

Ambyrne wind, amberlice and byre in the DOE Online

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ABSTRACT

This article, which builds on an older publication of the author's, argues on the basis of nautical, linguistic and logical evidence that some widely accepted opinions on the meaning of the Old English words in the title cannot be upheld any further.

In November 2016, 'after many years of lexicographical labor', the *Dictionary of Old English: A to H Online* was officially published.¹ I would like to suggest the following emendations.

AMBYRNE WIND

Ambyrne is the accusative singular masculine form of an otherwise unrecorded Old English adjective *ambyre*, which in the *DOE Online* – against the manuscript – is spelt with a hyphen (*am-byre*). It occurs in the Old English version of the fifth-century Latin world history by Paulus Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos* (*Histories against the pagans*), or, more precisely, in an addition to the geography of Northern Europe beginning with the words *Ohthere sæde his blaforde, Ælfrede cyninge*,² later there follows the account of a voyage through the Baltic Sea by a traveller called Wulfstan. The ninth-century Norse seafarer Ohthere, apart from describing to the king his personal status and wealth in Norway, gave accounts of his travels to the White Sea and southwards to Denmark, together with a general description of sailing along the Norwegian coast. When Ohthere speaks about his home far in the north of Norway (Hålogaland) and how long it would take to sail south to *Sciringes heal* (probably Kaupang near Larvik, at the western approach to Oslofjorden), the only surviving manuscript of this part of the Old English text reads as follows: 'Þyder he cwæð þæt man ne

¹ *DOE = Dictionary of Old English: A to I online*, ed. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey et al. (Toronto, 2016), *DOE 2016 Progress Report*. <http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doe/>

² 'Ohthere told his lord, King Alfred'. The authoritative edition is still *The Old English Orosius*, ed. J. Bately, EETS SS 6 (Oxford, 1980), at p. 13. More easily accessible, with facsimiles, a translation and translation notes, is *Ohthere's Voyages: a Late 9th-century Account of Voyages along the Coasts of Norway and Denmark and its Cultural Context*, ed. J. Bately and A. Englert, Maritime Culture of the North 1 (Roskilde, 2007).

mihte geseġlian on anum monðe, gyf man on niht wicode *and* ælce dæge hæfde ambyrne wind; *and* ealle ða hwile he sceal seġlian be lande.³

Ohthere's voyages have enjoyed constant interest among readers in the modern period, as is shown by a Google search for the name, and nearly all editions and translations render this often-quoted passage and *ambyrne wind* in the same or similar ways: 'There, he said, one cannot sail in one month if one camped on shore at night and each day had a fair (or: favourable) wind; and all the while he will sail along the coast.' The meaning 'favourable' for *ambyre* is also given by most printed dictionaries and glossaries of Old English, and the *DOE Online* joins them: 'referring to wind: favourable; the sense 'unfavourable' has been advocated by some commentators and translators in the belief that the prefix *am-* (< *and-*) is adversative as in ModIcel *andbyrr* 'contrary wind', but it has been shown that the context cannot readily support this interpretation.'

A staunch representative of this tradition of a positive meaning is Alfred Bammesberger, who in the course of thirty-three years has published three articles on this subject alone.⁴ I personally, however, voted for 'unfavourable' in an article of 1985,⁵ arguing amid other kinds of evidence that the negative expression *ne mihte geseġlian* does not logically go together with a conditional clause that contains first an impediment to travelling (camping, negative) and then a positive impetus by a good wind. Other authors, though adhering to 'favourable wind', have apparently felt the same and appeased their slight uneasiness by introducing additional words. Richard Hakluyt, for instance,

³ *The Old English Orosius*, ed. Bately, p. 16, lines 3-6; *Ohthere's Voyages*, ed. Bately and Englert, p. 47. Though there is some uncertainty in the sentence because the scribe first started the negation *ne* (*mihte*) with the letter *m* and then altered it to *ne*, the text should be accepted as it stands.

⁴ 'The Old English Adjective *ambyre*', *ES* 64 (1983), 97-101; 'Old English *ambyre* Revisited', *North-Western European Language Evolution* 60/61 (Jan. 2011), 39-44; 'The Meaning of Old English *ambyrne wind* and the Adverb *amberlice*', *N&Q* 63.2 (2016), 179-80. In his publication of 2011 (pp. 40-1) Bammesberger mentions that there is a scholarly dispute between 'favourable wind' or 'unfavourable wind' but does not give any names or details. Instead he points to *Ohthere's Voyages*, ed. Bately and Englert, 'for a well documented survey of scholarly opinions' and gladly accepts Englert's conclusion reached by non-linguistic means that *ambyrne wind* 'should – from a practical point of view – be read as a positive condition'. After this he goes on: 'The conclusion is convincing: the meaning of *ambyrne wind* is "favourable wind," thus entirely disregarding the fact that in 1985 he himself was the editor of a conference book containing an article (see next note) which tried to prove the exact opposite, 'contrary wind', and this not only on the basis of nautical and historical facts but also for well-documented linguistic reasons.

⁵ M. Korhammer, 'Viking Seafaring and the Meaning of Ohthere's *ambyrne wind*', *Problems of Old English Lexicography: Studies in Memory of Angus Cameron*, ed. A. Bammesberger, Eichstätter Beiträge 15 (Regensburg, 1985), 151-73.

added ‘although’ in his *Principal Navigations* of 1599,⁶ Bammesberger added ‘even’;⁷ and Christine Fell changed the text to ‘could scarcely sail there’.⁸ Bammesberger in 2016 even qualified his confident statement that a positive connotation of *ambyrne wind* ‘is not to be doubted’ only two lines further down by adding that ‘one could well ask whether under really “favourable” sailing conditions the distance might not be covered in a shorter period of time’, and in the same article now votes for the meaning “‘appropriate’, possibly also ‘adequate’ or ‘fitting’”.⁹

In her contribution of 2007, Janet Bately listed the various attempts at explaining the etymology and meaning of the adjective *ambyrne* and came to the conclusion that there is ‘no single demonstrably satisfactory linguistic interpretation for either *am-* or *byre*’.¹⁰ Relying on this authoritative source, and at the same time also feeling the above-named uneasiness about the contrast of negative and positive in the conditional clause, and the resulting slow average sailing-speed of only three knots over a distance of *c.* 1000 nautical miles,¹¹ Bately’s co-editor Anton Englert proposed theoretical ‘day-sailing distances’ that might be reached under theoretical good weather conditions; to support this conjecture he pointed to the later Norwegian concept of the so-called *mileskift*, the distance a boat could be rowed in a day and which averaged *c.* thirty-six nautical miles, nearly the same distance as the one to be assumed in Ohthere’s account.¹² This seemingly compelling solution of a problem by a nautical archaeologist, who had great practical experience as a result of his work at the Roskilde Viking Ship Museum, found consent with Bately and

