

Chapter 3

Literary Tombs and Archaeological Knowledge in the Twelfth-Century ‘Romances of Antiquity’



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3.1 Introduction

Twelfth-century literary romances of antiquity (‘romans d’antiquités’) such as the anonymous *Roman d’Eneas* (c. 1160), Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s *Roman de Troie* (c. 1165), and Heinrich von Veldeke’s *Eneit* (1170–1788), feature elaborate descriptions of the tombs of legendary heroes and warriors.¹ Entirely absent or perfunctory in classical source texts, these descriptions are highly detailed and imaginative. Although the romances of antiquity are works of fiction, I will suggest that their descriptions of ancient burial practices reflect the influence of more recent written accounts of actual tomb openings and exhumations in the preceding century. Thus, the description of the burial of Pallas in the *Roman d’Eneas* is partly modeled on the account of the discovery of the ‘real’ tomb of Pallas in Rome in c. 1045, written by the chronicler William of Malmesbury between 1125 and 1135.² In the *Roman de Troie*, the tomb of Hector with its distinctive enthroned burial is based in part on accounts of the opening of the tomb of Charlemagne by Otto III in the year 1000. Highlighting the sophisticated intertextuality and intermedial referentiality of these ‘romans d’antiquités’, this chapter will explore the interaction of imaginative

¹Except where noted, all references to *Eneas* are to the *Roman d’Eneas*, edited by Petit (1997), *Troie* to the *Roman de Troie* by Benoît de Sainte-Maure, edited by Constans (1904–1912), and *Eneit* to the *Eneas Romance* by Heinrich von Veldeke, edited by Etmüller (1852). Although Petit (1997) is accessible and reliable overall, Salverda de Grave (1891) remains an indispensable resource due to its detailed account of manuscript variants and editorial decisions.

²*Gesta Regum Anglorum* (William of Malmesbury, 1998, II.206).

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literature and archaeological knowledge in Western Europe in the middle decades of the twelfth century.

The unprecedented fantastical tombs that seemed to erupt Pallas-Athena-like as fully formed conceptions from the minds of medieval romance authors and their reader-/listener-communities may seem unlikely vessels of ‘archaeological knowledge’. The excavations and exhumations described by medieval chroniclers, as discussed in this chapter, are not archaeological reports in the modern sense,³ and may never have happened (at least not in the way they are described). And yet exploring a few of these textual tombs can shed light on the relationship between what we are used to thinking of as ‘literature’ and what is defined as ‘historical archaeology’, as well as yielding insights into medieval processes and perceptions of burial and exhumation, and the ways in which these can conceal or reveal the past to us and to past textual communities.

Recent decades of literary scholarship have troubled persistent long-held post-Reformation beliefs about medieval historiographical *naïveté*. Introducing his important 1974 translation of the *Roman d’Eneas*, John A. Yunck summarizes scholarly consensus by explaining that in the twelfth century authors and audiences utterly lacked spatial and temporal perspective:

All this is to say—and we are perhaps belaboring the obvious—that the twelfth-century romancers lacked the historical sense or historical orientation⁴ which dominates every educated man’s world view today. The medieval romancer made no attempt to absorb and recreate the spirit of a historical past. Judgements of truth or falsehood were ethical, rather than historical, and perspective was pursued no more in time than in space. The historical past emerged, like the stylized background of the illuminators, as a depthless—or timeless—plane [...]. (Yunck, 1974, p. 23)

The notion that medieval authors and audiences had no sense of perspective with regard to either physical space or the historical past directed scholarly interests for generations. The sepulchral features of the *Eneas* and the *Troie* romances (the “ultimate in garish bad taste and architectural instability”, Yunck, 1974, p. 23) were particularly condemned by (and inaccessible to?) those guided by such assumptions. Even as Yunck brilliantly traces a number of textual influences on the *Eneas* tombs, observing that the *Eneas* poet “has discovered such features scattered throughout his readings and assembled them into a single fictional display for the education of his audience” (Yunck, 1974, p. 23), he, like other scholars of his time, rather reductively attributes didactic purposes to the poet. Even when—and this is not the case in the *Eneas*—a medieval poet asserts such a purpose, this often serves

³Though the discipline would only begin to flourish in the eighteenth century (Maier, 1992, p. 12), the word ‘Archaiology’ (to refer to a range of ancient textual sources) makes its first appearance in English in 1607 (Hall, 1607, sig. G3r; see also Davis, 2009, p. 31; OED, 1989). In 1679 Jacob Spon introduced ‘Archaeologia’ as a discipline encompassing the range of sources relevant to the texts discussed here, including funerary rites and exhumations, epigraphy, iconography, and architecture (Spon, 1679, sig. á3r). Spon also shared the privileged focus on classical antiquity exhibited in these texts.

⁴On the lack of historical consciousness in the medieval period, Yunck cites Guy Raynaud de Lage (1961).

as a justification (rather than a motivation), and is sometimes demonstrably disingenuous. Rather than a haphazard composite of scattered attributes, the *Eneas* poet selects and deploys references based on shared knowledge and lived experiences for an audience which—it seems clear—was to a varying but undeniable extent equipped to receive, reimagine, and respond to them. Though the myth of the ahistorical Middle Ages has surely now been discredited (Otter, 1994), much remains to be reexamined. An investigation of the tombs of the *Roman d’Eneas* and later romances of antiquity is thus also an investigation into twelfth-century mentalities, and the archaeological consciousness of romance audiences.

3.2 The Tomb of Pallas in the *Roman d’Eneas*

A grieving king places his son in a tomb he had readied for himself. The vault of vivid stones is carved with beasts and flowers, and decorated with bright painting and costly enamel. The vault is surmounted by a spire of gilded copper and topped by a marvelous golden bird, seated on two balls of gold. Constructed with the greatest ingenuity, this bird is immovable in wind and weather. The dead body of the beautiful, still-beardless boy is carefully prepared. Invested with the regalia he would have assumed had he outlived his father; his body is placed in a sarcophagus of clear green chrysoprase which is set on four golden lions. A pillow under his head tilts the head forward a little. Two golden tubes (« chalumiax », « fistrez »: *Eneas* ll. 6530 and 6541) are inserted into his nostrils. One leads to a golden vessel full of balsam; the other to a vessel of sardonyx full of turpentine. The vessels are hermetically sealed so that their preservative liquors course through the body. As long as water does not touch it, the body will never decay. Along the ridge of the sarcophagus’ lid, fashioned of a single amethyst, gold lettering identifies the deceased, his attributes, and his manner of death. An ever-burning lamp hangs overhead on a golden chain. Last of all, the tomb is sealed by bitumen from the Dead Sea, a substance which can never be dissolved but by one little thing: something secret which cannot be named openly. When the mourners depart, the tomb is sealed off forever, so that no one can ever enter it again (*Eneas* ll. 6438–6591).⁵

This description of Pallas’ tomb in the Anglo-Norman *Roman d’Eneas* is the first of many elaborate tomb descriptions in twelfth-century romance. Yet there is nothing like it in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, the classical epic on which the romance is based. Book 11 of the *Aeneid* includes a funerary procession for Pallas, and Evander’s lengthy lament for his dead son, but offers no description of Pallas’ embalment, burial or tomb (Virgil, 1918). By contrast, the description of Pallas’ tomb in the *Roman*

⁵ In his introduction to the *Roman d’Eneas*, Aimé Petit (Petit, 1997) discerns a pattern in comparing the tombs of Pallas and Camille: death (Pallas 5734–5847, Camille 7045–7290); procession (Pallas 6168–6207, Camille 7494–7553); lament (for Pallas 6208–6288, for Camille 7427–7490); funeral (Pallas 6438–6471, Camille 7554–7694); tomb description (Pallas’ 6372–6591, Camille’s 7595–7790).

d'Eneas is over 100 lines long. Why this innovation? Inaugurating the tombs that suddenly emerge as objects of wonder and interest in twelfth-century romance, the tomb of Pallas raises questions that interrogate Anglo-Norman historical consciousness, conceptions of 'otherness', ideas of texts and bodies, of authors and their audiences, and of the entombers and the entombed.

