

XIII.—The Apple of the Eye

MARBURY B. OGLE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

This paper traces the origin and spread of our phrase "the apple of the eye" which appears first in English literature in the 9th century, as a translation of the Latin *pupilla oculi*. This translation was confined to the writings of King Aelfred and to the West Saxon Psalter and did not gain general currency until the 14th century. The evidence leads to the conclusion that this use of "apple" in the sense of "pupil" arose in a gloss on the Latin phrase which appears frequently in the offices said at daily devotions. To account for the restricted use of the word and for the semantic shift by which the pupil of the eye is designated "apple," it is suggested that the translation of Latin *pupilla* by "apple" may have been due to a mistaken reading of the Latin word, perhaps written in ligature, as *pila*, "ball," a meaning which "apple" has in other Anglo-Saxon documents.

The phrase "the apple of the eye," employed in a figurative sense as the expression of the highest affection and regard, is familiar to most English-speaking people, no matter what their calling. Back of this figurative use of the word "apple" must lie one in which the word was applied with a concrete reference to designate, owing to some real or fancied resemblance, either the physical eye itself or some part of it. To illustrate the first case, in which "apple" signifies the eye-ball, the New English Dictionary¹ cites but three examples, none earlier than the opening years of the 17th century. It seems, however, that this meaning must have been familiar since Holland, in his translation of Pliny's *Natural History* (1601) 11.32, where he renders the Latin *orbis* (i.e. "ball," "eye-ball") by the word "ball," adds by way of explanation, "the apple of the eye." Whether the phrase had been used in this sense during earlier periods is a question to which we shall return below.

Much more common, however, and on the face of it apparently much earlier, is the second sort of reference, where "apple" designates the pupil of the eye. The first example of this use occurs in the translations from the Latin of King Aelfred written towards the close of the 9th century. In his translation of a passage in Boethius, *De Cons. Phil.* 4, Prosa 4, where Philosophia answers the objection that men will not heed her teaching by saying: Ita est. . . . Ne-

¹ Ed. J. A. H. Murray (London, 1888) 1 Part. 1404.7. According to this authority the word "apple" was "sometimes extended to the eyeball but apparently only by misunderstanding."

queunt enim oculos tenebris assuetos ad lucem perspicuae veritatis attollere similesque avibus sunt quarum intuitum nox illuminat dies caecat, Aelfred introduces before the comparison a sentence which does not correspond with anything in our Latin text. He makes Philosophy say, 38.6: Nan wundor; hwæt þu wast þa men þe habbað unhale eagen ne magon full eade locian ongean þa sunnan þonne hio beortost scind, ne furðum on fyr ne on nanwuht beortes hi lyst locian, gif se æppel lef bið.²

This passage in Boethius is similar in content to one in the *Cura Pastoralis* (1.11) of Gregory the Great concerning wilful sinners and it may well be that, when Aelfred introduced into his Boethius the sentence just quoted, he was thinking of this passage in Gregory. Gregory compares those who are blind in spirit and so unable to see the light of truth with those whose eye-sight is impaired by physical disease and he employs the word *pupilla*, "pupil," which, as the diminutive of *pupa*, "a doll," refers to the tiny figure of ourselves which we see reflected in another's eyes as we gaze into them. His Latin is: in lippis quippe oculis pupillae sanae sunt sed humore defluente infirmatae palpebrae grossescunt quorum quia infusione crebro atteruntur etiam acies pupillae vitiatur. . . . Albuginem vero habet in oculis qui veritatis lucem videre non sinitur. . . . Pupilla namque oculi nigra videt, albuginem tolerans nihil videt. When Aelfred translates this passage (ch. 11)³ he renders *pupilla* by "apple": Hwæt on ðæs siweniggean eagum beoð ða æplas hale, ac ða bræwas greatiað forðæm hie bioð oft drygge forðæm tearum þe ðær gelome offlowað, oððæt sio scearpnes bið gewierd ðæs æples. . . . Ðurh ðone æpl ðæs eagean mon mæg gesion, gif him ðæt fleah on ne gæð. Gif hinne ðonne ðæt fleah mid ealle ofergæð, ðonne ne mæg he noht gesion. Since, as is

² Ed. W. J. Sedgefield, *King Aelfred's Old English Version of Boethius* (Oxford, 1899) 121. In the translation of this work made by J. S. Cardsdale (London, 1829) 315-6, this passage runs: "Then said she: That is no wonder. Thou knoweth that the men who have unsound eyes cannot very easily look at the sun when it shines brightest, nor indeed do they choose to look on fire or anything bright, though the apple [of the eye] be left. In like manner the sinful minds are blinded by their evil will so that they are not able to behold the light of clear truth. But it is with them as it is with the birds and other beasts which can see better by night than by day."