⁶ W. A. Craigie, ‘The Meaning of *ambyrne wind*’ [sic], *Philologica: Journal of Comparative Philology* II.2 (1923–24), 19–20. Craigie, as one of the few, votes for the meaning ‘unfavourable, contrary’, mainly because ‘the sentence is more logical if both the qualifying clauses are explanatory of delay’. His note had already found its way into T. N. Toller’s *Supplement* of 1921 (cf. below, n. 42) and probably influenced R. W. Chambers, *England before the Norman Conquest* (London, 1926), p. 227 (‘and each day had the wind against him’), W. J. Sedgefield, *A Book of Anglo-Saxon Verse and Prose* (Manchester, 1928), p. 427 (‘andbyre *adj.* contrary’), and F. Mossé, *Manuel de l’anglais du moyen âge des origines au XIV^e siècle: I, 2 Vieil anglais, notes et glossaire* (Paris, 1945, 1950), p. 440 (‘*ambyrne Adj. ja contraire (vent) 5/88 [<*-and-byre]*’). For a survey of the early translations, see E. Ekwall, ‘Old English *ambyrne wind*’, *Selected Papers*, Lund Stud. in Eng. 33 (Lund, 1963), 129–37, at 130 [reprint from *Mélanges de philologie offerts à M. Johan Melander* (Uppsala, 1943)].

⁷ Bammesberger, ‘The Old English Adjective *ambyrne*’, p. 98.

⁸ *Two Voyagers at the Court of King Alfred: the Ventures of Ohthere and Wulfstan together with the Description of Northern Europe from the Old English Orosius*, ed. N. Lund, trans. C. E. Fell (York, 1984), p. 21.

⁹ Bammesberger, ‘The Meaning of Old English *ambyrne wind*’, p. 179.

¹⁰ Bately, ‘Translation Notes’, *Ohthere’s Voyages*, pp. 51–8, at 51.

¹¹ Personal communication on 19 February 2017. I am very grateful to Anton Englert for his gift of a copy of *Ohthere’s Voyages*, which he sent to me in March 2007.

¹² Englert, ‘Ohthere’s Voyages Seen from a Nautical Angle’, *Ohthere’s Voyages*, pp. 117–29, at 125.

especially Bammesberger, and in the opinion of Bately supports the ‘traditional’ interpretation ‘favourable’.¹³ However, Englert’s novel explanation runs aground by comparing rowing boats and sailing boats. While even the strongest rower can only deliver a certain performance per day or hour and then needs recreation and sleep, the wind is inexhaustible when it blows; this is why the sailing vessel was invented in the first place, one might add. Englert’s theoretical average day-sailing distance of less than thirty-seven nautical miles stands in stark contrast to the record voyages of nineteenth-century Norwegian square-rigged boats, which are comparable to Viking ships and for which Englert himself lists amazing daily averages of 146 to 223 nautical miles;¹⁴ a continuous favourable wind would thus drive a ship from Hålogaland to Kaupang in five to seven days! Englert’s theoretical distance is also much lower than Ohthere’s actual daily average of eighty nautical miles between the Norwegian Kaupang and Hedeby (OE *at Hapum*, German *Haithabu*), the Viking trading settlement in modern Schleswig-Holstein, Northern Germany.¹⁵ Englert’s graphical demonstration of this voyage (five days), the voyage round the North Cape (fifteen days), and in contrast to this his ‘standard sailing route’ along the Norwegian coast (more than twenty-eight days) makes it, in my opinion, visually obvious even to someone without any nautical experience that *ambyrne wind* simply cannot mean advantageous wind conditions.¹⁶ This view was also taken by Irmeli Valtonen in her MA thesis of 1988 and later in her doctoral dissertation.¹⁷

A simple way of demonstrating that OE *ambyre* indeed has a negative meaning would be to change the order of the constituents of the conditional clause: ‘one cannot sail there in a month if one had *ambyrne* wind each day and (because of this) camped on shore at night’. Camping at night would be necessitated by the difficulties caused by the contrary wind. But of course this is impossible, we cannot simply alter an original text because we are in the dark about its meaning.

In contrast to his voyage round the North Cape and the five-day journey from Kaupang to Hedeby, Ohthere does not describe the route along the Norwegian coast from his own viewpoint but in general terms: ‘man ne mihte

¹³ Bately, ‘Translation Notes’, *Ohthere’s Voyages*, p. 51.

¹⁴ Englert, ‘Ohthere’s Voyages’, p. 124.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 120–1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 126–9.

¹⁷ I. Valtonen, ‘An Interpretation of the Description of Northernmost Europe in the Old English Orosius’ (Pro Gradu Thesis, Oulu University, 1988; available on the internet), 134–6; *The North in the Old English Orosius: a Geographical Narrative in Context*, Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki 73 (Helsinki, 2008), 449 and 457–9. Both thesis and book are mentioned by Bammesberger (2011, 2016); not, however, Valtonen’s explicit opinion on the meaning of *ambyrne wind*; cf. above, n. 4.

geseglian'; 'he sceal seglian'; 'him bið ærest'.¹⁸ Before proposing his hypothetical day-sailing distances, Anton Englert argues against the meaning 'unfavourable': 'It would have made no sense for Ohthere or his listeners to focus on a voyage under unfavourable conditions'.¹⁹ Englert is absolutely right here – and the real solution suddenly presents itself: Ohthere is not describing an actual voyage in the *ambyrne-wind* sentence, nor even a theoretical voyage, but a distance.²⁰ Scholars have assumed for some time that Ohthere's and Wulfstan's accounts at King Alfred's court 'are based on notes made from their verbal reports',²¹ and Englert presents seven convincing questions which might have been put to Ohthere in his conversation with King Alfred and his court.²² He phrases possible question 6 as follows: 'how long does it take to sail from the north to the south of that land . . . to sail the North Way?' Now, if we alter the wording of this assumed question to: 'how long is the North Way?' or 'how long is it from your home down to the south?', this changes the subject matter of the question from length of sailing time to distance. Because of the rugged, deeply indented coastline of Norway and the mountain ranges²³ Ohthere would not have been able to answer in 'so-and-so many miles' (as he had done before when describing the width of the Norwegian territory between the sea and the mountains);²⁴ instead, as a seafarer, he gave a practical answer based on his own and other sailors' nautical experience. We can fully adopt Englert's hypothetical form of Ohthere's answer: 'Well, from Hålogaland, where I live, to the southern port of *Sciringes healb* it is not possible to sail in one month, if one camped at night [and had *ambyrne wind* each day].'²⁵

In 1985 I had claimed: 'Under good conditions he [Ohthere] would probably have specified the maximum duration more clearly, say, for instance, a fortnight or less.'²⁶ Anton Englert, citing me, asks in return: 'why did Ohthere or the English scribe not say so?'²⁷ My answer to this is now: because it is a worst-case scenario that Ohthere is here presenting. In other words: 'The Norwegian

¹⁸ 'One cannot sail; he will sail; to him will be at first.'