Along with the love story between Eneas and Lavinia, the *Eneas* poet invents the tombs of Dido, Pallas, and Camille—each surpassed by the next, in a process of accretion that seems calculated to heighten the affective impact of each. Each of these tomb descriptions is longer than the one before. Each employs more elaborately the classical rhetorical technique *ekphrasis*, whereby physical objects and spaces were conjured in the mind's eye and implanted into the reader-listener's memories by evoking many—sometimes all—of the senses. Dido's tomb has an inscription, but Pallas' inscription is of gold, and circumscribes the single amethyst that forms the lid of the sarcophagus. Pallas' tomb has an ever-burning lamp, but Camille's eternal flame is connected with tripwires to a complex system of automata that is poised to self-destruct on the head of potential intruders. Each tomb recalls and surpasses the last, just as it recalls, surpasses, and contains the physical (*/fictional*) dead body and ephemeral absent life. Markers and signifiers of absence, the tomb descriptions insist on their materiality and tangibility. The intricacies of the infra-, inter-, and extra-textual references of the ekphrases accumulate meanings with what seems like gathering momentum and agency. As the poet Amaranth Borsuk has said with reference to Ander Monson and Jer Thorp's (Monson, 2006) collaborative 'Index for X',

these details help build "a remembrance of the body" [...] Just as the lines of the poem accrue meaning as we go on, they accrete images as well. (Borsuk, 2011)

She later quotes the poem directly: "Amalgamation. Accumulation. What comes down in time accretes" (Monson, 2006). Borsuk's own experiments in textual materialities and 'interfaces' (Borsuk & Bouse, 2014) suggest that the meeting points of multiple media and genres are peculiarly apt sites of such accrual.

Almost since its inception, the field of psychoanalysis has sought to understand such responses and repetitions in relation to human mortality. Sigmund Freud explicitly linked his observations of repetition compulsion (*Wiederholungszwang*) with what he conceptualized as the death drive (*Todestrieb*) (Freud, 1921, pp. 17–20 and 37–61). Sarah Kay has articulated the close-but-contrasting relationship between the tombs of the romances of antiquity and their hagiographical parallels using Lacanian language which seems peculiarly apt for expressing the superlative refinement, uncanny doubling, and transformation presented to the reader in romance tombs:

Whereas the sublime body of the martyr is infused with the immortality of eternity, the sublime body of the warrior [in these romances] is set to endure throughout historical time [...] Whereas in hagiography the body of the saint is the primary focus of the sublime, in the *romans antiques*, it falls to human artifacts to serve as the fantasmatic support of sublimation. (Kay, 2001, p. 236)

Kay neatly captures the uncanny slippage between the tomb and the body it contains; between signifier and signified, human artifacts and human bodies. These slippages and shifts have recently been further explored and unpacked in the field of sociology, where their impact on memory and emotion has been highlighted. Examinations of phenomena in social media have explored the effects of repetition and circulation, examining shifts between bodies, objects, and their representations; and within the realm of representation; between modes, media, and genres. Imogen Tyler observes that

it is through *the repetition of a figure across different media* that specific figures acquire accreted form and accrue affective value. (Tyler, 2008, p. 19)

Observing the social and political impact that can result, Tyler advocates what she calls a ‘figurative methodology’ which

is needed precisely because it is only when a range of different media forms and practices coalesce that these overdetermined figures materialize. (Tyler, 2008, p. 19)

One of my aims in this essay is to examine how tombs and their real or imagined reopenings accrue significance and affective urgency as they move across media (from materiality to the differing textualities of chronicle and romance), across languages, and across time.

With each accumulative iteration of sepulchral ekphrasis, the *Eneas* poet showcases proficiency and learning not only of Virgil, but of Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* and—even more markedly—of the *Metamorphoses* as well (see, for example, Baswell, 2000, pp. 31–35). Numerous other texts and practices, including those of pilgrimage, liturgy, church-building, and hagiography, would have also informed the sepulchral passages. The *Eneas* responds not only to texts from the distant Latin past, but to recent texts in both Latin and the vernacular, in prose and verse, whose content ranges from historical chronicle to lyric—texts, practices, and traditions circulating within, between, and beyond courtly contexts. The *Eneas* tomb-descriptions, for example, quote the anonymous *Roman de Thèbes* (Constans, 1890)—produced in French earlier within the same decade (c. 1150–1155)—as well as William of Malmesbury’s prose Latin chronicles *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (similarities noted by Yunck, 1974, p. 183, n. 113), as further discussed below. In responding to the texts of both the classical and recent past, the tombs of the *Roman d’Eneas* initiate a set of conventions that are variously developed in later romances. Like the eternal lamp of Camille’s tomb, these tombs could be—and, I will argue, were—understood to have been set up as an incitement and provocation for future texts.

There has been a certain amount of critical attention to the tombs in the *Roman d’Eneas* and, to a much lesser extent, to those in the *Roman de Troie*. Sarah Kay, for instance, reads the tombs of romance in light of hagiographical narratives and considerations of the sublime (Kay, 2001, pp. 216–258). Laura Ashe (2007, pp. 124–145) and Lee Patterson (1987, pp. 157–195) provide contrasting readings of the tombs in the *Eneas* in relation to Anglo-Norman historical identity and the *translatio studii and imperii* it claimed and aspired to. Christopher Baswell (2000, 2015) and Noah Guynn (2000) point to tombs as symbols of the text, noting their hermetic, rarefied,

and superlative qualities. Baswell articulates the capacity of these reflexive, idealized spaces to showcase clerkly learning and ingenuity.⁶ Guynn reads the tombs in the *Eneas* as attempts to seal the deviant ‘Queer’ body off from history, but sees this being undercut by the motif of the eternal flame, read as an allegory for non-procreative relationships.

The description of Pallas’ tomb in the *Roman d’Eneas* includes a (literally) final motif which highlights a number of these themes, and paradoxically underscores both the impenetrability and the penetrability of the tomb:

La tombe estoi alquetetes halte;
 Il ot du betumoi d’ Afalte
 Al seeler la sepulture.
 Li betumoi a tel nature:
 La ou il est un po sechiez,
 Ja ne sera pui depeciez
 Ne mes que sole par une rien:
 Il n’est pas gent ne bel ne bien
 Que l’en le nont apertement
 S’a consoil non priveement. (*Eneas* ll. 6558–6567)⁷

The tomb was quite high; it was sealed with bitumen, from the Asphalt Lake [the Dead Sea]. Bitumen has this property: When it has dried a little bit, it can never be cleft asunder, except only by one little thing. It is neither noble nor lovely nor good to mention this thing openly but only secretly, in private.

