it as an individual rather than a member of a species or class. This is in keeping with a view of 'The Church' as representing not only a house of God but also a living congregation of saints (and sinners).[55] Each member of this chain of poems has a name which is a true *omen* and which, like many significant names in drama or fiction, helps to explain the text while it is itself explained by it. 'The Odour' shows that even the article as a part of speech that seems to carry little semantic weight may become expressive of a deeper meaning, to the extent that God himself, *theos*, is reflected in it. Thus we come to see once more that the names of Herbert's poems resemble the *titulus*, the 'title strange, yet true' of the 'King of grief'. 'Will not a verse run smooth that bears thy name?', Herbert asks in one of his early sonnets.[56] In this perspective, all his titles are but variations; they serve to define and re-define this one name (the name of all names) in whose honour his posies are made.

Notes

1 For a survey of the development of the poetic title since antiquity, see Hans-Jürgen Wilke's unpublished dissertation, 'Die Gedicht-Überschrift: Versuch einer historisch-systematischen Entwicklung' (Frankfurt am Main, 1955).

2 Helen Gardner does 'not [even] believe that more than a few of the titles are Donne's own'; see Gardner, ed., John Donne, *The Elegies and The Songs and Sonnets* (1965; Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), xciii (Textual Introduction).

3 Joseph H. Summers, *George Herbert: His Religion and Art* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1954), 128-129; Mary Ellen Rickey, *Utmost Art* (U of Kentucky P, 1966), 92-102; John Hollander, '"Haddock's Eyes": A Note on the Theory of Titles', in his *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form* (New York: Oxford UP, 1975), 212-226. See also Rosemund Tuve, *A Reading of George Herbert* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1952), 130 and 145), and Dale B.J. Randall on the title of 'The Collar' in 'The Ironing of Herbert's "Collar"', SP 81 (1984), 473-495.

4 Hollander's assertion, however, that critical theory has confined itself more or less to 'Borgesian joking about how by a mad affirmation of synedoche, a list of titles might constitute the ultimate library' (p. 212), has to be taken with a grain of salt.

5 Anne Ferry, 'Titles in George Herbert's "little Book"', *ELR* 23 (1993), 314-344, especially 321.

6 For a more detailed discussion of Ferry's article see my forthcoming note in *Connotations* 4.3 (1994/95).

7 I am following F.E. Hutchinson's original-spelling edition of *The Works of George Herbert* (1941; Oxford: Clarendon, 1945). In accordance with common practice, however, I do not include the full stop after each title.

8 Examples from *Belvedére or The Garden of the Muses* (1600; rpt. New York: Burt Franklin, 1967).

9 Examples from *England's Parnassus* (1600; rpt. Menston: The Scolar Press, 1970).

10 See Ben Jonson's *The English Grammar* (1640), in C.H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson, eds, *The Complete Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. 8 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 505-506): 'IN our *English* speech, we number the same parts with the *Latines*. ... Only, we adde a ninth, which is the *Article* ...'

11 On *The Temple* as a house of memory, see Inge Leimberg, 'George Herbert "The Sinner": Der Tempel als Memoria-Gebäude', *Archiv* 206 (1970), 241-250.

12 Cf. Jonson, p. 506.

13 It is quite remarkable that the emphatic use of *the*, 'in the sense of "the pre-eminent", "the typical", or "the only ... worth mentioning"' (*OED* 11) is first documented in 1824.

14 *The Countrey Parson*, chapter 23 (Hutchinson, p. 261).

15 *OED ibid.*; cf. John 19: 19: 'And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.' *Titulus* also refers to the *crux nude* itself. See Du Cange, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis* (1883-87; rpt. Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1954), 'titulus' 8.

16 Cf. *OED* 'tittle' 1.a.: '1483 *Cath. Angl.* 389/2 A Tytille (*A.* Titylle), *titulus, apex, epigrama*'; on *titulus* in this sense see, for instance Jean Gerson, *De modis titulandi*, no. 480 in: Glorieux (ed.) *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 9 (Paris: Desclée, 1973), 700-703.

17 *Title* is the spelling of Matt. 5: 18 in the 1562 edition of the Geneva Bible, the 1602 edition of the Bishops' Bible, and the AV.

18 *OED* 'title' 2a, 'the formal heading of a legal document'; 7a, 'Legal right to the possession of property ... ; title-deeds'; 8 '*Eccl.* A certificate of presentment to a benifice'.

19 See, for example, J.F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 'titulus' 9.

20 See Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), 86 and 244-245. On p. 86 Carruthers quotes Richard of Auxerre's dictum that *titulus* is derived from *titan* 'because it is the illuminating "sun" of the entire text'.