³ Ed. H. Sweet, *King Aelfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, E.E.T.S. 45.50 (1871) 67-8. He translates as follows: "The pupil of the bleared eyes are sound, but the eyelashes become bushy, being often dried because of the frequent flow of tears, until the sharpness of the pupil is dulled. . . . A man can see with the pupil of the eye, if it is not covered with albugo, but if it is entirely covered with albugo, he cannot see anything."

generally agreed,⁴ Aelfred's translation of the *Cura* was the earliest of his surviving works, it seems likely that his use of "apple" here to render *pupilla* suggested to him its use in the similar sentence which he later introduced into his *Boethius*.

However this may be, this use of "apple" in the literal sense of "pupil" seems to have been confined to Aelfred and employed by him in these two passages only; his contemporaries use instead of it the word *seo* (*seon*, *sion*) *eagen*, "the sight (seeing) of the eye." This is the word which appears in all the Latin-Anglo-Saxon word-lists, including one by Aelfred's friend, Bishop Aelfric,⁵ which were compiled during the 10th, 11th, and 12th centuries.⁶ It is not indeed until the very last years of the 13th century that we find another example of "apple" in this literal sense, this time in the versified Anglo-Norman-English word-list, written by Walter of Bibbesworth just before 1300.⁷ Here the French text reads: De le oyl est sauve la prunelle⁸ / Par les paupeyrs ke est la pel; / Si la paupere seyð bon e bel, / En les paupyres sunt les cyz. Above the word *prunelle* is the gloss, "the apple of the eye," above *paupeyrs*, "the eye-lids," above *cyz*, "the heres of the eye-lide." In the many similar vocabularies⁹ of Latin-English words which were compiled during the 14th and 15th centuries the Latin *pupilla* is regularly glossed by "apple of the eye." To illustrate the traditional character of these word-lists, it will suffice to quote from a metrical vocabulary of parts of the body, similar to that of Walter: *pupilla*: Appulle of the ye.¹⁰ The MS containing this list dates from the 15th century, the text is probably older, and was written in the west of England, on or near the Welsh border, a detail which,

⁴ Cf. *Cambridge History of English Literature*, ed. by A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (Cambridge, 1908) 1.90.

⁵ Cf. T. Wright, *Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies*, 2nd ed. edited and collated by R. P. Wuelcker (London, 1889) 1.156.40; *pupilla* vel *pupula*: *seo*; cf. also J. Zultiza, *Aelfric's Grammatik und Glossen* (Berlin, 1880) 298.

⁶ Cf. Wright-Wuelcker, *op. cit.* 1.60 (from a Kentish gloss of the 9th cen.); 263.30; 290.21; 306.3; 536.8.

⁷ This is contained in T. Wright, *A Volume of Vocabularies*, 2nd ed. (London, 1882) 145.

⁸ The French word *prunelle*, *dim.* of *prune*, literally "a little plum," is the regular translation of Lat. *pupilla*, just as "apple" is. The semantic shift in this case is easily recognized, since in its literal meaning, "little plum," it corresponds in color, shape, and size with the pupil of the eye.

⁹ Cf. *Catholicum Anglicum*, Ed. J. H. Herrtage, E.E.T.S. 75 (1881) 11; for other examples, cf. Wright-Wuelcker, *op. cit.* 1.606.13; 675.18.

¹⁰ Cf. Wright-Wuelcker, *ibid.* 1.631.6.

in view of the evidence to be presented below, may not be without importance. This use of "apple" = "pupil" occurs in our literature for the first time, as far as I can discover, in Shakespeare, *M.N.D.*, 3, 2: "Flower of this purple dye. . . Sink in apple of the eye"; and *L.L.L.*, 5, 2: "Do not you . . . laugh upon the apple of her eye?"