The author of the *Eneas* here seems to address the reader/audience in confidence, alluding to things that must only be spoken of in private. Bitumen, we understand, can be dissolved only by one little thing—inconsequential, hardly worth mentioning, « une rien » (*Eneas* l. 6564). Yet this ‘rien’ is so potent that the mere mention of its name openly (« apertement »: *Eneas* l. 6566) must be quadruply forbidden in the name of courtesy, aesthetics, virtue, and modest discretion. As if swearing us to secrecy, the narrator’s cautionary exhortations draw us into closer proximity and complicity—to consider the mysterious little (no)thing in conspiratorial, ominous tones. These warnings against offensive openness impose constraint, and suggest that minds and mouths should be stoppered and sealed as tightly shut as the fluids coursing through Pallas’ body, and as his tomb is sealed by Evander. At the very same time, the enigmatic emphasis on this mysterious agent of penetration and rupture implicates the reader—especially the clerkly reader—in the very destruction [/opening/excavation] its nameless singularity would seem to preclude. For if the poet is whispering to us in hushed tones, it is a stage whisper: a distinctly audible one calculated to entice our curiosity, at least as tempting as it is cautionary.

Ignited by means and in spite of passive, inanimate materials (text, corpse, tomb), this curiosity will remain unsatisfied within the bounds of the *Roman d’Eneas*, however. The *Roman de Troie* reuses the trope for Achilles’ tomb (marvelously held together by “strong bitumen and cement”, « De fort betun e de ciment »: *Troie* l.

⁶ See also Baswell (1990, 1994, 1995) and Burgwinkle (2004).

⁷ Unless stated otherwise, all translations into English are by the author of this contribution.

22,421⁸), but provides no further clarity. Only the poem’s intertexts, then, may illuminate the implications of the riddling reference to bitumen here, and the kinds of readerly conjecture and shared frames of reference it activates.

Numerous classical and biblical sources, many of them summarized and synthesized by the enormously influential Isidore of Seville, testified to bitumen’s marvelous and practical properties. A form of petroleum occurring naturally in the Dead Sea in Judea (Isidore XIII.xix.3–4; Barney et al., 2006; Lindsay, 1911), Tacitus describes it as “a dark fluid which [...] swims on the surface” (*Historiae* V.6: Tacitus, 1931, p. 187; see Forbes, 1936, p. 31). Isidore (XVI.ii.1) describes how it would be collected by fishermen in skiffs. Buoyant, flammable, adhesive, hydrophobic, bitumen was sought-after and traded for a variety of uses ranging from engineering and construction, to medicinal, and to embalming. An ideal, almost impenetrable sealant for caulking ships (Strabo XVI.1.9), Galen (e.g. V.342 K) and Pliny the Elder (XXXV.51) also recommended it for sealing wounds and other medicinal purposes (Galen, 2011, pp. 56–57; Pliny, 1952, pp. 392–395; Strabo, 1930, pp. 206–207). Herodotus (I.179) tells of its use in enlarging the walls of Babylon (Herodotus, 1920, pp. 224–225), also related by Isidore (XV.i.4). Called *mūmiyā* (or ‘mummy’) in Arabic, Strabo (XVI.2.45) and Diodor (XIX.99.3) both mention its use in embalming (Diodor, 1954, p. 103; Strabo, 1930, pp. 296–297; see also Safrai, 1994, pp. 105–106). Recent gas chromatography-mass spectrometry analyses of Egyptian mummies from the Ptolemaic to Roman Periods (samples dating from the late fourth century BC to the fourth century AD) confirm its ever-growing importance after the Late Period (Clark et al., 2016; Maurer et al., 2002). The function of bitumen as an embalming agent would seem to make it a particularly fitting sealant for a tomb.

In the Hebrew Bible, references to bitumen (*chemar* חֶמָר or *chamar* חָמָר) are manifold, but in Jerome’s Latin Vulgate translation (used throughout the medieval Latin West), there are only four explicit mentions (Genesis 6:14, 11:3, 14:10 and Exodus 2:3). All of these occur in the Old Testament, and each one constitutes a striking feature in stories of cataclysmic destruction, preservation, and fragile but enduring legacy. The first instance occurs in the words of God to Noah, instructing him to make himself an ark “[...] and line it with bitumen inside and out” (Genesis 6:14: “*fac tibi arcam [...] et bitumine linies intrinsecus et extrinsecus*”). Noah and his passengers are thus saved from the catastrophic annihilation of all other life. With its powerful images of enclosure, mortality, and salvation, Noah’s ark was a favorite motif of early Christian sepulchral imagery.⁹ In the fourth and final instance (Exodus 2:3), the baby Moses—placed in a bitumen-lined

⁸Constans (1907).

⁹For example, on late Roman marble sarcophagi in the Vatican’s Museo Pio Cristiano (Sarcophago con scene bibliche, inv. no. 31472 and Sarcophago ‘di Giona’, c. AD 300, inv. no. 31448); on the sandstone sarcophagus with relief of Noah’s ark in Trier (Sarkophag mit Relief der Arche Noah, AD 300, Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier, inv. no. 1987,20); and on the so-called marble Theusebios Sarcophagus (Sog. Theusebios-Sarkophag, early fifth century AD, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv. no. 17/61.)

basket—escapes widespread infant massacre. The use of bitumen in the construction of the ill-fated tower of Babel (Genesis 11:3) evokes ancient feats of ingenuity and their destruction, accompanied by irredeemably splintered linguistic unity. But perhaps the most patently relevant biblical reference to bitumen occurs in Genesis 14:10, where the legions of Sodom and Gomorrah fleeing the Battle of Siddim by the Dead Sea (the Lacus Asphaltus, referred to above in *Eneas* l. 6559) perish in pits of the viscous substance.

For the fatal, unmentionable ‘little thing’, we must look to Isidore (XI.i.141) and Pseudo-Hegesippus (IV.18), who tell us that the only substance which could dissolve bitumen was menstrual fluid.¹⁰ Recent criticism (Ferguson, 2008, especially pp. 1–49; Guynn, 2000, 2007) has recognized the oppositional relationship between this substance, the integrity of Pallas’ tomb, and the triumph of Trojan/Roman/ Angevin lineage and procreation over the deviant, non-procreative relations represented by Dido, Pallas, and Camille. Whilst Guynn (2007, p. 70) notes that the reference to unspeakable things could also implicitly evoke sodomy, the close association of bitumen with both menstruation and sodomy is unmistakable in the poem’s intertexts. In Pseudo-Hegesippus (IV.18) the solubility of bitumen is linked in textual sequence and metonymically through the Dead Sea with the “shameful crimes” (“flagitia”) (Ussani, 1932, p. 271) of Sodom; in a comparable passage, Isidore notes of the Dead Sea:

mare Salinarum dicitur, sive lacus Asphalti, id est bituminis [...] usque ad viciniam Sodomorum. (Lindsay, 1911)

called the Salt Sea, or Lake Asphalti, that is, ‘of bitumen,’ [...] it stretches [...] up to the neighborhood of Sodom. (Barney et al., 2006, p. 279)

The author of the *Eneas*, then, found in classical and biblical references to bitumen a substance which condensed associations of female procreative power and Sodom, anticipating the very accusations leveled at Eneas, first by Lavinia’s mother, who calls him a ‘sodomite’ (*Eneas* ll. 8635–8637), and then by Lavinia herself (*Eneas* ll. 9182–9192). Bitumen thus emerges as a profoundly multivalent substance which comments poignantly and ironically on the rare and remarkable boy, and why he had to go.

