

## *Blickling Homilies* 193, 5 の feallan について

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### A Brief Note on *Feallan* in *BlHom* 193, 5

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Here is a passage from *The Blickling Homilies*<sup>1</sup> (abbreviated *BlHom*):

- (1) Sona swa him þæt geþeahrt tocom, þa feol him ege on þæt he nahwær seoppan mannum ne æteowde. (193, 4-5)  
'As soon as that decision reached him [Nero], great fear fell upon him so that he nowhere afterwards appeared to men.'<sup>2</sup>

*Feol him ege on* is given as an instance in Toller's *Supplement*<sup>3</sup> s. v. *feallan* I a: "fig. of immaterial things." In this short paper it will be shown that *feallan* having *ege* as its subject in (1) is a scriptural expression.

*Me* . . . deaðes in the next quotation is also cited in the same place as above in Toller :

- (2) Ys me on hreðre heah heorte gedrefed

and me fealleð on fyrhtu deaðes. (*Paris Psalter* 54, 4)<sup>4</sup>

'My lofty heart is troubled in my bosom

and the fear of death falls upon me.'

In these passages *feallan* is used figuratively of fear or terror coming upon one. The usage is found not only with this verb but also with other OE verbs meaning to 'fall,' i. e. *gefeallan*, (*ge*)*hreoſan*; below we have an example of *hreoſan* used in this manner :

- (3) Ða wearð Zacharias gedrefed, þæt geseonde, and him ege on hreas. (*Luke* 1, 12)<sup>5</sup>

'Then Zacharias was troubled, seeing that, and fear fell upon him.'

The Latin original<sup>6</sup> of (2) and (3) is as follows :

- (4) Cor meum conturbatum est in me,

Et formido mortis cecidit super me. (*Psalmus* 54, 5)

'My heart is disturbed within me,

And the fear of death has fallen upon me.'

- (5) Et Zacharias turbatus est videns, et timor irruit super eum. (*Secundum Lukam* 1, 12)

'And Zacharias was troubled, seeing [him], and fear fell upon him.'

It will be observed that 'dative *feallan on*' (2) and 'dative . . . *on hreoſan*'

(3) are derived from ‘*cado super* accusative’ (4) and ‘*irruo super* accusative’ (5) respectively.

The expression ‘fear fell upon someone’ is found elsewhere in the Vulgate, e. g. :

(6) *Irruat super eos formido et pavor, in magnitudine brachii tui :*  
(*Exodus* 15, 16)

‘Fear and dread shall fall upon them, by the greatness of thy arm :’

(7) *Novi quod Dominus tradiderit vobis terram : etenim irruit in nos*  
*terror vester, et elanguerunt omnes habitatores terrae.*  
(*Iosue* 2, 9)

‘I know that the Lord has given you the land: truly the terror of you has fallen upon us, and all the inhabitants of the land have grown faint.’

(8) *Laetata est Aegyptus in profectioe eorum,*  
*Quia incubuit timor eorum super eos.* (*Psalmus* 104, 38)

‘Egypt was glad at their departure,  
For the fear of them fell upon them.’

(9) *Et steterunt super pedes suos, et timor magnus cecidit super*  
*eos qui viderunt eos.* (*Apocalypsis* 11, 11)

‘And they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon those who saw them.’

The following OE glosses of (8) show examples of *gefeallan* and *gehreosan* metaphorically used of fear, terror :

- (10) ... forðon gefeol ege heara ofer hie (*Vespasian Psalter* 104, 38)<sup>7</sup>  
 (11) ... forþon gehreas l. onsæt egsa l. oga heora ofer hig (*Lambeth Psalter* *ibid.*)<sup>8</sup>

*Ege, egesa, fyrhto* and *broga* are typical OE words for 'fear, terror, dread.' According to Bessinger's concordance,<sup>9</sup> *ege, egesa* (*egesan, egsa, egsan*), *fyrhto* (*fyrhtu*) and *broga* (*brogan*) do not occur as subjects of verbs like *feallan, hreosan*, in *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, except for *fyrhtu* in *Paris Psalter* 54, 4 [= (2)]. And in the next OE versions of (7) and (8), *becuman* and *standan* are used instead of *feallan, hreosan*, etc. :

- (12) Ic wat nu to soðan ðæt God eow sylð ðisne eard; witodlice eower ege is on us becumen, □ ðis folc is geyrged □ ormod ongean eow. (*Ælfric Joshua* 2, 9)<sup>10</sup>

'I know now in truth that God gives you this land ; truly the fear of you has come on us, and this people has been terrified and without courage against you.'

- (13) Wurdon him Egyptas æftor bliðe,  
 syððan hi on fore folc sceawedan,  
 forðon him þær egesa angryslíc stod. (*Paris Psalter* 104, 33)  
 'The Egyptians became merry afterwards,  
 when they saw the people setting out,  
 for a dreadful fear came to them there.'

These facts suggest that the above usage of *(ge)feallan* and *(ge)hreosan* is not common as an OE expression. On the other hand, as in (13)



- Turrado, 6th ed. (Madrid : La Editorial Católica, 1982).
- 7 Henry Sweet, ed., *The Oldest English Texts*, EETS. OS. 83 (1885).
- 8 U. Lindelöf, ed., *Der Lambeth-Psalter*, Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae, 35, No. 1 (Helsingfors, 1909). This passage is referred to in Toller s.v. *gehreosan* III a = "of strong emotion, e.g. fear, to fall upon."
- 9 J. B. Bessinger, Jr., ed., *A Concordance to the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (Ithaca and London : Cornell UP).
- 10 S. J. Crawford, ed., *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, EETS. OS. 160 (1922 ; rpt. 1969).
- 11 Fr. Klaeber, ed., *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 3rd ed. (Lexington, Mass. : Heath, 1950).
- 12 Cf. the use of Old Norse *standa* in 'stendr ógn af e-m, *one inspires terror*' (Zoëga (ed.), *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic*, s. v. *ógn*). Also Klaeber comments in the Glossary s. v. *standan* : "with subjects like *leoht, egesa* . . . Similarly in ON., OS."