The association of "apple" with the Latin *pupilla* is seen also in another set of examples some of which are cited by the *Dictionary* under the caption: "Figurative Use, of what is cherished with the greatest regard." It will be noticed, however, that the phrase, "the apple of the eye," is not used here with quite the same meaning as we now employ it when we identify the object of affection with the pupil of the eye, but rather serves to compare the object with the pupil as the most valuable and highly cherished human organ. Here again the earliest example is found in Aelfred, in his translation of Boethius 39, 10 (= Boeth. 4, Prosa 6). In this passage Aelfred replaces a Greek quotation in his original with the words: *sé godcunda anwald gefriodode his deorlinges under his fíðra sceade ond hi scilde swá geornlice swa man deð þone æppel on his eagen*, obviously a paraphrase of Vulg. *Psalms* 16, 8: *a resistentibus dexteræ tuæ custodi me ut pupillum oculi; sub umbra alarum tuarum protege me.*

Variants of the Latin expression *custodire aliquem* (*aliquod*) *ut pupillam oculi* occur also in the following books of the Old Testament: Prov. 7, 2: *serva . . . legem meam quasi pupillam oculi tui*; Zach. 2, 8: *qui enim tetigerit vos, tanget pupillam oculi mei (al. eius)*¹¹; Deut. 32, 10: *eum custodivit quasi pupillam oculi sui*. In the only other passage in the Bible in which *pupilla oculi* occurs, Lam. 2, 18: *neque taceat pupilla oculi tui*, the reference is clearly to the physical pupil of the eye.

The thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, from which I have just quoted, the Canticum Moysi, or Cantum Deuteronomium as it is called in the Rule of St. Benedict¹² where it is assigned for singing at Matins (Vigiliae) on Saturdays, is one of the Canticles¹³

¹¹ The Cod. Amiatinus has *eius*. Our English versions differ in regard to the pronoun; Wyclif's and the Douay Bible have "my," Coverdale's "his own," King James' "his."

¹² Cf. *Reg. Monast.*, ed. B. Linderbauer, *Florilegium Patristicum*, Fasc. 17 (Bonn, 1928) 35.

¹³ On this subject cf. Dom Cabrol, *Le Livre de la Prière antique* (Tours, 1929) 26ff.; Id. *Dict. d'Archéologie Chrét.* s.v. Cantiques, 2.2.1975ff.; H. Schneider, *Die altlateinischen Biblischen Cantica*, Texte u. Arbeiten, herausg. durch die Erzabtei Beuron, 29/30 (Beuron, 1938).

which at an early stage in the development of Christian worship were joined with the Psalms to form the *Psalterium* and hold an important place both in Greek liturgy and in all the western types. The presence of the phrase, *pupilla oculi* in both Psalms and the Canticle would have been enough to make it universally known and it is not surprising, therefore, to find it used as a gloss in a Kentish word-list of the 9th century.¹⁴

Even more important, however, for the tradition of "the apple of the eye" is the appearance of Ps. 16, 8 among the sentences which were said or sung during various services both in church and monastery. As was usual in such cases,¹⁵ some changes were made in the wording of the biblical text which need to be noted, namely, the omission of the words a . . . dexteræ tuæ, the substitution of *nos* for *me*, and the insertion of *domine* after the first *nos*, so that the verse becomes: Custodi nos, domine, ut pupillam oculi: sub umbra alarum tuarum protege nos. We find this form in the Antiphony of Bangor,¹⁶ a book written in the north of Ireland between 680 and 691, as an Anthem in a service *pro fratribus* and again under the rubric *Ad horas diei*.¹⁷ We may compare with this its use as a Versicle in the Mozarabic rite which was current in the Church of Spain from the establishment of Christianity down to the last years of the 11th century, where, under *Horæ Canonicae*, it is assigned for singing at Compline.¹⁸ Here, too, at the service for Fer. iv post Oct. Epiph., the versicle, custodi *me*, domine, etc., is followed by a prayer which begins, custodi *nos*, domine, ut pupillam oculi ne innocentiae . . . sub umbra . . . protege nos.¹⁹ In the Roman Missal the verse forms the Gradual for services during Lent and for Dom. X post Pentec.,²⁰ but generally the two parts are employed as Versicle and Respond. In the Leofric Collectar²¹ of the 11th century, so-called because of its connection with Bishop

¹⁴ Cf. Wright-Wuelcker, *op. cit.*, col. 60, line 31: quasi pupillam: swa sion custodiat.

¹⁵ On the subject of "Centonization" in the Liturgies, cf. Dom Cabrol, *Dict. d'Arch. Chrét.* s.v. "Mozarabe" (La Liturgie) 12.484.

