

**“FROUWE, WILTU TOUFEN DICH, / DU MAHT  
OUCH NOCH ERWERBEN MICH” (PZ.: 56,25F.):  
NOTES ON GAHMURET’S DESERTION  
OF BELAKANE \***

Love, combat and death are some of the dominant themes of German courtly narrative poetry: they are naturally also motives which, in differing degrees, animate Wolfram’s Arthurian and Grail romance, *Parzival*. While it is true that in describing the adventures of Parzival and Gawan Wolfram attempts, where possible, to avoid the deaths of any knights in combat, in the *Vorgeschichte*, which is from a source independent of Chrétien’s *Perceval*, and which is described in the first two books of the work, a different world is presented. There, death in knightly combat seems unavoidable: among others, Isenhart, Galoes and the protagonist Gahmuret meet tragic ends. Indeed, in many ways the ethos which underlies the *Vorgeschichte* appears to be not dissimilar to that of the rest of the poem: it would seem that a different set of rules apply here.

The first part of the *Vorgeschichte* describes the relationship between Parzival’s father, the knight-errant Gahmuret, and the beautiful, dark-skinned heathen Queen Belakane: from his *Minnedienst* for her and their marriage, to Gahmuret’s subsequent desertion of his pregnant bride. Although theirs is to be a short-lived relationship, it is one which has wide-ranging repercussions over the action of the romance. This is particularly noticeable when, at the end of the work, Gahmuret and Belakane’s son, Feirafiz comes to the West in search of his father: he is to join his half-brother Parzival for the final stage of his quest for the Grail, marry Parzival’s aunt, the Grail maiden, Repanse de Schoye, and return with her to the East, where their son, Prester John, will spread the word of Christianity.

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\* Edition of text used: *Wolfram von Eschenbach*, ed. K. Lachmann, Berlin, 1926.

The Wolfram-*Forschung* has already recognised the importance of the Gahmuret-Belakane couple in the work, having devoted a large number of studies to their relationship<sup>1</sup>. It is my intention in this short article to discuss the motives which lead to the break-down of their marriage; in doing this I will pay particular attention to the reason Gahmuret himself gives for having deserted his wife, and which is referred to in the title of this essay.

In *Parzival* Gahmuret has a short and brilliant career. Indeed, this figure may well have been based on the ideal which was exemplified by the legend of Richard the Lionheart:<sup>2</sup> the dashing knight-errant with a restless spirit yearning constantly for adventure. The anchor in his shield symbolises that he is to move from port of call to port of call, never staying in one place for too long. As the perfect knight-errant Gahmuret has no problems in winning the ladies of his choice; however, as I have elsewhere argued<sup>3</sup>, he fails to reach the type of profound and lasting relationship with *one* woman which is achieved by his sons Feirafiz (with Repanse) and Parzival (with Condwiramurs): although he comes from a family governed by love (a pre-occupation inherited from the fairy ancestress Terdelaschoye; cf. *Pz.* 585,11ff.), his service as a knight — and his death — do not, as in the case of other members of his family, appear to be primarily for *minne*, but rather for adventure.

Like Artus and Gawan, Gahmuret is destined to have serious love encounters (with Ampflise, Belakane and Herzeloide). Such *minne*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. BUMKE, J. — *Wolfram von Eschenbach*, Stuttgart, 1991, pp. 185f.; among some of the more important works to discuss the Belakane — Gahmuret relationship cf. GIBBS, M. — ‘*Wiplichez wibes reht*’. *A Study of the Women Characters in the Works of Wolfram von Eschenbach*, Pittsburgh, 1972; ORTMANN, C. — *Ritterschaft. Zur Frage nach der Bedeutung der Gahmuret-Geschichte im Parzival Wolframs von Eschenbach*, in “DVjs” 57, 1973, pp. 664-710; RICHEY, M. — *Gahmuret Anschewin. A Contribution to the Study of Wolfram von Eschenbach*, Oxford, 1928; SCHUMACHER, M. — *Die Auffassung der Ehe in den Dichtungen Wolframs von Eschenbach*, Heidelberg, 1967; WILLSON, H. B. — *The Symbolism of Belakâne and Feirafiz in Wolfram’s Parzival*, in “GLL” 13, 1959, pp. 94-105.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. SNELLEMAN, W. — *Das Haus Anjou und der Orient in Wolframs ‘Parzival’* (Diss.), Amsterdam, 1941, but cf. also PANZER, F. — *Gahmuret. Quellenstudien zu Wolframs ‘Parzival’* (Heidelberger S.B., Phil. Kl. Bd. 30/1), Heidelberg, 1940, pp. 5ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. GREENFIELD, J. T. — ‘*Minne*’ in *Wolfram’s ‘Parzival’* (Diss.), Cardiff, 1984, pp. 13ff.