¹⁹ Englert, 'Ohthere's Voyages', p. 125.

²⁰ Englert came very close to solving the problem: 'The wanted piece of information was more a geographical one: how long is the North Way' (*ibid.* p. 124), but then took the wrong turn with his day-sailing distances.

²¹ *The Old English Orosius*, ed. Bately, p. lxxvii; cf. *Ohthere's Voyages*, ed. Bately and Englert, p. 30.

²² Englert, 'Ohthere's Voyages', p. 118.

²³ Cf. 'Transport in Norway prior to the Age of Steam', at <https://sites.google.com/site/norwegiancoastalexpress/wind,horseandmanpower>.

²⁴ *The Old English Orosius*, ed. Bately, p. 15, lines 26-9; *Ohthere's Voyages*, ed. Bately and Englert, p. 46.

²⁵ Englert, 'Ohthere's Voyages', p. 118.

²⁶ Korhammer, 'Viking Seafaring', p. 163.

²⁷ Englert, 'Ohthere's Voyages', p. 124-5.

coast is extremely long; if one interrupts one's journey each night by camping on land and (on top of that) has an *adverse* wind all the time, a journey by sailing-ship will take longer than a month; and all the time there will be land to one side.' The topic of the discussion here is not sailing times or the performance of ships but distance; by naming an unlimited length of time Ohthere will surely have presented a vivid picture of the length of the Norwegian coastline. This new explanation also provides a real function for the following sentence 'and ealle ða hwile he sceal seglian be lande';²⁸ it emphasizes the continuity of the long stretch of land and serves to further impress the Anglo-Saxon audience.²⁹ This, in my opinion, persuasive solution of an old problem does away with the above-mentioned illogical connection of negative interruption plus positive wind; *and* (*ælce dæge*) is indeed *and* with a cumulative meaning while *ambyrne wind* cannot be anything but an adverse wind. Both impediments are necessary for the description of the great distance, and the original text remains unmodified without any interference or addition.

To prove this supposition let us run through four different scenarios:

Scenario 1

It is not possible to sail there in one month even if one had a *favourable wind* each day.

Ohthere's home is located southwest of Tromsø by modern historians, and I am glad to find that the 1000 nautical miles which I assumed for the route to Kaupang in 1985 are nearly identical with Englert's 1036 nautical miles, and he also accepts my lunar month of twenty-eight days.³⁰ Thus in this scenario a Viking ship would manage less than thirty-seven nautical miles per day (1036 ÷ 28) although it enjoyed good circumstances! I have shown by the evidence of medieval voyages, my own sailing experience and the performance of modern replicas of Viking ships (see below) that a figure of < 37 nautical miles per day is far too low for the assumed fair wind conditions.³¹ There is no need to repeat my findings here for they are fully corroborated by Anton Englert's more modern and also more professional exposition,³² although he differs as to the explanation of *ambyrne wind*. Scenario 1 is clearly wrong.

²⁸ 'And all the time he shall sail along the coast.'

²⁹ Only a few lines further down Ohthere specifies this: '(Þonne is þis land oð he cymð to Sciringes heale) and ealne weg on þæt bæcbord Norðweg' (and all the way on the port side Norway) (*Ohthere's Voyages*, ed. Bately and Englert, p. 47). Bammesberger, 'Old English *ambyrne* Revisited', p. 42, n. 1, tries to correct Bately's translation; but his attempt to syntactically join the preceding clause *Þonne is þis land* to the later *Norðweg* is definitely wrong; *þis land* is clearly Britain.

³⁰ Korhammer, 'Viking Seafaring', p. 155, and Englert, 'Ohthere's Voyages', p. 123.

³¹ Korhammer, 'Viking Seafaring', pp. 154–63.

³² Englert, 'Ohthere's Voyages', pp. 117–129.

Scenario 2

It is not possible to sail there in one month if one stopped for the night regularly but had a *favourable wind* each day.

If we accept twelve hours of pure sailing time as our basis and the remainder of the day for looking for a safe place, securing the boat, making a fire, cooking and eating, sleeping and preparing for departure in the morning, we arrive at an average speed of less than thirty-seven nautical divided by twelve [hours] = 3 nm per hour = 3 knots = 5.5 km/h, the speed of an active walker. Again, all our nautical evidence speaks against this kind of scenario. Irrespective of the size of the boat, whether only ten metres long or twenty-three metres like the Gokstad ship of Ohthere's period,³³ every Viking ship was faster than three knots with just a bit of favourable wind. See Englert *passim*, and also the following resumé:

experiments with replicas of Viking ships have shown that, somewhat depending on the hull form and cargo, under optimal conditions, with a cross wind or more to aft, they can hold an average speed of 6–8 knots over a day's voyage, and that they may reach speeds of 10–12 knots in a breeze. Moreover, they can maintain an effective speed of approximately 2 knots at 55–60° to the wind when tacking.³⁴

So, again, our scenario 2 is wrong simply for the low average speed it assumes. And there is another point to consider. The idea that (nearly) everybody stops working in the evening and goes home for the night is typical for modern city dwellers that are ruled by their nine-to-five activities. But would a Viking skipper really give up a good wind from astern just because his crew wanted 'to have their tea at six' and sleep on *terra firma*? Certainly not, and not even the most rebellious crew would have insisted on camping at fixed times: because a favourable wind of three, four, five, even six Beaufort from behind ('on the broad reach or running') would have meant comfortable, dry, fast travelling, the ship speeding in the same direction as the waves at from six to twelve knots, and they would in one day cover distances which otherwise could have taken them between two to perhaps five days. With a really favourable wind only the helmsman had to work – quite a lot actually with the swell of the waves from behind – one crewmember had to watch at the bow, and one or two had to bail out if the hull was not tight, but the remainder of the crew could lean back and

³³ The latter is thought probable by Arne Emil Christensen, 'Ohthere's vessel', *Ohthere's Voyages*, ed. Bately and Englert, pp. 112–16.

