

Intra-writer variation in emotion conceptualization:

Ælfric's expressions for SHAME and GUILT and the development of Anglo-Saxon Christian identity

This research focuses on the analysis of onomasiological variation (Grondelaers and Geeraerts, 2003) in Old English texts written by Ælfric; more specifically, we are interested in the study of the different motifs that shape the linguistic expressions of shame and guilt used by this Anglo-Saxon monk across different textual genres (Homily, Bible, Saints' Lives, Religious Treatise, Astronomy, Grammar, etc) and levels of translation (relationship with Latin original; Kytö, 1996). Through the fine-grained analysis of the whole set of *shame* and *guilt* expressions recorded in the entire corpus of Ælfrician texts, a network of literal and figurative conceptualizations for each emotion will be proposed. On the basis of this network, we will reconstruct and analyse patterns of conceptual variation in Ælfric's English in order to show the existing tension between literal, metonymic and metaphoric expressions for these two emotions. As shall be seen here, the introduction in Anglo-Saxon England of Augustinian psychology by Ælfric and other highly educated authors (Lockett 2011) favoured (i) the progressive neglect of the Germanic concept of *shame* and *guilt* as instruments of social control, (ii) the dissemination of new shame-related values, and (iii) the growing use of a new set of embodied conceptualizations for the two emotions under scrutiny here, most of which have become common figurative expressions of *shame* and *guilt* in later varieties of English (Díaz-Vera, 2014). The new expressions (e.g., SHAME IS SOMETHING COVERING A PERSON, GUILT IS A BURDEN) illustrate the shift towards a progressive embodiment of the new emotional standards brought by Christianization. According to these standards, rather than an external judgment or reproach, *shame* and *guilt* involve a negative evaluation of oneself. Furthermore, we argue here that, through his lexical choices, Ælfric greatly contributed not only to the development of a new emotional style, but also to the creation of a unified Anglo-Saxon Christian identity.

References

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