Edition with a Variorum Commentary: [Tesi di dottorato]

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Abstract (inglese)

Gnomic poetry plays a fundamental part of the so-called Old English Wisdom Literature. The Anglo-Saxons showed a strong tendency to inspect, wonder about, and ponder on the primary aspects of human thought, life and essence. This frame of mind is characterised by sequences of concise, tightly structured proverbial utterances. Such briefness endows gnomic poetry with a sharp, authoritative force.

The Anglo-Saxon scop turns to a gnome, maxim, proverb, laconic, sententious saying to compose alliterative verses on native folklore and traditional patterns of thinking. In Old English literature, gnomic poetry inextricably blends pious Christian elements with ancient themes of a heathen far-flung Germanic tradition.

Gnomic verses not only deal with folklore, they also stand as a powerful and elaborate literary device to affirm a moral, or even to portray virtues or vices. Such a literary sensibility stands in the middle between a Christian religious tradition which traces its roots back to Old Testament proverbs and the typical Germanic wisdom-competition poems such as Old Norse Vǫluspá, Vafþruðnismál, Heiðreks saga and so forth.

Yet, the Anglo-Saxon scop used the gnomic verse as a reliable fund of ethical dictum on which he would generally call to celebrate, in a poem, an episode worthy of celebration or to restate an accepted truth.

There are extant heterogeneous â€œcompilationsâ€™ of gnomic verse to which scholars normally refer as Maxims I and II. Furthermore, there are some other examples to be found in other poems, such as in The Wanderer or in Beowulf. The Exeter Book and BL MS. Cotton Tiberius B.i contain the utmost examples of gnomic passages.

The vivid content of the Maxims caused a variety of opinions relating to both the significance of the style of these poems and the provenance of its content based on large number of literary sources. The purpose of this Doctoral dissertation is to carry out a scrutiny of the Old English gnomic tradition, focusing on Maxims I and II, supply an edition of the texts, write a variorum commentary and an analytic glossary.

At the same time, this work aims to take into consecration the reason such a theme dendritically sprouts and suddenly reaches new heights in some crucial parts of Old English literature.

Abstract (italiano)

La poesia gnomica è un genere ricorrente nella letteratura antico inglese. Il codice Exoniense e il BL. MS. Cotton Tiberius B.i contengono due poemi, rispettivamente Maxims I e Maxims II, ovvero una raccolta di senzenze sapienziali. Le medesime, o loro riformulazioni, ricompaiono nel resto della silloge poetica antico inglese. Lo scopo di questo lavoro è di editare e annotare i due poemetti, fornire un commento variorum e un glossario analitico. Vi è anche una parte di codicologia, paleografia ed ecdotica dalla quasi parte per fare il riconoscere un valore di una robusta tradizione gnomica.

At the same time, this work aims to take into consecration the reason such a theme dendritically sprouts and suddenly reaches new heights in some crucial parts of Old English literature.
Maxims: The titles Maxims I and Maxims II refer to pieces of Old English gnomic poetry. The poem Maxims I can be found in the Exeter Book and Maxims II is located in a lesser known manuscript, London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B i. Maxims I and Maxims II are classified as wisdom poetry, being both influenced by wisdom literature, such as the Psalms and Proverbs of the Old Testament scriptures. Although they are separate poems of diverse contents, they have been given a shared name because the themes throughout each poem are similar, also known as Old English Maxims Poetry. Printed dict The title of Maximâ€™s I (and that of its counterpart, Maximâ€™s II) from the album Loud City Song refers doubly to a notable restaurant in Paris (called Maximâ€™s) and to a couple of anonymously authored gnomic poems from the Old English Exeter Book codex, entitled Maxims I and Maxims II. Maxims I is available here, in original and translation: http://www.adilegian.com/OldEnglish/maximi.htm. “Maxim’s I” Track Info. Selected Exeter Book Riddles Riddles. Gnomic or Wisdom Poems Maxims II (Cotton Maxims) Charms The Fortunes of Men. Religious Poems CÆ†dmon’s Hymn Physiologus: Panther and Whale Vainglory Two Advent Lyrics The Dream of the Rood. Appendix A. “Digressions”: Battles, Feuds, and Family Strife in Beowulf Appendix B. Genealogies in Beowulf Appendix C. Two Scandinavian Analogues of Beowulf Appendix D. Possible Riddle Solutions Glossary of Proper Names Bibliography Index Acknowledgments.