21 For the most recent study of Herbert and the emblem see Bart Westerweel's contribution to this volume. Rosemary Freeman, *English Emblem Books* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1948) discusses several of Herbert's titles (pp. 168-171) but surprisingly does not compare their function to those of inscriptions or *tituli* in emblem literature. John Hollander (pp. 223-224) refers to Herbert's 'emblem titles' but does not seem to regard the disparity between title and text as being analogous to the relation of *inscriptio* and *pictura.*

22 The tradition comprises, in the words of Douglas Gray, 'the inscription-poem used as *titulus*, carved or painted on tombs or the walls of buildings'. See 'The Five Wounds of Our Lord', *N&Q* 208 (1963), 166. *Titulus* could also denote a monument, 'whether with a legend or not' (Niermeyer, 'titulus' 1); according to Du Cange, another meaning (p. 7) was 'Versus lugubres de morte insigniorum personarum'.

23 See Ulrich Ernst, 'Ars memorativa und Ars poetica', *Ars memorativa: Zur kulturgeschichtlichen Bedeutung der Gedächtniskunst,* edited by Jörg Jochen Berns and Wolfgang Neuber (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993), 73-100, here 85.

24 Cf. Albrecht Schöne, *Emblematik und Drama im Zeitalter des Barock*, 3rd ed. (München: C.H. Beck, 1993), 20-21.

25 Samuel Daniel, *The Worthy tract of Paulus Iouius, contayning a Discourse of rare inuentions, both Militarie and Amorous called Imprese* (London, 1585), sig. Avii[r].

26 Examples are William Alabaster's sonnets 'Upon the Crucifix'.

27 This is confirmed by Samuel Daniel's use of the word *title* in *A Defence of Ryme*, where it denotes the name of a verse form or number: 'Onely what was our owne before, and the same but apparelled in forraine Titles, which had they come in their kinde and naturall attire of Ryme, wee should neuer haue suspected that they had affected to be other ...'. Samuel Daniel, *Poems and a Defence of Ryme*, edited by Arthur Colby Sprague (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1965), 151.

28 An example is Raleigh's 'What is our life?' It should be noted that this is not a title but the beginning of the poem.

29 Robert B. Shaw has noted that Herbert's one-word titles appear to require 'the sort of elucidation which a set of definitions might supply. One might ask how Herbert's task as a poet compares with that of lexicographer. The analogy presents itself unavoidably in the case of "Prayer (I)"'. See his 'George Herbert: The Word of God and the Words of Man', *Ineffability: Naming the Unnamable from Dante to Beckett*, edited by Peter S. Hawkins and Anne Howland Schooter (New York: AMS Press, 1984), 81-93, here 84.

30 Another term is *paraphrasis*. See Lee A. Sonnino, *A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric* (London: Routledge, 1968), 116-117.

31 Synonymy cannot be separated from translation, its major field of application. A popular Anglo-Latin dictionary of Herbert's time, for example, was called *Synonymorum sylua*. In this work by Simon Pelegromius and 'H F', which went through thirteen editions between 1580 and 1639 (cf. STC 19556-19564), English headwords are printed as titles followed by a number of Latin (and Greek) equivalents.

32 Cf. Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 3: 6:5.

33 I am indebted to Professor Inge Leimberg for this delightful discovery. For 'dittie' as a form of verse, see Thomas Campion, *Observations in the Art of English Poesy* (1602), chapter 8 ('Of Ditties and Odes'), *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, edited by Gregory Smith, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1904), 346.

34 Ample documentation has recently been given by J.W. Binns, *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age* (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990), esp. chapter 1.

35 On Herbert's use of the letter T as a sign of the cross, see Inge Leimberg, 'The Letter Lost in George Herbert's "The Jews"', *SP* 90 (1993), 298-321, especially 317-321. Leimberg's interpretation of 'The Jews' is, at the same time, an exemplary study of one of Herbert's titles.

36 Yet another example is given by 'A Dialogue-Antheme,' where the title is neither prefixed to an anthem in the literal sense of the word nor to a poem about anthems. It is rather a metaphor of the musical structure of the poem, as well as of death's final transformation. It indicates that Death himself, in Christ's sacrifice, has been miraculously enabled to sing (cf. Herbert's 'Death'). See Inge Leimberg *et al.*, 'Annotating Baroque Poetry: George Herbert's "A Dialogue-Antheme"', *GHJ* 15 (1991), 49-67, especially 50.

37 Accordingly, I hesitate to share Rickey's opinion that 'the general significance of the name of *The Pulley* is perfectly clear' (p. 98).

38 Cf. *OED* pulley 3 fig: '1581 N. BURNE *Disput.* 109 The Cauuinist maist bauld of al vil afferme ... that ve be certane pilleis, or ingeyneis ar liftit vp to heauin be ane incomprehensible maner.' For the connection of 'rope' and 'pulling' cf. Herbert's *Outlandish Proverbs* 25 (Hutchinson, p. 322): 'Hee puls with a long rope, that waits for anothers death.'