relationships are based — as are all ideal love affairs in German medieval courtly romance — on the knight's *dienst* for the lady's *lôn*. The *dienst* is paid in a number of ways: in Gahmuret's family it would appear only to be through service of arms — the males in the Angevin line all fight for their ladies. Indeed, it would appear that *Minnedienst* has brought about the deaths of some of Gahmuret's *sippe*: we know that many of the men in Gahmuret's family die violently. Thus, his grandfather Addanz (*Pz.* 56,8), his father Gandin (*Pz.* 5,28) and his brother Galoes all die while fighting in knightly combat. While we are not certain of the motives for the deaths of Addanz and Gandin, with Galoes we do know that his death is directly concerned with his love for Annore (cf. *Pz.* 80,14ff.). The high incidence of such deaths in the Angevine line is doubtless due to the importance which *minne* holds for the whole family: typical of the genre, love can be deadly.

It might well be argued that Gahmuret himself dies in the service of a lady, since he claims his success is in his wife's honour (cf. *Pz.* 101,9ff.): this would indeed accord well with the family tradition. However, despite his son Parzival's claim that Gahmuret's death occurred "*durh minne*" (*Pz.* 751,28), the true motive for Gahmuret's service when he dies is his need for *strît*: this *strît* is not undertaken in order to help his wife, but to help his friend, the *bâruc* of Baghdad. As the narrator notes:

*er was von Anshouwe erborn,  
und hât vor Baldac verlorn  
den lip durch den bâruc* (*Pz.* 108,9ff.)

The deaths of other knights, when they take place during their *minnedienst*, occur only when they are serving their ladies exclusively (e.g. Isenhart is paying *minne* service to Belakane, and Schionatulander to Sigune). However, with Gahmuret this is not the case, indeed, the express statement that he died "*durch den bâruc*" shows that Gahmuret dies not so much in the service of a lady, but in that of a man...

Gahmuret pays *minne* service to three ladies. While the other major characters of the romance can each establish a lasting and special relationship with one lady who is ideally suited (for Parzival Condwiramurs, for Gawan Orgeluse, for Feirafiz Repanse), Gahmuret is equally committed to several different ladies. This accords well with the ideal of knight-

errantry, parallel with Richard the Lionheart in history and Lancelot in romance. In the courtly narrative, the normal motive for a knight-errant is to help a lady, thereby winning her love and, if possible, a higher social position that might go with her. This entailed a threat to knight-errantry, since it could lead to his settling down with the lady and governing her lands. As in the cases of Richard the Lionheart and Lancelot, it is only through the neglect of these responsibilities that he can remain true to the ideal of knight-errantry. Hartmann's Arthurian romances *Erec* and *Iwein* both deal with this problem. It is the central theme of *Erec*: Erec has a splendid career, wins his bride and then he comfortably settles down with her (*verliget*) and thereby forfeits his hard-won *êre*. In the case of *Iwein* the opposite is true: the hero errs in the other direction, neglecting his bride for the sake of chivalry. Gahmuret also faces this problem: in Belakane's case he resolves it by not simply *neglecting* his bride, but by brutally *deserting* her.

Gahmuret only totally volunteers his help to a lady when *minne* is involved. He only fully offers his assistance to Belakane after she has stimulated his *minne* interest. He does not, however, appear interested in any lands she might own, for he leaves her although he might continue to live with her, reigning over her kingdom. Equally, he will later leave Herzeloyde to look after Waleis and Norgals while he goes to help his friend the *bâruc*. At the beginning of his career, his brother's offer to divide their father's kingdom between them is turned down by Gahmuret (cf. *Pz.* 8,10ff.): he is not interested in the security of *gemach* (*Pz.* 7,22), but hopes to earn a reputation seeking adventure and glory and the favour of ladies<sup>4</sup>. His conduct at the outset of his career foreshadows that of Parzival, who will decline security and the hand of Liaze in order to seek glory and perform *minne* service in her name (cf. *Pz.* 176,30ff.). Each of them recognises that it would be ignoble to rest securely before having proved himself in the service of ladies.