Although scholars have argued that the tombs of the *Eneas* have the intended function of sealing off the Other from the historical narrative, they must also be recognized as functioning, paradoxically, in the opposite way, providing a shortcut to the world of the past very different from the serial progression of lineage and narrative. As Guynn says of the tombs of Pallas and Camille:

¹⁰Pseudo-Hegesippus follows and expands on Josephus (*The Jewish War* IV.viii.4: Josephus, 1927, pp. 298–299) and Tacitus (*Historiae* V.6: Tacitus, 1931, pp. 186–187), both of whom mention the power of menstrual blood to dissolve bitumen (though Tacitus also ascribes this capacity to blood generally). Pliny the Elder, by contrast, notes the power of bitumen to dissolve coagulated blood and hasten menstruation (XXXV.51: Pliny, 1952, pp. 394–395).

Both tombs are elaborately fortified to immobilize deviance in a seemingly indomitable, immovable literary architecture; and yet they are also adorned with a strikingly conflictual, volatile symbol: the eternal flame. The perpetuity of the flame initially suggests an ekphrastic, allegorical suspension—frozen movement, logocentric presence—but it cannot suppress the fluctuation of meaning intrinsic to all signs, including ekphrasis and allegory. (Guynn, 2000)

Yet it is not simply a matter of being open to multiple interpretations. These tombs of putatively historical figures are also left open to archaeology. Though they are described as being perfectly sealed off forever in a state of impenetrability, we are aware in advance that they are not impenetrable. Any twelfth-century reader of the *Eneas* who was also familiar with the work of the English chronicler William of Malmesbury would be aware from the outset that Pallas’ tomb had been opened in the recent past. As William records near the conclusion of his *Gesta Regum Anglorum*:

Tunc corpus Pallantis, filii Euandri, de quo Virgilius narrat, Romae repertum est illibatum, ingenti stuoere omnium quod tot secula incorruptione sui superavit; quod ea sit natura conditorum corporum, ut carne tabescente cutis exterior neruos, nerui ossa contineant. Hiatus uulneris quod in medio pectore Turnus fecerat quattuor pedibus at semis mensuratum est. Epitaphium huiusmodi repertum:

Filius Euandri pallas, quem lancea Turni
Militis occidit more suo, iacet hic.

[...] Ardens lucerna ad caput inuenta arte mecanica, ut nullius flatus uiolentia, nullius liquoris aspergine ualerat extingui. Quod cum multi mirarentur, unus, ut simper aliqui sollertius ingenium in malis habent, stilo subtus flammam foramen fecit; ita introducto aere ignis euanuit. Corpus muro applicitum uasitate sui menium altitudinem uicit; sed procedentibus diebus, stillicidiis rorulentis infusam, communem mortalium corruptionem agnouit, cute solute et neruis fluentibus. (*Gesta Regum Anglorum* II.206)

It was at that time that the body of Pallas son of Evander, of whom Virgil tells, was discovered intact in Rome. The way it had lasted for so many centuries incorrupt caused universal astonishment; for the nature of embalmed corpses is such that, while the flesh decays, the outer skin holds together the sinews, and the sinews hold together the bones. The great gaping wound made in his breast by Turnus measured four feet six inches by the rule. An epitaph was also found, that ran somewhat as follows: / Here Pallas lies, Evander’s son; By Turnus’ lance he was undone. / [...] By his head a lamp was found burning, so artfully contrived that no violent blast of wind and no sprinkling of water could put it out. While many were wondering at this, one man, with the ingenious cunning some people always show when they are up to mischief, made a hole with a bodkin below the flame; and when he thus let in the air, the flame went out. The body was leant against the wall, and was so huge that it overtopped the battlements; but as time went on, and it absorbed the drops that came down like dew, it acknowledged the common law of our mortality, the skin gave way, and the sinews disintegrated. (William of Malmesbury, 1998, pp. 384–385)

William’s description is noteworthy for a number of reasons. As in the *Eneas*, Virgil is explicitly cited, and also verified by the reference to the gaping chest wound inflicted by Turnus (e.g. *Aeneid* 11.40: “patens in pectore vulnus”). The whole passage is self-consciously artful and poetical, with numerous examples of flamboyant alliteration (“stilo subtus flammam foramen fecit; ita introducto aere ignis euanuit”). The passage also abounds with watery imagery, contextualizing and foreshadowing the body’s fate when exposed to moisture, moving from a state of incorruption

(“illibatam,” literally “unspilled”) to liquefaction (“fluentibus”). This aspect of the text in particular seems to have caught the eye of the *Eneas* author.¹¹

In the *Eneas*, Pallas’ tomb-description concludes with the closing up of his tomb:

si fist li roys l’uis estouper
que l’en n’i peüst mais entrer. (*Eneas* ll. 6590–6591)

The king had the door blocked up,
so that no one could ever enter it again.

Laura Ashe remarks that, “[p]reserved eternally, Pallas is also permanently cut off from the world” (Ashe, 2007, p. 137). Crucially, however, the *Eneas* author knows that Pallas is not permanently cut off from the world, and will not be preserved eternally. The detail that « jamais li cors ne maürroit/desi que eve i tocheroit » (*Eneas* ll. 6546–6547: “The body would never decay/As long as water did not touch it”), along with the further emphasis on the durability of the eternal lamp (*Eneas* ll. 6580–6581: « ja pui estointe ne sera,/ne nule foiz ne deffera »; “It could never be extinguished, nor ever undone”), seem designed to specifically recall William of Malmesbury’s account of the discovery of the body, and thus to remind us of the body’s eventual fate. Like the inscription in William’s account, the inscription given in the poem tells us that Pallas was killed by Turnus. Both accounts emphasize the remarkable preservation of the body; both draw attention to the danger posed by water; and both draw attention to the miraculous ever-burning lamp. William’s account of the discovery of Pallas’ tomb is thus not only a source for the description in the *Eneas*, but an intertext (Guynn, 2007, p. 70) which the romance gestures to as a dramatic and intensely ironic sequel to its description of the tomb’s construction. The unsealing of Pallas’ tomb precedes its creation, and is inscribed into its very structure. The very terms in which the romance describes the efforts to preserve Pallas’ body and seal it away for all eternity depend upon and archly remind us of the tomb’s subsequent violation, and the disintegration of the body it contains.

3.3 The Tomb of Hector

A similar dialogue between real medieval archaeology and the tombs of literary romance is found in the epic romance *Roman de Troie*, the work of Benoît de Sainte-Maure, a chronicler and poet of the Norman court of Henry II. A dedication to the « riche dame de riche rei » (*Troie* l. 13,468)¹² has been understood as signifying Eleanor of Aquitaine in the period between her marriage to Henry Plantagenet in 1152 (Henry II as of 1154) and her imprisonment in 1173 (also the year of Benoît’s

¹¹ Although the tubes in Pallas’ nostrils are not mentioned by William of Malmesbury, they feature in several twelfth-century accounts of the opening of his tomb, including the *Status Imperiii Judaici* (c. 1137–1147), which may have been an additional source for the *Eneas* author, or they may share a common source (see Patzuk-Russell, 2019; for the text see Hammer & Friedmann, 1946, pp. 58–60, with translation in Colavito, 2015).