39 Cf. *OED* 'ampul' 2: 'A vessel for holding consecrated oil, or for other sacred uses. (In this sense *ampulla* is now commonly used.)'

40 *OED tire* v^2 I †1; cf. French *tirer* and Italian *tirare*. M.M. Mahood was probably the first to draw attention to the technique of connecting different images by means of unspoken wordplay: 'Sometimes a word, the various meanings of which offer the poet a range of images, itself remains unexpressed. George Herbert's poem beginning 'Love bade me welcome' is built upon the ordinary and the Eucharistic meanings of the word *host* which nowhere occurs in the poem.' See her *Shakespeare's Wordplay* (London: Methuen, 1957; rpt. 1988), 24-25. For Donne's use of the technique, see Matthias Bauer, '*Paronomasia celata* in Donne's "A Valediction: forbidding mourning"', forthcoming in *ELR* 25 (1995).

41 Cf. Matt. 7: 14: 'arcta via est, quae ducit ad vitam' and John 14: 6: 'ego sum via et veritas et vita'. On the topos of the choice between the *via vitae* (being a *via virtutis*) and the *via mortis*, see Wolfgang Harms, *Homo viator in bivio: Studien zur Bildlichkeit des Weges* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1970), e.g. 36, 46, 93. Augustine's wordplay also underlines the identity of *via* and *vita*. See, for instance, David Lenfant's *Concordantia Augustinianae* (Paris, 1665; rpt. Brussels: Culture et civilisation, 1963), *via*, esp. item 27: 'Vides viam, et quaeris quo ducat haec ipsa via? Ad veritatem et ad vitam ducit. Si amas veritatem et vitam, et cupis ad veritatem et vitam venire, a via noli errare. *Serm.* 46. *de temp.* cap 8. *Tom.* 10.' On paranomasia, see the essay by Judith Dundas elsewhere in this volume.

42 In 'The Flower', the speaker identifies himself with the heliotrope, which follows the motion of the sun and declines when the Lord turns away from him. The flower's *turning* and *troping* towards the light is related to the poet's own art in lines 38-39: 'I once more smell the dew and rain, / And relish *versing* ...' (my emphasis).

43 Cf. German *wittern*, which both means to decay and to trace by smelling.

44 *Send* as a noun, denoting the action of sending, is restricted to Scottish usage in the sixteenth century (*OED* n^1).

45 The play on *sent* (sending) and *scent* in 'The Odour' is discussed by Heather Asals, *Equivocal Predication: George Herbert's Way to God* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1981), 28.

46 From 'Lent' we can go on to 'The Holdfast' which presents a logical paradox (cf. 9-10: 'But to have nought is ours, not to confesse / That we have naught. I stood amaz'd at this ...').

47 Cf. Isidor, *Etymologiae*, on the relationship between *vitis* and *vitta*: 'Vitta dicta quod ea pectus vincitur instar vitis ligantis' (edited by W.M. Lindsay [Oxford: Oxford UP, 1911], 19: 33:7; cf. 17: 5:2).

48 See Heather Ross' essay elsewhere in this volume.

49 The etymological play on 'more' and 'little', so consistent with the commercial imagery of the poem, is already to be found in '*My Master*': *Master* is derived from Latin *magister* and is thus the exact counterpart to *minister*. Cf. A. Walde and J.B. Hofmann, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 5th ed., vol. 2 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1982), s.v. *minister* (p. 91): '... aus **minis-teros* für altes **minus-teros* mit *i* nach *magister*'. This goes together with an implied *minim* in the twice repeated 'my minde' (6, 7, 10).

50 *The Golden Legend*, edited by F.S. Ellis (London: J.M. Dent, 1900; rpt. New York: AMS Press), vol. 3: 110. I have checked this modern-spelling edition against an edition of Caxton's original version (London, 1521; *STC* 24879.5).

51 Cf. *Musae Responsoriae* XXXIII: 19-20 (Hutchinson, p. 398): '*Téque Deum* alternis cantans *Ambrosius* iram, / Immemor antiqui mellis, eundo coquit.'

52 *Golden Legend*, vol. 6: 140-141. The 'real' etymology of his name, 'gift of God', fits well with the imagery of mutual exchange. For a detailed interpretation of the poem and its imagery of mystical commerce, see Christiane Lang-Graumann's forthcoming Münster dissertation on the motif of the smallest particle in Herbert.

53 'Odore vero suavissimo omnes repleti sunt ...'. Jacobus a Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, edited by Th. Graesse (Dresden & Leipzig, 1841) cap. CLXV [160], p. 741.

54 Cf. 'That call' in line 25 of 'The Odour.'

55 Cf. 1 Cor. 3: 16 and 2 Cor. 6: 16 ('ye are the temple of the living God').

56 Hutchinson, p. 206, line 11.