Summary

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Group: An Dun Theine

This entry is a poem I wrote in the style of the high medieval German Minnelieder (Minnesongs) like those found in the “Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift”, also known as Codex Manesse (The Great Heidelberg Songbook) and the “Weingartner Liederhandschrift” (The Konstanz-Weingarten Songbook). In those books, Minnelieder are compiled which originate between 1160 and 1330.

The original poems are written in the Middle-High-German (Mittelhochdeutsch) language. My entry is also written in this language. For better readability in the SCA context, I translated the poem into the English language.

The style of the poem is consistent to the original period Minnesongs, in this special case it is modeled after the theme, style and structure of three different poems from the same time period (end of 12th century/beginning of 13th century):
1) The theme/subject and style of the Minnesongs of Reinmar von Hagenau (ca. 1190)
2) The rhyme scheme of “Der Ostertag” by Rienmar von Hagenau (ca.1190)
3) The structure of the poem “Verfluchte Linden” of the song collection Codex Carmina Burana (ca. 1230)

The following sources were used:
4) www.minnesang.com
5) www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/CULPEPER/MCMAHON/minnesang.html
The Poem

English Version

The Falcon’s Flight

A dazzling maze
Where our spirit dances
And their elusive glances
If only I could fly
Above the clouds
To reach the Falcon
Oh would I dare to try?

A most appealing face
Yet stifles all advances
Her eyes with lovely gaze
Could melt all swords and lances
Her conduct rather shy
A captivating guise
And beautiful sincerity
Her virtues are so high

I fell into a daze
Between a thousand fences
A foglike tender haze
Confusing all my senses
I looked above into the skies
The falcon soaring
High and higher
Life goes on and time flies.

Middle-High German Version

des valkens vluc

ein wirre zoubegarte
wâ unser sinne tanzen mac
wâ ieder ligt ûf warte
ist diser schoene meientac
mîn wünschen ist ze vliegen
wol über wolken
dâ bî den valken
anstete iewâ blôz ze ligen

edel ist ir antlitze unde guot
doch erstickt si iedes werben
durch ir ougen blitze senden tuot
aller swert gelîch verderben
si beweget sich sô schûlich
mit ûfrihtic gestalt
unde wunderhaft êrnest
si ist sô waerbâre tugentlich

gevallen unde betoubt
lag dâ dar ich zwischen hecken
mîn sin war mir geroubt
durch eine trüebe di tout alles verdecken
mîn blic schouwet in den himel ûf
der valke steigt
hoch in die luft
sô nêmet das lêben sinen louf
**Documentation for the Poem “The Falcon’s flight”**

**Introduction**
This entry is a poem I wrote in the style of the German Minnelieder (Minnesongs) like those found in the “Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift”, also known as Codex Manesse (The Great Heidelberg Songbook) and the “Weingartner Liederhandschrift” (The Konstanz-Weingarten Songbook). In those books, Minnesongs, which originate between 1160 and 1330, are compiled.

**History of the German Minnesang**
The German *Minnesang* had its highpoint between the late 12th century and the beginning of the 14th century. The expression is a construction of the two Middle High German words “Minne” (Love) and “Sang” (Song, Poem), and thus means “Love song” or “Love poem”. In fact, in those times, the poems were mostly presented in the form of a song. Unfortunately, because the melodies were hardly ever written down, but conveyed through the generations by oral transfer, in most cases we can only speculate how such a song might have sounded like. The lyrics of these songs, however, were written down and have survived the centuries.

The roots of the German *Minnesang* lie in Southern France, where the local Troubadours or *Trouvères* sang their “Love songs” since the mid 11th century. From there it spread to other parts of Europe. Especially the time of the second crusade in the mid 12th century brought frequent contacts between the different European cultures, as knights and their entourage from various corners of Europe came together for the war in the Holy Land. At first, the French songs of the *Trouvères* were just translated into German, and then the form, themes and melodies were used with original German lyrics. But soon, a distinctive and genuine form developed, and at the end of the 12th century the German *Minnesang* had emancipated itself from the French origins – it had become an independent and authentic art form of medieval Germany.