¹² Constans (1906).

death) (Constans, 1912, pp. 189–190); the romance is generally dated by scholars c. 1160–1165. Benoît based his work on the two supposedly eyewitness accounts of the Trojan War provided by Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis, yet the *Troie*’s lavish and remarkable tomb ekphrases, like those of the *Eneas*, have no classical source.¹³ Instead, composed close on the heels of the *Eneas*, the *Troie* echoes the earlier romance in its descriptions of marvelous tombs. In this romance of antiquity, Patroklos’ death and burial in a seamlessly sealed tomb closely echoes Pallas’ in the *Eneas*.¹⁴ Both beautiful young men are passionately loved and mourned by one of the protagonists (Eneas and Achilles); both Pallas and Patroklos are placed in sarcophagi of costly green stone; and both are perfectly preserved in sealed tombs. Although the description of Patroklos’ tomb is comparatively spare, occupying only 16 lines (*Troie* ll. 10,383–10,398),¹⁵ it initiates a series of descriptions of lavish tomb structures which punctuate the *Troie*. The tombs of the *Troie* also reflect on current events, specifically on Imperial and Anglo-Norman rivalries expressed in the tombs of saintly antecedents. The descriptions of the tombs of Hector and Achilles reprise the themes of remarkable craftsmanship, impossibly perfect preservation, and strangely amorous interpenetration that emerged in the *Eneas*. As in the *Eneas*, where Norman conceptions of history informed and enriched the power of the tomb descriptions, the tomb of Hector in particular resonates with Norman aspirations and ideas of lineage.

Finally, after much deliberation and after the accomplishment of the greatest feats of craftsmanship and ingenuity, the dead Hector sits on his sepulchral throne. In a manner that clearly recalls the embalming of Pallas in the *Eneas*, two slender tubes marvelously fashioned out of gold reach from precious vessels into his nostrils so that the powerful green balsam courses through his body.¹⁶ His feet are also placed in this liquid, so that we might imagine him to be hooked up like a battery

¹³ Though the Trojan history of Dictys Cretensis features no examples of sepulchral ekphrasis, the text was itself the subject of a narrative of grave reopening, having been supposedly discovered in the author’s tomb when it was revealed by an earthquake in the reign of Nero (see ní Mheallaigh 2016, pp. 45–46).

¹⁴ In some respects Patroklos’ entombment also resembles Camille’s death and burial in her splendid tomb in the *Eneas*. In this context it is worth noting the set of conventions employed in the *Eneas* as set out by Petit in the introduction: “Each of the episodes devoted to the death of the hero (or the heroine) is integrated into the narrative in the same way. It is preceded by a truce, and is followed by a council at Laurente” (Petit, 1997, p. 14, my translation). What is particularly relevant to my study, as I will suggest below, is that, through repetition, the *Eneas* seems to establish a set of forms and conventions for its descendants to follow. The *Roman de Troie* consistently preserves these funerary patterns, as Sarah Kay has observed (Kay, 2001, pp. 233–234).

¹⁵ Constans (1906).

¹⁶ As Truitt (2015, pp. 104–105) notes, the embalming methods employed in *Eneas* and *Troie* in some ways resemble those used on medieval popes, including the insertion of preservative substances through the nostrils, though the intention in the latter case was to preserve the body for a matter of months, not for all eternity.

(Figs. 3.1 and 3.2).¹⁷ In addition to this treatment, which fixes his body in statue-like preservation, an additional statue is also erected.

De fin or fu resplendissant
E a Hector si ressemblant
Que nule chose n'i failleit. (*Troie* ll. 16,789–16,791)¹⁸

It was resplendent with fine gold
and resembled Hector so much
that nothing was wanting.

This golden statue brandishes its naked sword at the Greeks, in threatening defiance. The hero of Troy will be avenged on them one day.

De la chaeire que direie ?
Ja tant ne m'en porpensereie
Qu'ele fust ja par mei retraite
Quel ert ne coment esteit faite;
Mais l'emperere d'Alemaigne,
Al mien cuidier, e cil d'Espaigne,
Ço vos puis dire senz mentir,
Ne le porreient tel bastir. (*Troie* ll. 16,737–16,744)¹⁹

Of the throne, what shall I say? I cannot imagine that I could ever describe it, nor how it was made; but the Emperor of Germany, in my opinion, or that of Spain—I can tell you this without lying—they could not build one like it.

The possible relationship between Hector's fictional tomb and real tombs is at once denied and ironically highlighted by the poet's declaration that neither the Emperor of Germany nor that of Spain could build one like it. In fact, the Emperor of Germany was at just this point in time concerning himself with a tomb very much like it, the tomb of Charlemagne. As will be discussed below, in 1165 Frederick Barbarossa had ordered the exhumation in Aachen of his predecessor Charlemagne, in preparation for his redeposition in a grander shrine.

It is unlikely that this would have escaped Benoît's notice. It is to him that we owe our knowledge of the German education of Empress Matilda (Tyler, 2017, pp. 357–358), and diplomatic correspondence between the courts during and after her lifetime is well-documented (Hollister, 1976, p. 221; Leyser, 1975). Whether or not the translation of Charlemagne's relics was in the forefront of Benoît's mind, he would certainly have been aware of political significance of Charlemagne's tomb, and of previous occasions on which it had been entered.

The description of Hector's tomb strikingly resembles the description of the opening of Charlemagne's tomb in the Palatine Chapel of Aachen Cathedral more

¹⁷ Manuscript depictions of Hector's tomb vary greatly, and many disregard the seated position of the preserved body (depicting instead a standing statue). Even these, as Buchthal has remarked, "all somehow fail to do justice to [Benoît's] description of that prodigious sepulchre" (Buchthal, 1961, p. 31), though the sixteenth-century example in Fig. 3.1 does convey the grand but anxious, almost-animate qualities of Hector on his throne.

¹⁸ Constans (1907).

¹⁹ Constans (1907).



Fig. 3.1 Hector's corpse enthroned with his feet in tubs of balsam (*Livre de la destruction de Troye, et la vraye hystoire de Eneas*, sixteenth century, ms. Français 22,554, fol. 119; © Bibliothèque nationale de France)

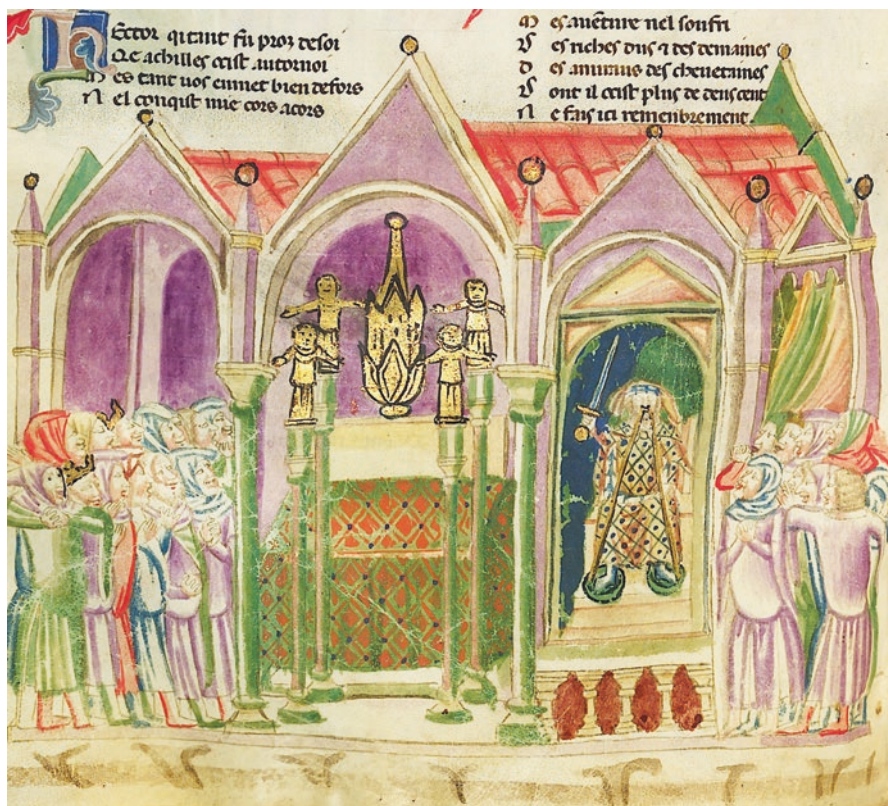


Fig. 3.2 Hector's corpse enthroned with his feet in tubs of balsam and tubes in his nose. This depiction featuring the tubes is rare (even unique?) (*Roman de Troie*, fourteenth century, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana MS fr. 17 (=230), fol. 131v. Su concessione del Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo – Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana. Divieto di riproduzione)

than a century earlier, in the year 1000 (Fig. 3.3). The tomb was reportedly entered by the Emperor Otto III, accompanied by two bishops and Count Otto of Lomello, whose eye-witness account is recorded in the *Chronicon Novaliciense* (c. 1048) (Görich, 1998). Writing under Henry III, the second emperor of the Salian dynasty, the author of the *Chronicon Novaliciense* uses this anecdote to provide an almost corporeal link between the Salian, Ottonian, and Carolingian dynasties. The passage is short enough to quote in its entirety:

Post multa itaque annorum curricula tertius Otto imperator veniens in regionem, ubi Caroli caro iure tumulata quiescebat, declinavit utique ad locum sepulture illius cum duobus episcopis et Ottone comite Laumellensi; ipse vero imperator fuit quartus. Narrabat autem idem comes hoc modo dicens: *Intravimus ergo ad Karolum. Non enim iacebat, ut mos est aliorum defunctorum corpora, sed in quandam cathedram ceu vivus residebat. Coronam auream erat coronatus, sceptrum cum mantonibus indutis tenens in manibus, a quibus iam ipse ungule perforando processerat. Erat autem supra se turgurium ex calce et marmoribus valde compositum. Quod ubi ad eum venimus, protinus in eum foramen frangendo fecimus.*



Fig. 3.3 The discovery of Charlemagne's tomb by Otto III on Pentecost, AD 1000. One of many nineteenth-century depictions of this scene, the fresco by Alfred Rethel (1847) knits together varying traditions, including that of the Persephone Sarcophagus (here depicted below Charlemagne's feet) (Coronation Hall, Aachen Town Hall, Germany; photo: F. Jungfleisch c. 1943, image file no. zi0010_0004 © Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Photothek)

At ubi ad eum ingressi sumus, odorem permaximum sentivimus. Adoravimus ergo eum statim poplitis flexis ac ienua; statimque Otto imperator albis eum vestimentis induit, ungulasque incidit, et omnia deficientia circa eum reparavit. Nil vero ex artibus suis putrescendo adhuc defecerat, sed de sumitate nasui sui parum minus erat; quam ex auro ilico fecit restitui, abstraensque ab illius hore dentum unum, reaedificato tuguriolo abiit. (*Chronicon Novaliciense* III.32: Pertz, 1846, pp. 55–56)

After the passage of many years the Emperor Otto III came into the district where the body of Charles was lying duly buried. He descended into the place of burial with two bishops and Otto, Count of Lomello; the Emperor himself completed the party of four. Now, the Count gave his version of what happened much as follows. ‘We then came to Charles. He was not lying down, as is usual with the bodies of the dead, but sat on a sort of throne, as though he were alive. He was crowned with a golden crown; he held his scepter in his hands, and his hands were covered with gloves, through which his nails had forced a passage. Over him there was a sort of vault built, well fitted together of mortar and marble. When we came to the grave, we broke a hole into it and entered, and entering, we were aware of a very strong odor. At once we fell upon our knees and worshipped him, and the Emperor Otto clothed him in white garments, cut his nails and restored whatever was lacking in him. But corruption had not taken anything away from his limbs; only a little was lacking to the very tip of his nose. Otto had this restored in gold; he then took a single tooth from his mouth, and so built up the vault, and departed.’²⁰

²⁰This translation was adapted by the author from that of A. J. Grant, *Early Lives of Charlemagne* by Eginhard and the Monk of Saint Gall, as quoted in Thorpe (1969, p. 187, n. 85).

Many similar details are found in the slightly earlier, Ottonian chronicle of Ademar of Chabannes, in which Charlemagne is also found bearing a sword and shield:

sedens in aureo cathedra, intra arcuatam speluncam, infra basilicam Marie, coronatus corona ex auro et gemmis, tenens sceptrum et ense[m] ex auro purissimo, et ipsum corpus incorruptum inventum est. Quod levatum populis demonstratum est. (Ademar III.31: Adémar des Chabannes, 1897, p. 153)

He was sitting on a golden throne in an arched crypt within the basilica of Mary, crowned with a crown of gold and gems and holding a scepter and sword of purest gold. The body itself was found uncorrupted. It was raised and shown to the people. (Callahan, 2008, p. 47)

Strikingly, Ademar's chronicle includes at an earlier point an account of Charlemagne's burial (II.25: Adémar des Chabannes 1897, p. 105) which carefully grants him the very grave goods which Ademar knows will be subsequently found in his tomb. Though he does not acknowledge it, Ademar is using his knowledge of the archaeological discovery to provide an authoritative account of the original burial. A similar imaginative leap is taken by the authors of the romances of antiquity, including Benoît.

The descriptions of Charlemagne's tomb in Ademar's chronicle and the *Chronicon Novaliciense* provide several points of comparison with Hector's tomb in the *Roman de Troie*. Both texts strikingly and exceptionally describe the figures as seated; both are heroic figures who would be claimed as ancestors of the reigning monarchs. In Ademar's account, Charlemagne bears a sword in his hand, just as Hector does. Both are associated with a powerful odor linked to their marvelous physical preservation (in Hector's case it is the odor of the embalming fluids, in Charlemagne's the odor of saintliness). Both have become curiously fused with precious physical substances, a detail which Sarah Kay reads in Hector's case as "confirming the sublime character of the preserved body" (Kay, 2001, p. 236), and which also anticipates the cyborgs of modern imagination.

Both the *Chronicon Novaliciense* and the romance make particular note of the structure[s] beneath which their figures are so meaningfully and regally enthroned. The *Chronicon Novaliciense* tells us that over Charlemagne's body there was a sort of vault built, well fitted together of mortar and marble, and it is through this vault that the two Ottos and two bishops, somewhat improbably, enter.²¹ The account involves a curious and perhaps significant correspondence between the structure of the sepulcher and the miraculously preserved body it contains: just as entry into the tomb is accomplished by making a single hole in the vault (which is subsequently repaired), so the body of Charlemagne is found to be damaged in a single place near its top (the tip of the nose). Einhard's account of Charlemagne's tomb is also worth noting. Though it diverges from the description in the *Chronicon Novaliciense* on several counts, it too makes note of the splendid structure over the tomb:

²¹ The perfection of the joins is a recurring motif in descriptions of perfectly crafted objects: I would suggest that in these objects are understood to rival naturally or divinely created objects which evidently have no joins or seams, or at least no imperfect ones.

arcusque supra tumulum deauratus cum imagine et titulo exstructus (*Vita Karoli Magni* 31: Einhard, 1911, p. 35).

a gilded arch was erected above his tomb with his image and an inscription (Einhard, 2010, p. 277).

In comparison, the canopy over Hector’s fictional tomb equals and trumps accounts of Charlemagne’s ‘real’ one. Described at length and in detail, Hector’s tomb seems to combine and surpass the chronicle accounts of Charlemagne’s structure. It is:

Un tabernacle precios,
Riche e estrange e merveillos. (*Troie* ll. 16,651–16,652)²²

A precious tabernacle (canopy, enclosure), / rich and strange and marvelous.