³⁴ Kjell-Olav Masdalen, 'Uden Tvivl – med fuldkommen Ret Hvor lå Sciringes heal?', 2010, cited in the English *Wikipedia* entry 'Ohthere of Hålogaland'. See also Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, 'Ships, navigation and routes in the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan', *Two Voyagers at the Court of King Alfred*, ed. Lund, pp. 32–3. For pictorial proof of the performance of Viking ships, see videos from the Viking Ship Museum at Roskilde, Denmark.

enjoy the swift journey. Of course, when the wind grew continually stronger the skipper had to have the sail reefed in time before the stress on the hull became too strong, or ropes might snap and the mast come crashing down.³⁵ And moving along very fast he had to be careful with his navigation, watching out for underwater obstacles and making the best use of the daylight; but in the summer there would be the midnight sun north of the Arctic circle, and even further south midnight twilight and long hours of daylight could be expected.³⁶ To repeat, scenario 2 is wrong.

Scenario 3

It is not possible to sail there in one month if one stopped for the night regularly and also had *an adverse wind* each day.

Apart from destructive storms, adverse winds would mean wind mainly from the front, and if the skipper really decided to attempt it by sail and not by oar he would have to tack against the wind and manage perhaps two nautical miles per hour towards his destination; see above. In contrast to the efficient seafaring under scenario 2, sailing against the wind was hard work. Tacking would mean constant shifting and trimming of the sail, the sailors would get plenty of seawater under their protective clothing from the spray caused by the oncoming waves, and yet after twelve hours of doing effectively two knots ahead they would find themselves only about twenty-four nautical miles nearer their target, and thus less than the required daily distance of thirty-seven nautical miles. After such a day it was only to be expected that everybody wanted to be on land, light a fire, have a hot meal and dry their wet clothes. Scenario 3 is thus correct; camping plus adverse winds make the voyage impossible within one month.

Scenario 4

It is not possible to sail there in one month if one had *an adverse wind* each day.

This scenario is purely theoretical. But if we accept that tacking would make possible two nautical miles against the wind (scenario 3), and that north of the Arctic circle around the time of the summer solstice (21/22 June) the sun is above the horizon for twenty-four hours and there is nearly nineteen hours of daylight at Kaupang, then a daily average of thirty-seven nautical miles would seem possible. So scenario 4 is wrong again though admittedly nobody in his right mind would have started on such a voyage: they 'would have done better to stay at home'.³⁷

³⁵ The wind blowing from behind the ship is felt as less powerful than it really is: the sailor senses the wind velocity minus the ship's speed.

³⁶ For the long days in northern waters, see Englert, 'Othere's Voyages', p. 119.

³⁷ Englert, 'Othere's Voyages', p. 125.

By a process of elimination we have arrived at the conclusion that only scenario 3 agrees with Ohthere's assumed worst-case scenario as a means of describing the length of the Norwegian coastline. And, what is more, we need not debate when or why or how fast Ohthere himself sailed down the Norwegian coast or if he stopped for the night or not: the Old English text only gives a general description of such a voyage, focusing on the distance involved. The meaning of OE *ambyrne wind* is definitely 'adverse, contrary wind', and turning towards the *DOE Online*, 'the context now readily supports this interpretation'.

AMBERLICE

The *DOE Online* gives the following explanation for this adverb which, like *ambyre*, is attested only once in Old English: 'aptly, appropriately, opportunely; the opposite sense, 'adversely', might be thought possible if the adjective *ambyre* were interpreted as 'unfavourable'.³⁸

In a homily for the second week in Lent, Ælfric paraphrases Matt. 21: 33–41, Jesus's parable of the 'certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants, more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him' (text of the King James Bible of 1611).

He cwæð to ðam Iudeiscum, Hwæt deð þæs hiredes ealdor	133
be þæs wineardes tilium? And hi ne wendon þa gyt	
þæt hi hyt sylfe wæron, and sædon him to andsware,	135
‘Þa yfelan tilian he yfele fordeð,	
And betæcð his wineard oðrum tilium syððan,	
Ðe him wæstmas agyfað on gewissum timan.’	
Rih[t]lice hi demdon heora agene dom.	
Soðlice gyf hi wiston þæt hi hyt sylfe wæron,	140
noldon hi andwyrðan swa <i>amberlice</i> be þam. ³⁹	

³⁸ 'Adversely' is vigorously rejected by Bammesberger, 'The Meaning of Old English *ambyrne wind*', p. 179, n. 11: 'But the meaning 'unfavourable' does not apply for *ambyre*, therefore 'adversely' as meaning of *amberlice* is not acceptable.'

³⁹ *Homilies of Ælfric: a Supplementary Collection*, ed. J. C. Pope, 2 vols., EETS 259–60 (Oxford, 1967–8) I, 254. 'He [Jesus] said to the Jews, What will that head of a household do to these

John C. Pope, the editor of the homily in 1967, devoted a long footnote to *amberlice*, which was unrecorded in the dictionaries at that time.⁴⁰ He associates it with *ambyrne wind* in the Old English Orosius, *-lice* denoting the adverbial form of the adjective (ModE *-ly*), and lists the conflicting opinions and the history of *ambyre*'s meanings varying between 'favourable' and 'unfavourable'. He at length settles on a positive meaning of *amberlice* as 'aptly, appropriately, opportunely', and gives the following translation/explanation: 'The scribes and Pharisees, caught off guard, have pronounced a just sentence against themselves. If they had known that they themselves were meant, they would not have answered so appropriately about the matter'; 'appropriately' was later endorsed by Bammesberger. However, after solving the riddle of *ambyrne wind* above, there is also a clear need for a reconsideration of *amberlice*.

The Jews expressed their judgement in very harsh, negative terms. Why did Pope not also vote for a negative meaning of *amberlice*? It was certainly the influence of the tradition connected with *ambyrne wind* – compare Janet Bately's 'traditional interpretation' above. Though handbooks like Holthausen and Clark Hall listed the meanings 'ungünstig' and 'unfavourable?' for *ambyre*,⁴¹ most scholars tended towards 'favourable', and the support of the impressive format of Bosworth-Toller must also have exerted some influence.⁴² As stated above, nearly all modern translations choose the positive meaning; there is a chance that the translators were influenced by each other, and thus propagated the degree of support for the 'favourable wind'.