Despite the central importance of *minne* in Gahmuret's career, the relationships he establishes appear superficial by comparison with Parzival's; Gahmuret's principal interest lies in the service itself: for him it is a motive and inspiration for fighting. Wolfram sees *strît* and *minne*

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. GREEN, D. H. — *Der Auszug Gahmurets*, in "Wolfram-Studien" I (1970), pp. 62-86, here pp. 85f. and WIEGAND, H. E. — *Studien zur Minne und Ehe in Wolframs 'Parzival' und Hartmanns Artusepik*, Berlin, 1972, p. 242.

as the two dominant forces which govern Gahmuret: *strit und minne was sin ger* (Pz. 35,25), says the narrator. This proves to be true in that he is inspired to fight by Belakane (and later by Ampflise and by Herzeloide). For the knight-errant Gahmuret love serves as a reason for fighting: what he requires from women is the inspiration to fight well, and the reward for so doing. However, the reward would appear to be only a secondary consideration: for the knight-errant service in arms (which, for a *Minneritter* like Gawan, is only the means for achieving the desired end, i.e. the *minne* of the lady concerned) seems to be more important than the desired end itself. Although Gahmuret feels love pangs and although the narrator leaves us in no doubt as to Gahmuret's appetite towards sex (cf. Pz. 139,15ff.), love would appear to serve him primarily as a stimulus for adventure.

The first time we see Gahmuret pay *minne*-service is in Zazamanc when he helps Belakane. Belakane's city, Patelamunt, has been besieged by Isenhart's vassals and family. Isenhart had been killed when, while paying Belakane *Minmediest*, he had gone into battle without his armour: he did this because Belakane had let him serve for her love, without the physical reward (as Sigune will later do with Schionatulander), and she had put him to this test to see if he would prove a worthy lover. Belakane regrets the death of so noble a knight; however, Isenhart's vassals (under their leader, the heathen Razalic) and family (under Isenhart's cousin, King Vridebant of Scotland and Kaylet), who see her as responsible for Isenhart's death, decide to exact revenge from her, and besiege her city.

On his arrival in Patelamunt Gahmuret does not yet know of Belakane, but after having heard of the population's plight (i.e. suffering from the effects of the siege) he offers his help as a mercenary (therefore without any possibility of a *minne* reward) (cf. Pz. 17,9ff.). His initial offer of help for material reward is rather half-heartedly made because the population is very dark-skinned (cf. Pz. 17,25). However, the idea of *guot* recedes into the background when *minne* takes over: after meeting Belakane, Gahmuret's indifference towards Zazamanc's plight changes. He sees the goodness of Belakane's heart, her *triuwe* (cf. Pz. 28,12), which for Wolfram is the most important of all qualities. The prospect of a possible *minne* experience increases his interest in the idea of battle to such an extent that he immediately goes to inspect the defences. At supper he falls in love with her; as the narrator notes: *des herze truoc ir minnen last* (Pz. 34,16). He is unable to sleep at night, thinking of battle and love

(cf. *Pz.* 35,25), and he rises early in the morning serving, as he is now, for love's wages:

*sîn dienest nam der minnen solt:  
ein scharpher strit in ringe wac* (*Pz.* 37,8f.).

Now that he is fighting for *minne* he becomes very enthusiastic; although the idea of battle is in itself interesting, for him it only becomes complete if a *minne* experience is involved.

The conflict between Isenhart's vassals and family and Belakane is resolved, not only by the knightly skills of Gahmuret (he is able to defeat Hiuteger, Gaschier and Razalic), but also because Gahmuret and Kaylet are of the same *sippe*. It is part of the code of chivalry (indeed, it is doubtless a rule which dates from a time long before the Age of Chivalry) that members of the same family are not allowed to fight each other:<sup>5</sup> thus, since Gahmuret is Belakane's champion, the conflict between the heathen Queen and Vrïdebant's forces is resolved — in part — peacefully.

Thereafter Belakane and Gahmuret start their married life, governing their kingdom. However, we know little of their life together; after describing in great detail Gahmuret's knightly combat and, after his victory, the discussions to reach a peace, the way in which Gahmuret and Belakane live together is given hardly no mention at all. The narrator notes laconically why Gahmuret deserts his heathen bride:

*daz er niht rîterschefte vant,  
des was sîn freude sorgen phant.  
Doch was im daz swarze wîp  
lieber dan sîn selbes lîp.  
ez enwart nie wîp geschicket baz:  
der frouwen herze nie vergaz,  
im enfüere ein werdiu volge mite,  
an rehter kiusche wîplich site.* (*Pz.* 54,17ff.)