We are told that three wise engineers, « *trei sage engeigneur* » (*Troie* l. 16,650), placed it « [t]res de devant l’autel major » right in front of the high altar (*Troie* l. 16,649). Of course, this was the place of honor for shrines and founders in medieval Europe which in the twelfth century was acquiring particular importance and sanctity in its association with the Eucharist. Possessing distinctly religious connotations, Hector’s tomb is twice called a « *civoire* » (*Troie* ll. 16,707 and 16,715) and once a « *tabernacle* » (*Troie* l. 16,651). This terminology contrasts with Einhard’s comparatively neutral “arcusque supra tumulum” and with the *Chronicon Novaliciense*’s “tugurium” (most often a hovel or farmer’s cottage as in the manuscripts of St. Gall). It is as if the terminology of Hector’s tomb could compensate for the lack of sanctity of this pagan ancestor—sanctity which was however, intensely associated with Charlemagne. Hector’s tomb is made (we are told) neither of lime nor of ivory, but of fine gold and precious stones. It shines and glitters so much that it resembles the starry sky in its brightness:

Mout par fu riche le civoire,
Qui ne fu de chaux ne d’ivoire,
Ainz fu de fin or e de pierres
Mout precioses e mout chieres.
D’iluec eissi grant clarté;
Plus ressembla ciel estelé
Que nule rien que seit el mont.
Trop ont grant sen cil qui ço font
Sor le civoire ont fait maisiere
Tote marsice e tote entiere
De marbre de plusors colors:
Vint piez en dura la hautors.
Voute i ot faite d’or vousee. (*Troie* ll. 16,707–16,719)²³

The tabernacle (canopy) was very rich / Which was neither of lime nor of ivory / It, too, was of fine gold and / Precious and costly stones / From thence issued such a brightness / It resembled the starry sky / More than anything in this world. / They had exceedingly good sense, who made it / On the tabernacle (canopy) they made the wall / Completely fitted together and completely / Of marble of many colors: / It stood 20 feet high. / There was a vault made of curved [vaulted] gold.

²² Constans (1907).

²³ Constans (1907).

As in the *Chronicon Novaliciense*, Hector's canopy also incorporates marble which is thoroughly fitted together (*Troie* l. 16,716). But surely the most striking, remarkable, and otherwise unheard-of similarity between the tombs of Hector and Charlemagne is the seated position of the corpses.²⁴

3.4 Pallas, Again

The account recorded in the mid-eleventh-century *Chronicon Novaliciense* would have seemed freshly topical in the second half of the twelfth century, when the saintly status implied by Charlemagne's miraculous preservation would be officially confirmed. In 1165, Frederick Barbarossa both oversaw the *translatio* (translation) of Charlemagne's remains and arranged for his canonization by the antipope Paschal III.²⁵ His cult was being actively promoted; the ardor of devotion paid by pilgrims was fanned for political purposes. Divine and temporal power were invoked and made to seem focused upon the Palatine chapel at Aachen Cathedral: built by Charlemagne, adorned by Barbarossa. Whether or not these events were known to Benoît when he described the tomb of Hector, they soon filtered into the *milieu* of the romances of antiquity, when the exhumation of Charlemagne became associated, most surprisingly, with the discovery of the tomb of Pallas.

As I have argued, through repetition and amplification of sepulchral ekphrases, the *Eneas* seems to establish a set of forms and conventions for its descendants to follow. Perhaps the clearest example of a text responding to the *Eneas*' invitation is Heinrich von Veldeke's translation and reworking, the *Eneit* (Ettmüller, 1852; Schieb & Frings, 1964), probably produced between 1170 and 1188. Composed almost immediately upon the reception of the French *Eneas*, Heinrich's version testifies to some of the ways in which it was understood. While Heinrich von Veldeke invariably abbreviates and summarizes the tomb descriptions found in the *Eneas*, the tomb of Pallas includes a significant addition.

Without explicit reference to the account of William of Malmesbury, the French *Eneas* author silently triggers the audience's knowledge of the discovery and extinction of the ever-burning lamp in the tomb of Pallas and of the body it illuminates. The silence allows the lamp to burn in the imagination while at the same time creating a tension—the imaginary lamp flickers in the reader's/audience's mind with the memory of its own undoing, making the reader complicit with the mischievous

²⁴Charlemagne's seated burial has been much debated. While Ademar and the *Chronicon Novaliciense* state unambiguously that he was found enthroned, the earlier account of Thietmar of Merseburg has the body found "in solio regio" which could refer to either a throne or a sarcophagus (Thietmar von Merseburg IV.47: Holtzmann, 1935, pp. 185–186). The reading of "in solio" as enthroned is disputed by Beumann (1967) and Görich (1998, p. 393), but defended by Gabriele (2002, p. 117).

²⁵See Kapolnasi (2007, pp. 22–23). His remains were translated again in 1215 to the shrine that still holds them today.

clerk. The flickering awareness of intersecting temporalities and narratives might seem conjectural, were it not for the testimony of Heinrich von Veldeke’s *Eneit*. Heinrich von Veldeke displays his own knowledge about the elaborate disposition of the tomb, the details such as the marvelous stone “bestône” (asbestos) (*Eneit* l. 226.8) and the unstable temporalities of the ever-burning lamp it fuels. As if responding to the *Eneas* author’s cues and prompts, Heinrich invites his readers to share his knowledge:

Nû ir eꝯ vernemen solt,
als ich eꝯ gelêret bin. (*Eneit* ll. 226.4–5)

Now you should experience (*imagine*) it, as I have been taught.

Narratorial interjections (*Eneit* ll. 226.28–29, 39 and 227.13) repeatedly bring us back to the moment of retelling and insist on its veracity even as Heinrich introduces his own innovations. We are invited to move from the moment of Pallas’ burial to the moment of its rediscovery ‘more than two thousand years’ later over and over again. But whereas the French *Eneas* author silently relied on William of Malmesbury or a shared source for the discovery and un-doing of Pallas’ tomb and its ever-burning lamp, Heinrich claims the discovery of Pallas’ tomb for a still-reigning monarch, Frederick Barbarossa.

eꝯ werte unze an den tach,
daꝯ Pallas dâ wart funden.
daꝯ geschach sint in den stunden,
daꝯ der keiser Friderîch
der lobebâre vorste rîch
ze Rôme gewîhet wart
nâch sîner êrsten hervart,
die er fûr uber berge
mit maneger halsberge
ze Lankparten in daꝯ lant.
sint vant man den wîgant
Pallantem in deme grabe,
dâ wir haben gesaget abe.
daꝯ enis gelogen nieht.
dannoch bran daꝯ lieht,
daꝯ sîn vater dar in gab,
dô geleet wart in daꝯ grab
der junge kunich Pallas. (*Eneit* ll. 226.16–33)

It [the eternal flame] endured until that day on which Pallas was found there. This occurred later, at the time when Emperor Frederick [Barbarossa], the praiseworthy, powerful Prince was blessed in Rome (after embarking on his first journey forth which he led across the mountains with many armed soldiers to the land of Lombardy). After that the warrior, Pallas, was found in this grave/tomb of which we told. That is no lie. From then on the lamp burned, which his father gave him there where he lay in his tomb, the young king, Pallas.