**Themes of the Minnesang**
The premise of the *Minnesang* is the love of the writer for a noble woman. The majority of the songs/poems typically begin with some description of Nature – characteristics of the seasons, like blooming flowers, green meadows, the scent of the forest, the chirping of bids and the like. This picture is then used to describe the writer’s own mood. This can either be done in a very cheery way: “Spring is here and my heart is filled with joy”; or in a contradictory manner: “Spring is here but I am depressed and without hope”. Invariably, there is a description of the woman he loves, her beauty, her virtues and her lovely features, which is either followed by his feelings of unfulfilled love and sorrow, because the woman is unattainable for him; or he describes his hope, that one day everything might fall into place and they would finally be together.
**Forms of Minnesongs**

The most common form of a Minnesong was the “canzone”, which consists of “Stollen”, “Stollen”, “Abgesang”. Both “Stollen” had the same meter and rhyme scheme, whereas the “Abgesang” had a different structure.

Here is a typical example, by Friedrich von Hausen (ca. 1190):

**Stollen 1**

Ich muoz von schulden sîn unfrô, a
sît si jach do ich bî ir was     b
ich möhte heizen Ênêas,         b

**Stollen 2**

und solte ab des wol sicher sîn, c
si wurde niemer mîn Tîdô.    a
wie sprach sî sô?              a

**Abgesang**

aleine frömdet mich ir lîp,       d
si hat jedoch des herzen mich   w
beroubet gar für elliu wîp.      d

Each line has four iambic feet, except for the last line of the second strophe, in which each syllable fill a whole foot.

Note that one line in the Abgesang does not rhyme with any other line. Such a rhyme is called a **Waise**, an orphan. If, however, the orphan in one strophe rhymes with the corresponding line in other strophes of the same song, it is called a **Korn**.

Very popular was also a series of lines with the same ending. Here an example from Neidhart von Reuental (1180-1240):

**Meie, dîn liehter schîn**          a
**und diu kleinen vogelin**          a
**bringent vröuden vollen schrîn**  a
**daz si willekomen sîn**            a
**ich bin an den vröuden mîn**       a
**mit der werlde kranc.**             b
**alle tage ist mîn klage,**          c
**von der ich daz beste sage**       c
**unde ir holdez herze trage,**       c
**daz ich der niht wol behage**      c
**von der schulden ich verzage**     c
**daz mir nie gelanc.**               b
But also more complicated constructions were used. Here an example from Konrad von Würzburg (1225-1287):

Jârlanc wil diu linde a
vom winde a
sich velwen, b
diu sich vor dem walde c
ze balde c
kan selwen. b
trûren üf der heide d
mit leide d
man üebet: e
sús hât mir diu minne f
die sinne f
betrüebet. e

The models for my poem
The style of the poem is consistent to the original period Minnesongs, in this special case it is modeled after the theme, style and structure of three different poems from the same time period (end of 12th century/ beginning of 13th century):

1) I modeled the contents of my poem after the style of Reinmar von Hagenau, who lived at the turn of the 12th/13th centuries in Vienna. He was one of the most revered Minnesänger of his time and was considered to be the Master of the art of courtly poems. In his poems, he described the patiently endured sorrow of the Minnesänger, in his futile love for an unattainable noble woman. He praises the beauty of the woman, her high virtues and his undying and total devotion to her, although she never even rewards him with the tiniest smile, so his hopes are crushed.
Modern scholars describe his style the following way: “Nobody suffered more beautiful than Reinmar”.

2) For the basic rhyme scheme of the poem, I used the poem “Der Ostertag” by Reinmar von Hagenau (ca.1190). As an example, only the first strophe is given here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reinmar’s poem (first strophe)</th>
<th>My poem (first strophe)</th>
<th>In Middle High German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ich wil allez gâhen</td>
<td>A A dazzling maze</td>
<td>ein wirre zoubergarte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zuo der liebe, die ich hân.</td>
<td>B Where our spirit dances</td>
<td>wâ unser sinne tanzen mac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sô ist ez niender nâhen, daz</td>
<td>A Are these spring days</td>
<td>wâ ieder ligt ûf warte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sich ende noch min wân.</td>
<td>B And their elusive glances</td>
<td>ist diser schoene meientac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doch versûoche ich ez alle tage</td>
<td>C If only I could fly</td>
<td>mîn wünschen ist ze vliegen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>und gediene ir sô, daz si âne ir danc</td>
<td>D Above the clouds</td>
<td>wol über wolken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mit fröiden muoz erwenden</td>
<td>E To reach the Falcon</td>
<td>dâ bî den valken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kumber, den ich trage.</td>
<td>C Oh would I dare to try?</td>
<td>anstete iewâ blôz ze ligen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3) Whereas Reinmar uses different rhymes in the next strophe, I chose to repeat the endings of the rhymes in the first strophe in the remaining two strophes of my poem as well. This structure can be found i.e. in the Song collection of the Codex Carmina Burana (ca.1230). As an example, only the first two strophes are given here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carmina Burana – Verfluchte Linden (two strophes)</th>
<th>My poem (two strophes)</th>
<th>Middle High German Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Er nam mich bi der wizen hant sed non indecenter, er wist mich div vise lanch valide fraudulenter. Hoy et oe! maledicantur tilie iuxta viam posite!</td>
<td>A B A A B C D E A B A A B C D E</td>
<td>ein wirre zoubergarte wâ unser sinne tanzen mac wâ ieder ligt ûf warte ist diser schoene meientac mîn wünschen ist ze vliegen wol über wolken dâ bî den vallken anstete iewâ blôz ze ligen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Er graif mir an daz wize gewant valde indeccenter, er furte mih bi der hant multum violenter. Hoy et oe! maledicantur tilie iuxta viam posite!</td>
<td>A B A A B C D E A B A A B C D E</td>
<td>edel ist ir antlitze unde guot doch erstickt si iedes werben durch ir ougen blitze senden tuot aller swert gelîch verderben si beweget sich sô schûlich mit ûfrihtic gestalt unde wunderhaft ërnest si ist sô waerbâre tugentlich</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources

This book contains all 27 paintings of the „little sister“ of the Codex Manesse, the "Weingartner Liederhandschrift". The paintings are from the same period as the Codex Manesse, only of a much more simple artistic style. It also contains some of the Minnesongs of the Original.

This book contains all 137 paintings of the original Codex Manesse. It also contains some of the Minnesongs of the Original.

This is the standard Middle-High German to (Modern) German Dictionary.

4) www.minnesang.com
This German website is maintained by Dr. Lothar Jahn (PhD in Music Science), who is the director of the medieval theater group DINGO (a not for profit society).
The website has a very extensive library of Minnesongs. It also delivers useful information about ca. 40 of the more prominent German Minnesänger, as well as some facts about the history of the Minnesang. It also delivers a very good insight into the themes of the poems, and also has some sound samples of Minnesongs.

The sources that were used to assemble this site consist of the following publications:

- Joachim Bumke: Höfische Kultur: Literatur und Gesellschaft im Hohen Mittelalter. dtv Verlag
- Helmut Brackert: Minnesang. Mittelhochdeutsche Texte und Übertragungen. Fischer Verlag
- Carmina Burana. Die Lieder der Benediktbeurer Handschrift. Zweisprachig. dtv klassik Verlag
- Heinrich von Morungen: Lieder. Reclam Verlag
- Diverse: Frauenlieder des Mittelalters. Reclam Verlag
- Neidhart von Reuenthal: Lieder. Reclam Verlag
- Diverse: Tagelieder des deutschen Mittelalters. Reclam Verlag
- Reinmar: Lieder. Reclam Verlag
- Walther von der Vogelweide: Werke 2: Liedlyrik. Reclam Verlag
- Heinrich von Morungen: Lieder. Reclam Verlag

5) www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/CULPEPER/MCMAHON/minnesang.html
This website is maintained by James V. McMahon, Professor of German Studies at Emory University.
It is part of an online university course about medieval German Music and Literature. Here is the course description:
This course will study Minnesang, German sung poetry of the 12th and 13th centuries. Literary scholars usually concentrate on the texts of this genre, acknowledging that they were always sung, but paying very little attention to the music. Musicologists consider the music, trying to find adequate ways to interpret the notation and the performance, but they usually ignore the poetic content of the texts. In this course we will give equal weight to both aspects, while investigating also the historical and cultural background against which this genre arose, the development of various themes within the genre, the poet-composers who produced the songs, and the influence of these songs on later literature, reaching even into the present.

The following sources were used:

- The so-called "Kleine Heidelberger Liederhandschrift," in the library of the University of Heidelberg.
- The "Weingartner" Liederhandschrift, in the Landesbibliothek in Stuttgart.
- The famous "Manesse" manuscript (named for the Manesse family in Switzerland, who formerly owned it); also called the "Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift," also now in the library of the University of Heidelberg.
- The Jena manuscript, containing a song by Spervogel.
- The Münster Fragment, found in the Staatsarchiv in Münster in 1910, and containing 26 strophes or parts of strophes, one of which has the complete melody of Walther von der Vogelweide's *Palästinalied*.
- The *Carmina Burana* manuscript, containing songs attributed to Reinmar, Dietmar, Heinrich von Morungen and Walther von der Vogelweide.
- The Kremsmünster manuscript, in the library of the monastery in Kremsmünster in Austria. It contains seven strophes of a German song attributed in other collections to Walther von der Vogelweide.