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<sup>5</sup> However, Gahmuret and Gaschier are also of the same *sippe*, yet they can fight: perhaps this is because they are further removed than Gahmuret and Kaylet; cf. on this point: DELABAR, W. — 'erkanntiu sippe unt hoch geselleschaft'. *Studien zur Funktion des Verwandtschaftsverbandes in Wolframs von Eschenbach 'Parzival'*, Göttingen, 1990, pp. 146ff.

The narrator here emphasises the extent to which Gahmuret is enamoured of his wife; and yet he still deserts her when she is twelve weeks pregnant. Because there are no deeds of arms to perform he does not feel able to stay, i.e. it is his nature, as a knight-errant, which forces him to leave.

Gahmuret departs — at the dead of night — in the same way he had arrived, by ship: his crest, with the anchor (which he had insisted be woven into the cloak he wore on his first meeting with Belakane, cf. *Pz.* 23,2ff.), clearly symbolises this destiny. Before departing he tells Belakane nothing of his decision: she will only learn of that from a letter he leaves in her purse. There, he explicitly states how he feels for her:

*'Hie enbiutet liep ein ander liep.  
ich bin dirre verte ein diep:  
die muose ich dir durch jâmer steln.  
frouwe, in mac dich niht verheltn,  
wær dîn ordn in mîner ê,  
so wær mir immer nâch dir wê.'* (*Pz.* 55,21).

Gahmuret compares himself to a thief; it is possible that, as GREEN<sup>6</sup> has argued, he says this to show how he feels that he is behaving badly. However, how are we to understand Gahmuret's assertion that if she were of his faith, then he would long for her forever? A motive appears here in the narrative which has not yet occurred: that of the *religious* difference between the Christian Gahmuret and the heathen Belakane.

This theme comes once more to the fore when, at the end of the letter, Gahmuret claims: '*frouwe, wiltu toufen dich, / du maht ouch noch erwerben mich.*' (*Pz.* 56,25f.); in this remark (which appears to be almost an afterthought) Gahmuret not only justifies his desertion citing the religious gulf which apparently now separates the two, but also tells Belakane that if she were to be baptised, then she could still win him back. This is a very strange assertion for two reasons: firstly, from the formal point of view, in that Gahmuret is here *inverting* the *dienst / lôn* system<sup>7</sup>, by suggesting that it is Belakane who will have to win him back (i.e. the lady must win the knight's reward and not *vice versa*); and

<sup>6</sup> Cf. GREEN — *Op. cit.*, pp. 63f.

<sup>7</sup> CHRISTOPH, S. — *Wolfram's Couples*, Amsterdam, 1981, p. 39.

secondly — from the point of view of the plot — because until the letter no mention had been made of any problem which the *religious* differences between Gahmuret and Belakane might cause. Judging from Gahmuret's reaction on his arrival in Zazamanc, the fact that Belakane is dark-skinned might have been problematic (which it was not: cf. *Pz.* 90,4ff.); but no word ever indicated that her not being a Christian might make her unfit to be a bride for Gahmuret.

Indeed, at the beginning of their short relationship, after Belakane has told Gahmuret of Isenhart's death, the narrator goes on to note Gahmuret's reaction:

*Gahmureten dûhte sân,  
swie si wære ein heidenin,  
mit triuwen wîplîcher sin  
in wibes herze nie geslouf.* (*Pz.* 28,10ff.)

It seems to Gahmuret that although she is a heathen, there is no more affectionate woman than Belakane. The narrator then goes on to remark:

*ir kiusche was der reine touf,  
und ouch der regen der si begôz,  
der wâc der von ir ougen vlôz  
ûf ir zobel und an ir brust.* (*Pz.* 28,14ff.)

Thus, for the narrator, Belakane's *kiusche* is equated to the baptism, as are the tears she sheds: although she is not baptised, it is almost as if she already were. Therefore, for both the protagonist and the narrator there would appear to be no reason to suppose that Belakane's religion could stand in the way of her relationship with Gahmuret. Indeed, on learning that Gahmuret has made it a condition for his return that she become a Christian, Belakane immediately expresses her willingness to do so (cf. *Pz.* 56,27ff.).