The epic, foundational *Eneas* narrative is thus linked with the sacred, imperial anointment of the still-reigning emperor at whose children’s courts Heinrich almost certainly served. The lyric, extra-narratorial aspects of ekphrasis are here linked with the almost-extra-temporal, nearly-eternal, ever-burning lamp:

vil michel wunder dag was,
 dag dag lieht werde
 bran under der erde
 alsô manegen tach
 aldâ Pallas lach,
 dag wir wizzen vor wâr,
 mêr dan zwei tûsent jâr,
 unze man Pallantem vant,
 und dennoch was unverbrant, (*Eneit* ll. 226.34–227.2)

A very great wonder that was—that the light would continue burning under the earth for so many days as Pallas lay there, as we truly know, more than two thousand years, until Pallas was found there and it was still unexhausted.

Of course the mischievous clerk is removed from this narrative, and the extinction of the lamp is attributed to a gust of wind:

dô man die gruft engrûb
 und den stein ûf hûb
 und der wint drin slûch,
 dag is wizzenlîch genûch,
 do erlasch eꝯ von dem winde. (*Eneit* ll. 227.3–7)

when the crypt was dug up/excavated, / and the stone was lifted up, / and the wind rushed in /—as is certain enough—/ it was blown out by the wind.

In these, the last two instances of a cluster of some twenty-four references to wind in the *Eneit*, it seems as if the wind let in by Barbarossa's party, which quenches the ever-burning flame, might finally appease the winds which hitherto have plagued Eneas:

ouch hazzent mich die winde,
 als ich eꝯ wol bevinde, (*Eneit* ll. 209.37–38)

Even the winds hate me, / as it seems to me.

Following this gust, though, the light seems to rekindle:

man sach an dem ende
 den rouch und den aschen
 und den stein unverlaschen. (*Eneit* ll. 227.8–10)

That is what was seen in the end: / the smoke and the ashes, / and the unextinguished stone.

Finally, as the tomb is sealed almost-forever, the poet/narrator brings to full circle the interlinking events and narratives around Pallas' young, ancient, body:

Dô der hêre Pallas
 alsô bestatet was,
 als man û sagete dâ bevor,
 dô wart vermûret dag tor
 mit kalke und mit steinen
 grôzgen unde kleinen,
 die veste wâren unde hart.
 sint dag der mortar troken wart,
 son mohte man sîn niht gebrechen.
 alsô hôrde ich sprechen,

daʒ eʒ wâr wâre. (*Eneit* ll. 227.11–21)

When the Lord Pallas / was disposed (appointed) in this way, / as you were told before, / then the door was walled up / with chalk and stones / great and small / which were secure and hard. / After the mortar was dry / it could not be broken / so I’ve heard tell / that this was true.

The historical Barbarossa did not, of course, visit Pallas’ tomb (which, if it ever existed, was discovered and destroyed decades before his birth). However, as we have seen, he was present at the opening of the tomb of Charlemagne. The account in the *Eneit* of Barbarossa encountering Pallas is thus in some sense a fusion of the Malmesbury story that lies behind the *Eneas* and the Charlemagnic intertexts of the *Roman de Troie*. Grasping the accrued power of the images of tombs and tomb openings passed down from the *Eneas*, the *Troie*, and their classical and earlier medieval sources and intertexts, Heinrich adds his own element of contemporary political observation and relevance, in a way that seems to epitomize Imogen Tyler’s description of how figures through repetition and translation “acquire accreted form and accrue affective value” (Tyler, 2008, p. 19). The verses describing the lamp repeatedly move back and forth between the moment of its placement in the tomb by Pallas’ father, and the moment of its discovery, 2000 years later. In a kind of temporal flickering—appropriate to a lamp—each moment confirms and lends meaning and poignancy to the other. Like Ademar in his account of Charlemagne’s burial, Heinrich is able to picture the precise details of Pallas’ burial because of what was found in his tomb, and is able to give meaning to the discovery on the basis of what he knows about Pallas’ burial. As Matthias Däumer observes, comparing this passage in *Eneit* to an episode in Hartmann von Aue’s *Erec*, it is

as if the ontologies of the images, of the fictional and the real world, approached one another so closely that one could be witnessed by means of another.²⁶ (Däumer, 2014, p. 204)

3.5 Conclusion

The intertextual arc of romance/archaeology explored in this chapter challenges boundaries between materiality and textuality, and between ‘history’ and ‘fiction’. Only by crossing boundaries with some of the same agility and imagination displayed by medieval romance authors can we begin to appreciate the richness and complexity of their achievement. Earlier scholarship was too often content to paint a picture of haphazard, ‘scattered’, unruly influences, to infer reductive authorial motivations, and to ignore the complex ways in which these intertextual and inter-subjective references might be received. Denied full recognition of their skill, intentionality, and difference, medieval reworkings—of classical subject matter and of classical rhetorical techniques like ekphrasis, used to describe architectural

²⁶ „als hätten sich die Ontologien der Bilder-, der fiktiven und der realen Welt im performativen Akt so sehr einander angenähert, dass man die eine durch die andere beweisen könne.“

features—were invariably found sadly lacking in comparison with classical precedents. But what if the communities producing and enjoying romances were more canny, complex, and self-aware? Scholars have begun to recognize that these and other precedents—far from being haphazardly plundered and patched together—could signal complex intertextual meanings to romance poets, patrons, and audiences.

Patrick J. Geary underlines the importance of taking into account the array of twelfth-century texts which shed light on past events, and of the range of practices, personal experiences, and artifacts which might feed into their creation:

[W]e must understand the double process of memory systems—*Traditionsnotizen*, necrological entries, personal recollections, on the one hand; and the logical, theological, and circumstantial contexts within which these transmissions were reformed and reinterpreted. (Geary, 1994, p. 176)

Building on this, I have observed the ways in which motifs and memories are reproduced across the boundaries of language, genre and discipline, and of objects, texts, and senses. The insights of psychoanalysis remind us that such reproduction may be generated by the most intense drives and mortal anxieties. But if we are to fully recognize these motifs as reciprocal signifiers—not merely misreadings, misunderstandings and misrepresentations, nor mere devices in a jostling for authorial voice and power, but as readings, receptions, and responses on the one hand, and as stimuli, prompts, cues, and provocations on the other—then recognizing their transgeneric, transsensory, and intersubjective cues is crucial. Recent studies of twenty-first century media and social media offer an illuminating perspective on the accelerating, cumulative potential of such repetitions in instigating as well as expressing accumulated emotion. As Imogen Tyler (Tyler, 2008, p. 19, 2013, pp. 36–37, 165, and 210–212) suggests, it is precisely in the shifts between media that such affect is accrued, and attains not merely individual, but social and political power.

As Geary observes,

Like the ghosts in [...] the *Chronicon Novaliciense*, bits of the buried past refuse to stay buried. Texts, names, traditions, inscriptions, and objects continued to haunt the landscape of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, wraiths of earlier ages that fit uneasily into the constructed pasts of our memory specialists. (Geary, 1994, p. 180)

Geary's metaphor hovers between the supernatural (ghosts and wraiths) and the archaeological (burial and exhumation); and although the 'memory specialism' of archaeology did not exist in the Middle Ages, it may offer the best description of what is going on in these romance texts. Although they have gone unnoticed by most literary scholars, the methods I ascribe to medieval writers in this chapter—studying accounts of recent tomb openings and exhumations, and using these accounts to imaginatively recreate the original circumstances of interment—will be familiar to modern archaeologists. Both chroniclers like Ademar and the authors of the 'romans d'antiquités' employ reports of mortuary excavation and encounters with human remains to reconstruct the distant past and the lives of the long dead. Funerary spaces, marvelously preserved bodies, and artifacts offer them a means of moving restlessly yet purposefully between the ancient past and the medieval

present, using each to interpret and give meaning to the other. Even as they acknowledge the extinguishing of the eternal flame, they use it to illuminate the darkness of antiquity.

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