I now propose, as I did in 1985, to apply a negative meaning also to *amberlice*: 'Truly, if they had known that they were it themselves, they would not willingly have answered so adversely about them (the evil husbandmen)', (*amberlice be*) *þam* being the dative plural and referring back to *Ða yfelan tilian* in line 136; 'they would not have pronounced such a hostile judgement on them'. Ælfric uses a similar construction in lines 41–2 (and 163–4) of the same homily: 'and þa sunderhalgan

husbandmen of the vineyard? And they did not yet realize that they were it themselves, and said to him answering, Those evil husbandmen he will miserably destroy, and will afterwards entrust his vineyard to other husbandmen that will give him the fruits at appointed times. Justly they pronounced their own judgement. Truly, if they had known that they were it themselves, they would not willingly have answered so *amberlice* about them (or: about it).'

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 257–8, n. 141.

⁴¹ F. Holthausen, *Altenglisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1934); J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 4th ed. with a supplement by H. D. Meritt (Cambridge, 1960).

⁴² *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary based on the Manuscript Collections of the late Joseph Bosworth*, ed. T. N. Toller (Oxford, 1898), with T. N. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary based on the Manuscript Collections of Joseph Bosworth: Supplement* (Oxford, 1921) and A. Campbell, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary based on the Manuscript Collections of Joseph Bosworth: Enlarged Addenda and Corrigenda to the Supplement by T. Northcote Toller* (Oxford, 1972). Toller's emendation in his *Supplement* of original 'favourable, fair' to 'unfavourable, contrary. . . [Dr. Craigie's note]' was later withdrawn again by Campbell and replaced by 'cheerfully'; see below, n. 44, and above, n. 6.

sona oncneowon / þæt he hit sæde *be him*.' ('And the Pharisees soon perceived / that he said it *about them(selves)*.) My solution 'so adversely about them' makes much better sense in the given context than Pope's and Bammesberger's rather vacuous interpretation 'so appropriately about the matter' where *þam* is taken to be a neuter dative singular. Their translation automatically triggers my question: from whose viewpoint would the Pharisees' answer appear 'appropriate'? Surely only from the viewpoint of Jesus because the Pharisees had fallen into his trap, but not from theirs: they had just signed their own death warrant.⁴³ If Ælfric had really meant the answer to be 'appropriate', he would have had to explain this to his surprised hearers and readers in an additional sentence.⁴⁴

Finally, we can say that the meanings 'aptly, appropriately, opportunely' in the *DOE Online* for *amberlice* ought to be replaced by 'adversely, in a hostile way', or similar expressions.

BYRE³

The *DOE Online* compares it to ON *byrr* and gives the following meanings: '(favourable) wind, glossing *aestu* 'undulating, tossing motion; swell of the sea, tide' (cf. *ambyrne wind* [*sic!*] s.v. *ambyrne*).

The only witness for this noun is found in the Old English Prudentius glosses: Lat. *aestu secundo et flamine* are glossed by OE *byre and blade*.⁴⁵ The words occur in the following context of Prudentius' *Crowns of Martyrdom V*, lines 493–6: 'Cernunt stupentes navitae / vectam remenso marmore / labi retrorsum leniter / aestu secundo et flamine.'⁴⁶ The correction of the meaning of *byre*³ in the *DOE Online* entry is easy. It glosses Lat. *aestu (secundo)* and is thus correctly translated only by 'a favourable tide'; the notion of wind, however, is expressed by *flamine = blade*. From this it follows that *byre*³ means 'flood tide, swell of the sea, undulating motion' (not 'tossing' – cf. *labi retrorsum leniter*); cf. ModLG *bore* 'Flutwelle', 'flood tide'.⁴⁷ The *DOE Online*'s meaning '(favourable)

⁴³ Not understanding that the evil workers will be destroyed for having committed murder, Bammesberger ('The Meaning of Old English *ambyrne wind*', p. 179) totally misreads the gravity of the situation when he writes of 'useless workers' and 'that the idle workers will be thrown out and replaced by others'.

⁴⁴ If *amberlice* was 'cheerfully' as suggested by Campbell (cf. above, n. 42), and if this was meant to be sarcastic as in 'cheerfully go to hell', an additional explanation would have been necessary as well. Bammesberger, 'Old English *ambyrne* Revisited', p. 41, considers *cheerfully* 'less likely'.

⁴⁵ *The Old English Prudentius Glosses at Boulogne-sur-mer*, ed. H. D. Meritt (Stanford, 1959), p. 93, l. 873.

⁴⁶ *Prudentius: Against Symmachus 2. Crowns of Martyrdom. Scenes from History. Epilogue*, trans. H. J. Thomson, Loeb Classical Lib. 398 (Cambridge, MA, 1953), 198–9. 'The boatmen in amazement see / it [the stone] carried over the sea, / floating gently backwards / with favoring tide and wind.'

⁴⁷ See below p. 110 and n. 56. The *OED* lists *bore* n.3, sense 2, 'A tide-wave of extraordinary height, caused either by the meeting of two tides, or by the rushing of the tide up a narrowing estuary', but is doubtful about its etymology.

wind' ought to be deleted; the error goes back to Meritt's edition, where in his commentary to line 873 he gives the wrong explanation: 'in context *aestu* refers to a favorable wind, *aestu secundo*'. Meritt here relied on Bosworth-Toller: 'byre, es; *m. A strong wind, storm*.—Byre *aestu* (cf. *yst*)'. He later deleted the meaning 'storm' in his supplement to Clark-Hall's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*.⁴⁸

OE *byre*³ 'tide' and ON *byrr* 'wind', despite having developed different meanings, must ultimately go back to the same Germanic etymon; see the next section.

ON THE ETYMOLOGY OF AMBYRE, AMBERLICE AND BYRE

I had hoped in 1985 that the extensive linguistic evidence which I was presenting would also help to cause a rethinking of the traditional definition of *ambyre* 'favourable'; but as is shown by Bately's assessment that there is 'no single demonstrably satisfactory linguistic interpretation',⁴⁹ my hope was in vain. This is another attempt.

Since both Ekwall and Bammesberger base their etymological discussions only on positive meanings of *ambyre* and *amberlice*,⁵⁰ their speculations on the evolution of these meanings lead us nowhere; only Bammesberger's proposal for the phonemic form of the common Germanic etymon is of use. In the 1985 article I had assembled a great many words from dictionaries of the Germanic language family that were etymologically akin to OE *ambyre* and *amberlice*.⁵¹ They were listed one after the other rather associatively, as they came to mind within the context, and I concluded that all could be subsumed under a general meaning of the Germanic root **bur-* 'raise, lift'. I am not going to repeat this accumulation of dictionary entries in every detail, but if we put some order in this host of words three groups crystallize, differing mainly by the root vowels that developed in the various Germanic languages; the number of the Old English occurrences given in parentheses are taken from the *DOE Online*.