In his *Parzival*, but also — and more notably — in his late work *Willehalm* (which describes a holy war between Christians and heathens) Wolfram does much to emphasise the noble qualities of the heathens; it is clear that, since the heathens have not been baptised, they will not go to Heaven, and yet they have the same capacity to love as the Christians. Thus, when the heathen *Minneritter* Tesereiz is killed in *Willehalm*, it is almost as if the sweet smell of the *odor sanctitatis* comes forth from his



wounds (cf. *Wh.* 88,1ff.): he is thus almost as much a martyr to the ideal of *minne* as the youth Vivianz is a martyr to the Christian cause (and in Vivianz's case the *odor sanctitatis* is detected after his death). Indeed, through their *kiusche* and *triuwe* and through the depth of their feeling, the heathens will, if they fall in love with Christians, turn away from their false gods and be opened to the love of the *wâre minnære* — the true God<sup>8</sup>. Thus, through their love for Christians, Feirafiz in *Parzival* and Gyburg in *Willehalm* will each learn of the love of God and themselves become Christian: in Wolfram's works, such is the power of *minne* that it can save the heathens from burning in the everlasting fire of hell.

Taking this into account, how are we to understand Gahmuret's remarks in his farewell letter to Belakane? It is difficult for us to believe that Wolfram has Gahmuret desert Belakane because she is not a Christian: this is contrary to the ethos of this work. Indeed, it is probable that Gahmuret is serious when he suggests that, in order for him to return, Belakane should turn her back on the heathen gods. But if this is true, why did he leave her? Why did Wolfram *not* allow Belakane's love for a Christian bring her to the love of the *wâre minnære* (to which she is so evidently open), as will later happen with her son Feirafiz and with Gyburg (and probably also Rennewart) in *Willehalm*?

When looking at this question we should not forget that Gahmuret is a knight errant: his world of adventure for the *bâruc* in the East is far removed from that of the Grail, where Feirafiz is to meet Repanse, or from that of the sombre *chansons de geste*, where Gyburg is to be abducted by Willehalm. Gahmuret obviously loves Belakane; but as a knight errant he clearly requires his freedom, and it is this liberty to go in search of adventure which she, apparently, cannot give him (cf. *Pz.* 54,17ff.). Belakane, for all her virtue, could never be the mother of the future Grail King; the successor to the throne in Munsalvæsche must be from the Grail family. If Gahmuret is to be the future Grail monarch's father (if he is to achieve his *telos*), then he *must* desert Belakane. However much Wolfram would have liked Belakane to become a Christian, from the point of view of plot, it is simply not possible. Wolfram does not want to show Gahmuret as being ignoble. Although he has later criticised for his behaviour by his son Feirafiz (cf. *Pz.* 750,22ff.),

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. GREENFIELD, J. — *durh minne unminne* (*Wh.*, 27,26): *Überlegungen zur Auffassung und Funktion der Liebe im Willehalm Wolframs von Eschenbach*, in "Trivium" 28 (Carl Lofmark Memorial Volume), 1993, pp. 3851, here p. 47.

Wolfram goes out of his way to emphasise Gahmuret's integrity (cf. *Pz.* 107,30), and thus he gives Gahmuret an excuse for leaving, even though it is only an excuse...

Gahmuret's excuse also has another function: had he not subsequently married Herzeloide, it is probable that Gahmuret would have returned to Belakane once she had fulfilled the condition he had set. He must know that she would be willing to become a Christian because of him; therefore, if he is to be true to his word, it is probable that he would have planned to return to her eventually. Indeed, although Gahmuret never mentions such an intention, there is evidence in the text to suggest that he did hope to go back at some time. After having deserted her, on his way to the West, something rather surprising happens: on the high seas his ship encounters another ship carrying Vrïdebant's men who are taking gifts (Isenhart's helmet and armour) and a message to Belakane (thereby formalising the peace already established between them). As the narrator notes, they give these offerings to Gahmuret:

*si gâbenz im: dô lobte ouch er,  
sîn munt der botschefte ein wer  
wurde, swenne er koeme ze ir. (Pz. 58,17ff.)*

Since Gahmuret here *promises* to give these tokens to Belakane, it would appear that he had every intention of returning to her; it is quite impossible to believe that he would have been lying to Vrïdebant's men, stealing tokens which are so clearly meant for her.

Later, when he is at the tournament called by Herzeloide in Kanvoleis, Gahmuret's thoughts once again turn to Belakane. There he explains why he had left her:

*'der vrouwen huote mich ûf bant,  
daz ich niht ritterschefte vant:  
dô wânde ich daz mich ritterschaft  
næm von ungemüetes craft.  
der hân ich hie ein teil getân.  
nu wænt manc ungewisser man  
daz mich swerze jagte dane:  
die sach ich vür die sunnen ane.  
ir wîplich prîs mir vüezet leit:  
si ist buckel ob der werdekeit.'* (*Pz.* 90,28ff.)

Here, after having said how much he still longs for his heathen bride (Pz. 90,18ff.), Gahmuret explains that he had left her because he wanted to go in search of adventure; even here there is no clear evidence to suggest that he still does not intend to return to her<sup>9</sup>. And yet, he does not return, since shortly after this scene in which he speaks of his love for Belakane, he marries Herzeloide...

Gahmuret may be an excellent knight errant and a champion who can with ease gain the upper hand in knightly combat, yet he is no match for Herzeloide, who for political reasons desperately needs a consort. Gahmuret is *forced* to marry Herzeloide because he cannot find the necessary arguments to refuse her. He is the victor at the tourney in Kanvoelis: the prize he has won is Herzeloide as his bride. However much he may not want to marry her, he has no choice but to do so. Following her insistence that he wed her, he immediately counters '*vrouwe, ich hân ein wîp: diu ist mir lieber danne der lip*' (Pz. 94,5f.); despite being told that he still loves Belakane above everything, Herzeloide is not impressed: she responds to Gahmuret with an argument which is theologically sound:

*'des toufes segen hât bezzer craft.  
nu ânet iuch der heidenschaft,  
und minnet mich nâch unser ê'* (Pz. 94,13f.)

There can be no doubt that — for Wolfram and his audience — a heathen marriage does not have the same value as the Christian Sacrament: Wolfram might consider the love of a heathen as highly as that of a Christian, but a heathen marriage could never have the same importance: thus, in *Willehalm* Gyburg can leave her heathen husband and marry the protagonist (although this might appear to cause Wolfram some discomfort). However much Gahmuret might want to remain married to Belakane, he has no way out — he has to wed Herzeloide. Now it becomes apparent why Wolfram had Gahmuret cite the religious difference between the two as a reason for leaving his heathen bride: Wolfram thus prepares the ground for Herzeloide's argument here (a line of argument which, from a theological standpoint, is correct).

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. SWINBURNE, H. — *Gahmuret and Feirafiz in Wolfram's Parzival*, in "MLR" 51, 1956, pp. 185-197, here: p. 199.

Once married to Herzeloide, Gahmuret can continue to go in search of adventure (he has this condition written into his marriage contract, cf. *Pz.* 97,7ff.), but he can never return to Belakane: this would show a lack of *triuwe* to his Christian bride. Because of Belakane's *triuwe* to him, she will wait for his return and later die pining for the love she had lost in him (cf. *Pz.* 750,24ff.).

Belakane and Gahmuret are clearly both characters dear to Wolfram's heart. It is one of Wolfram's traits in all his narrative works that he tries to understand his characters on their own terms: even if he might not always approve of their conduct, he will be tolerant towards them. Gahmuret's knight-errantry does not represent the ideal which Wolfram wishes his audience to emulate: but it is an ideal which the courtly age found exciting and attractive. However, it clearly could not lead to the sort of happiness in married life with which the German courtly romance ends. The break-down of the Gahmuret — Belakane relationship is due neither to the shallowness of the partners' feelings, nor to the religious difference which separates the lovers as GIESE has argued:<sup>10</sup> it is caused above all by Gahmuret's nature as a knight-errant. The reason which Gahmuret gives for the desertion could not be the knight-errant's real motive, but it is the one which Wolfram uses to allow him to explain to his audience Gahmuret's subsequent marriage to Herzeloide. Without changing the Gahmuret character radically, Wolfram could not have avoided this aspect in the make-up of such an important knight.

Although in the courtly romance ladies may provide the *primum movens* for their knights, and although in the courtly lyric they might be idealised and honoured, it is a feature of this *genre* that while men fight to gain prestige, women are destined to suffer. However happy the outcome of these romances may seem, however many knights may — through their service of arms and their years of *arbeit* — reach their *teloi*, the lives of the women in this literature has one dominant characteristic — and that is of their passive suffering; the noble heathen Belakane — like Herzeloide, Sigune and Condwiramurs — cannot escape this destiny.

John Greenfield

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<sup>10</sup> GIESE, I. — *Sigune. Untersuchungen zur Minneauffassung Wolframs von Eschenbach* (Diss.), Rostock, 1952, p. 46.