Preliminary explanation: There is a general consensus that the root of OE (*am*)*byre* derives from the zero grade of IE **bber-*; cf. Lat. *ferre*, Greek *φέρρειν* (*pherein*), Sanskrit *bhárati* 'bears'. The general meaning of the IE root is simply 'to carry, bring';⁵² in the Germanic languages, however, the meaning of the zero-

⁴⁸ Clark Hall-Meritt, *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, s.v. *byre*.

⁴⁹ Cf. above, p. 99.

⁵⁰ Ekwall, 'Old English *ambyrne wind*', pp. 134–7; Bammesberger, 'Old English *ambyre* Revisited', pp. 41–3; 'The Meaning of OE *ambyrne wind*', p. 180.

⁵¹ Korhammer, 'Viking Seafaring', pp. 164–6 and 172–3.

⁵² See H. Rix et al., *LIV. Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben: Die Wurzeln und ihre Primärstammbildungen*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden, 2001), pp. 76–7; and D. S. Wodtko, B. Irslinger, C. Schneider, *Nomina im indogermanischen Lexikon* (Heidelberg, 2008), pp. 17–34.

grade form (> *bur-) was expanded to the notion of ‘raise (itself), lift’; it seems to be a Germanic innovation. This becomes apparent in Julius Pokorny’s etymological dictionary (where he mistakenly assumes the new meaning ‘aufheben, erheben’ already existed in the Indo-European period): his numerous examples are all taken from Old Norse, Old English, Old Saxon and Old High German.⁵³

1. *bur- > byr- (by primary i-mutation)

Most of the representatives from the Old English vocabulary belong here:

*byre*³ ‘flood tide’ (1 occ.); cf. below ModLG *bore* ‘Flutwelle’.

*byre*² ‘time, opportunity, instance = Lat. tempus’ (8 occ.).

*byre*¹ ‘descendant, child’ (12 occ. in poetry).⁵⁴

gebyre ‘opportunity’ (1 occ.).

gebyredlic ‘suitable, due’ (9 occ.).

gebyredlice ‘in an orderly manner, suitably’ (3 occ.).

gebyrian ‘to belong to, to be appropriate, to befit, to be due, to happen, occur’ (ca. 650 occ.).

byrian ‘to belong to, to behoove, to happen, occur’ (ca. 30 occ.).

ambyre (1 occ.) and possibly *amberlice* (1 occ.).

ON *byrr* ‘strong wind, gust’ with its modern Scandinavian forms such as *byr* or *bør*, together with ON *byrja* ‘to be fit, to be due, to begin’, also belong in this group. The *OED* and *MED* correctly derive ME *birr*, *bir(e)* ‘wind, breeze’ and its varying forms from ON *byrr* and thus eventually from the Scandinavian settlers in Britain. The *DOE Online*, however, with its references in the *byre*³ ‘flood tide’ entry to *birr* (OED) and *bir(e)* (MED), might create the impression that these forms were later developments of OE *byre*: but it is the older etymological association, not the meaning, that binds ON *byrr* and OE *byre* together.

⁵³ *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern, 1959), pp. 128–31. For a more detailed survey of the etymological connections within the Germanic word-family (with bibliographical details) see A. L. Lloyd *et al.*, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Althochdeutschen*, vol. 2: *bi-egzo* (Göttingen, 1998), *s.v.* *bor* and *burien*. The putative Germanic forms are listed by E. Seebold, *Vergleichendes und etymologisches Wörterbuch der germanischen starken Verben*, Janua Linguarum, Series Practica 85 (The Hague, 1970), 105. For the verbal *etymon* **burjan-* see Guus Kroonen, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Germanic* (Leiden, 2013).

⁵⁴ I am sticking my neck out here. *Byre*¹ ‘descendant, child’ is only found in Old English poetry, which is striking. According to Karl von Amira, *Grundriss des germanischen Rechts* (Strassburg, 1913), p. 183, Germanic fathers acknowledged newborns as their own by *lifting up* the child from the ground or by accepting it from the midwife. Lifting up was thus a legal act after which it was no longer possible to expose the child and let it die, as was apparently permissible and customary with handicapped babies. If OE *byre*¹ can be traced back to the Germanic *etymon* **bur-* ‘raise, lift’ it means that the word highlights the legitimacy of the descendant.

2. *bur- > bur-, bor- (no i-mutation)

This development is only sparsely represented in Old English by:

bora 'bearer, supporter' (1 occ. in poetry) plus many compounds like *mund-bora* or *segnbora*.

borlice 'excellently, eminently, admirably, ? ostentatiously' (5 occ.).

boretan 'to brandish, shake, tremble, flash, glitter' (5 occ.).⁵⁵

However, forms in *bur-* or *bor-* live on in numerous Old and Middle High German words, and also in Low German from Old Saxon to modern dialects: some representative words will suffice.

OHG *bor* (*por*) 'height, *fastigium*'; OHG *in bore* '*excelsus, in aere*', MHG *enbore* 'on high, aloft', ModG *empor*.

OHG *bora* 'very = intensifying prefix', like *bor(a)ferro* 'very far', *boralang* 'very long'.

ModLG *bore* 'flood tide'.⁵⁶

OHG *burlib* 'excellent, eminent' (cf. OE *borlice* 'excellently' above and Goth. *gabaurjaba* 'gladly').

OHG *burien/burren* 'to rise, raise (oneself), lift, start moving, begin' (plus derivatives).

OHG *giburien/giburren* 'to happen, come to pass, befall, be due to, belong to, befit'; OS *giburian*.

OHG *giburi* '*eventus, casus, occasio, sors*'.

East Frisian 'bur(r)' 'wind'.

3. *bur- > bor-, bōr-, bōr, bōr (by various sound changes and/or secondary i-mutation)

There are many examples from German and Low German:

OHG *irbōren* '*promovere, surgere, initiare*', MHG *erbāren*, Swiss *erbōren*.

MHG *bōr* 'defiance, insurrection', *bāre* 'height', *enbāren* 'lift', ModG *empōren* 'to shock, to anger, to disgust', *Empōrung* 'indignation'.

MLG *bōren* 'to lift, erect, raise (taxes)', *gebōren* 'to be due', *bōre* 'elevation, revenue', *gebōre* 'dues, merit, rank', *bōrelos* 'motionless for lack of wind'.

Dutch *beuren* 'to lever, lift, raise', *gebeuren* 'to happen, take place, befall; event'.

⁵⁵ The etymology is uncertain; see Lloyd *et al.*, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Ahd.*, s.v. *bor, por*.

⁵⁶ See above, pp. 107–8 and F. Kluge, *Seemannssprache. Wortgeschichtliches Handbuch deutscher Schifferausdrücke älterer und neuerer Zeit* (Halle, 1911), p. 130, s.v. *bore*: "merkwürdige Gezeitenerscheinung, brandende Flutwelle, die auftritt, wo die Flutwelle sehr schnell aus tiefem auf flaches Wasser gelangt" Stenzel 1904 = nd. *bor* 'mittelste der drei Brandungswogen' Schumann, Lübecker Wortschatz, S. 29 . . . und verwandt mit *Baaren*'; p. 50 s.v. *Baaren* "große Wellen, welche vom Sturme oder auch durch verborgene Klippen entstehen" . . . Die Sippe hängt wohl zusammen mit ahd. *burjan* 'in die Höhe heben' und nhd. *empor*."

While the words in groups 2 and 3 clearly illustrate the gradual development of their very diverse meanings, best exemplified in OHG (*gi*)*burien* from ‘raise (itself)’ to ‘happen’, ‘belong’ and ‘befit’,⁵⁷ Old English in group 1 preserves nothing that is comparable to OHG *bor/por*. Except perhaps for *byre* ‘flood tide’, which might still have been felt to be expressive of the lifting process of the sea water, the other Old English words do not openly exhibit a semantic connection with the meaning ‘raise, lift’: they are not etymologically transparent any more. The Old English word family has already shrunk in diversity as compared to the German dialects, and will later die out completely in the standard language; this also explains the status of *ambyre* and *amberlice* as hapax legomena.⁵⁸

As for the prefix *am-* in *ambyre/amberlice*, Bammesberger derives it from Germanic **an(a)-* for which he assumes an intensifying function to suit his meanings ‘appropriate, adequate, fitting’, though he admits that ‘the intensive element *an-* . . . is not frequently found in Old English’.⁵⁹ I argued in 1985 that the original, undiluted meaning of this prefix, ‘up (against)’ (Greek *áva-* ‘upward, up, up to’),⁶⁰ is a far better match for the meaning ‘raise, lift’ of the Germanic etymon **buri-/burja-*, OE *ambyre* thus originally meaning ‘rising up against’.⁶¹ The equivalent Modern German prefix *an-* (implying a direction) is still alive in many nautical terms: *ab und an* ‘off the land, towards the land’, *anlaufen* ‘to head for (a port)’, *anlegen, andocken* ‘to dock’, *anluven* ‘to luff up’, *ein Object anpeilen* ‘to bear on an object’, and also in many words of everyday speech, for example, *anschreien* ‘to shout at someone’ and other terms of hostile behaviour like *anfahen, anbellern, anfauchen, anfeinden, angreifen, anberrschen, anmotzen, anranzen, anschnauzen*.

Now if we accept an original prefix **an(a)-* we should also expect a regular OE **anbyre/onbyre*: *ambyre* and *amberlice*, however, clearly show phonetic assimilation of alveolar /n/ to bilabial /m/ by the following bilabial /b/.⁶² Why this

⁵⁷ See F. Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, 20th ed. by W. Mitzka (Berlin, 1967), s.v. *gebühren*. Kluge-Mitzka saw later developments in the meanings ‘sich ziemen, Sorge tragen, statthaben, geschehen’ of *giburien* as against the simplex *burjan, burren* ‘erheben’; by contrast, K. Matzel postulates two totally independent, concurrent developments; cf. below, p. 113 and n. 68.

⁵⁸ *Ambyre* may have survived as a technical term of seafaring (proposed by Ekwall, ‘Old English *ambyrne wind*’, p. 135).

⁵⁹ Following Heidersmann (cf. below, p. 113) Bammesberger traces these meanings back to **burja-* > OE *byre* ‘opportunity, time, period’ (‘Old English *ambyre* Revisited’, pp. 41–2; ‘The Meaning of OE *ambyrne wind*’, p. 180 and n. 17).

⁶⁰ For details, see G. E. Dunkel, *Lexikon der indogermanischen Partikeln und Pronominalstämme*, 2 vols. (Heidelberg, 2014) II, 50–4.

⁶¹ Korhammer, ‘Viking Seafaring’, p. 165.

⁶² Assimilation of a former /nb/ is attested by OE *hlimbed* ‘bed of rest’ (*Beowulf* 3034; DOE Online s.v. *hlin-bedd*), OE *elmboga* (< *elnboga*) ‘elbow’ and OS *ambusni* ‘command’ (*Heliand* 2451),

assimilation in an accented prefix which would darken its meaning?⁶³ We have already found a possible answer: because the words were not etymologically transparent any more. In a comparable way, native speakers of German will easily connect *empören* and *Empörung* (group 3) with the adverb *empor* (group 2); however, the latter will be a moneme to them, consisting of only one morpheme, because OHG *bor/por* ‘height’ does not exist anymore and *em-* is not identifiable as a former prefix. And it will come as a surprise to any contemporary German (who can only be *empört*, ‘appalled and disgusted’) that two hundred years ago the verb *empören* was still used with the meaning ‘to raise, lift’: ‘Die Elephanten all empörten die Rüssel’ (Rückert), or, like OE *ambyre*, in connection with wind and water: ‘Wie Windeswirbel . . . Laub und Staub empört’ (Bürger); ‘Hinter ihm empörte sich die Flut’ (Chamisso).⁶⁴

Parallel to the proposed prefix **an(a)-* there is another, probably even better, solution. A. H. Feulner, who has cast a critical eye over the etymological section of this paper, compares *ambyrne wind* to ON *andvriði* (Nynorsk *andveder*) and modern Icelandic *andbyr* ‘contrary wind, headwind’ and suggests an original **and-byre*, a proposal already made by Craigie, Holthausen, Mossé and Ekwall,⁶⁵ though the latter advocates the positive meaning ‘carrying the ship on (forward)’. IE **h₂enti*, **h₂ento*, Greek *ἀντι*, *ἄντα*, Lat. *ante*, Gothic *anda-*, OE *and-* had the original meanings ‘before, opposite, against, towards’,⁶⁶ and Craigie and Feulner point to Gothic *andbatti* and its equivalents OE *ambiht* ‘office’, ModG *Amt*. Here we have actual proof of a phonetic assimilation of */*andb/* to */amb/* in Old English, which was probably provoked by the conglomeration of three consonants. It is, however, important that this new candidate still remains within the range of our assumed meaning of ‘rising up against’.

A wrong translation of *ambyrne wind* does not greatly impair the reader’s enjoyment of Ohthere’s travel account, though now with the correct meaning and interpretation (‘great length of the Norwegian coastline’) some established opinions about Ohthere’s own sailing have to be thrown overboard.⁶⁷ But the

Gothic *anabusns*; see A. Campbell, *Old English Grammar* (Oxford, 1959), § 484, and Bammesberger, ‘The Old English Adjective *ambyre*’, pp. 99–100.

⁶³ For the word accent in Old English, see Campbell, *OE Grammar*, § 71–86.

⁶⁴ ‘The elephants all raised their trunks’; ‘As the whirlwind raises leaves and dust’; ‘Behind him the flood was raising itself’; see D. Sanders, *Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1860–5), s.v. *empören*.

⁶⁵ See above, p. 98 (*DOE Online*) and n. 6.

⁶⁶ Dunkel, *Lexikon der idg. Partikeln*, II, 306–11.

⁶⁷ Cf. ‘that it took more than a month for Ohthere to travel by ship from his home . . . down to Kaupang’ (Stefan Brink) or ‘It is there [=Hedeby] in effect that the voyage of Ohthere from distant Hålogaland ends’ (Stéphane Lebecq); *Ohthere’s Voyages*, ed. Bately and Englert, pp. 66 and 170. See above, pp. 102 and 105.

work of a neighbouring philological discipline has decidedly been affected by the traditional dictionary entries and Bammesberger's patronage of a positive meaning. Klaus Matzel differentiates between two Germanic weak verbs, **burjan* 'raise' (a denominal derivation from **bur-* 'rising up'), and completely independent of this **ga-burjan*, which in his opinion was formed directly from the zero grade of a primary strong verb.⁶⁸ Via Gothic forms he construes an original Germanic **ga-bur-i-/-ja-* (prefix + root) 'zukömmlich' (≈ 'wholesome, beneficial'), from which he derives Bammesberger's meaning 'favourable, appropriate, suitable, fitting' – without in the least caring about the prefix *am-*. In the second part of his article Matzel leaves off the Germanic prefix **ga-* and arrives at **bur-i-/-ja-* 'zukömmlich', ignoring the fact that this has now become homonymous with the root of **burjan* 'raise'.

Frank Heidermanns builds on Matzel's '*burja-* (zukömmlich)'.⁶⁹ However, he derives OE *ambyre* 'exozentrisch' from OE *byre* 'opportunity' and explains it as **ana-burja* 'occurring at a favourable time',⁷⁰ but without any attempt to check the background of the *hapax legomenon*. And though he criticizes Bammesberger's 1983 classing **bur-u* among the *u*-stems and finds fault with his alleged intensifying function of **ana-*, Heidermanns again leaves the prefix totally unaccounted for in his semantic discussion. And all these imposing castles in the air made possible by a traditional but wrong translation of an Old English word!

Finally, I should like to point to two interlinear glosses in a German psalter ('Trierer Psalter', c. 1200, language possibly 'Rhine Franconian') which are of special interest to us: *uon den anboriden an mich lose mich* = 'ab insurgentibus in me libera me' (Ps. 58: 2); *unde in mir aneborende* = 'et insurgentes in me malignantes' (Ps. 91: 12).⁷¹ The forms *anboriden*, *aneborende*, though belonging in group 2 or 3 above, are our nearest equivalents to OE *ambyre* and *amberlice* in group 1, and the glossed Latin verb *insurgere* 'rise up against' definitely agrees with the meaning already reached by the etymological analysis of the Old English

⁶⁸ K. Matzel, 'Nachträge zu den germanischen Verbaladjektiven auf -i-/-ja-', *HS* 104 (1991), 239–50; *HS* 105 (1992), 93–143; the author is here taking up a hint, not properly explained, from F. Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, 22nd ed. by Seebold (Berlin, 1989), s.v. *gebühren*.

⁶⁹ F. Heidermanns, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der germanischen Primäradjektive* (Berlin, 1993), p. 144.

⁷⁰ The phonetic assimilation in *ambyrne/amberlice* and their status as *hapax legomena* appear to indicate that they are old words on their way out of common usage; by contrast the semantic development to *byre* 'time, opportunity' and the new exocentric word-formation from it would have taken a longer time. Heidermanns's semantic analysis is therefore chronologically improbable.

⁷¹ *Der Windberger Psalter*, ed. K. Kirchert, 2 vols., Münchner Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters 59 (Munich, 1979) II, 265 and 436.

adjective.⁷² The German verb form also seems to tip the balance in favour of the Germanic prefix **an(a)-*, though from a phonological and semantic point of view **and-* would appear preferable. By way of compromise one might think of the possibility that the two languages used different though phonetically and semantically similar prefixes; but this point cannot be decided. The German transmission also opens up the possibility that *e* in the root of OE *amberlice* is not a reduction vowel of *y*,⁷³ but of an earlier *o*, that the word really belongs in group 2 above, and that its preform **and-borlice* stood in direct semantic contrast to OE *borlice*, quoted above with the meanings ‘excellently, eminently, admirably, ? ostentatiously’. According to the *DOE Online* this word is very rare; it is attested only in its adverbial form and only in *Byrhtferth’s Manual*, four times as *borlice* and once as comparative *borlicor*.

Our nautical debate at the beginning has shown that – against the prevailing scholarly tradition, yet adhering to the original Old English text unaltered – Ohthere’s *ambyrne wind* must be an ‘adverse, contrary wind’; from this and logical considerations of the context it also follows that *amberlice* means ‘in an adverse, hostile, disapproving (or similar) manner’. These results have been rounded off by a linguistic discussion of the Germanic etymon of the OE root **byr-* which points overwhelmingly to ‘rise, raise’ and together with the prefix **an(a)-*, or better still, **and-* ‘against, towards’ (> ‘rising up against’) is in complete accord with the newly established meanings of the Old English words. All the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle have fallen into place. I thus propose to declare the case of *ambyrne wind* closed.⁷⁴

⁷² A quick search in the *DOE Web Corpus* reveals that the Anglo-Saxon Psalters glossed in Old English render Lat. *insurgere* exclusively by verb forms of *arisan* and *onarisan*.

⁷³ *Homilies of Ælfric*, ed. Pope, I, 258, and Bammesberger, ‘Old English *ambyre* Revisited’, p. 42.

⁷⁴ I am grateful to Anna H. Feulner, Helmut Gneuss, Peter-Arnold Mumm and Michael Twomey for their help and suggestions.