¹⁶ *Ed.* with facsimiles by F. S. Warren, Henry Bradshaw Society, Publ. 4 (1892) = vol. 1, and 10 (1895) = vol. 2 (amended text); cf. 2.21.

¹⁷ *Ib.* 2.32.

¹⁸ Cf. *Breviarium Gothicum (Mozarabicum)* in Migne, *Patr. Lat.* 86.964.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 200.

²⁰ *Missale Romanum*, Milan, 1474, ed. by R. Lippe, H. B. Soc. (London, 1899), 1.64 and 271.

²¹ Cf. *The Leofric Collectar*, 2 vols. ed. by E. S. Dewick, H. B. Soc. (London, 1913-1918) 1.74.78.82.

Leofric of Exeter (1050–1072), in the services on Sundays preceding Lent, the Respond is: *custodi nos . . . ut pupillam oculi*, the Versicle: *sub umbra . . . protege nos ut pupillam*.²¹ Only in the York Breviary,²² in the Office for Septuagesima Sunday, have I found precisely this form. Elsewhere the chief use of the sentences is in connection with the daily devotions at the Hours (cf. the Mozarabic Breviary, cited above) where, at the service for Compline, they form the Versicle and Respond. They are thus used in the Sarum Breviary,²³ the influence of which was widespread, in the Roman Breviary,²⁴ and in at least two MSS, written during the 11th century, of *The Hours of the Blessed Virgin Mary*,²⁵ a service which came to be an essential part of the Layfolks' Prayer-book or Prymer.²⁶ One of these MSS,²⁷ it may be noted, was probably written at Winchester, Aelfred's capital, perhaps at one of the Benedictine Houses there²⁸; at any rate the sentences appear in the early 14th century MS of the Breviary of Hyde Abbey, Winchester, at the service for Compline during November and December²⁹ and are still so employed in the modern Benedictine Use.³⁰

Whether this liturgical version of Ps. 16, 8 was in King Aelfred's mind when he wrote the paraphrase, quoted above from his Boethius, or the biblical text—he must have been familiar with both—cannot of course be determined, nor does this question concern us.

²² Cf. *Breviarium ad Usus Insignis Ecclesiae Eboracensis*, ed. by Lawley, Surtees Soc., 71–72 (Durham, 1880–83) 1.238.

²³ *Breviarium ad Usus Sarum*, ed. by F. Procter and Chr. Wordsworth, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1879), 1.xi, ad Completarium de Adventu; 2 col. 225.

²⁴ Cf. *The Roman Breviary*, ed. by C. F. Brown (London, 1936), Pt. 3.54.

²⁵ One is collated by H. Littlehales, *The Prymer or Lay Folks Prayer Book*, E.E.T.S. Orig. Ser. 105–109 (London, 1895), p. lxxxiii; the other is edited with facsimiles by E. S. Dewick, *Facsimiles of Horae de Beata Maria Virgine*, H. B. Soc. 21 (London, 1902), Col. 17. It may be noted that another MS of the Horae (Cotton MS Tiberius A iii), also of the 11th century, probably from Christ Church, Canterbury, does not contain our phrase.

²⁶ For an account of these Prymers, cf. E. Bishop, "On the Origin of the Prymer," in Littlehales, *op. cit.* xi–xxxviii; Wordsworth and Littlehales, *The Old Service Books of the English Church* (London, 1904), 248–254.

²⁷ That edited by Dewick, *op. cit.*

²⁸ Probably at St. Mary's Abbey which was founded by King Aelfred or his Queen Ethelwitha; cf. Dewick, *op. cit.* Intro. xi; W. De Grey Birch, "An Ancient Manuscript of the 8th or 9th Century," Hampshire Record Soc. 2 (London, 1889) pp. 5ff.

²⁹ *The Monastic Breviary of Hyde Abbey, Winchester*, ed. by J. B. L. Tolhurst, H. B. Soc. 71 (London, 1934) 5. Fol. 452 v.

³⁰ Cf. the *Psalterium Secundum Regulam SS. Patris Nostri Benedicti* (Bruges, 1925) 172.

What is of interest is his translation of the phrase *pupilla oculi* by "the apple of the eye," and the origin and tradition of this translation.

Wherever the Latin phrase occurs in the passages cited above from the Old Testament, all our English versions of the Bible, beginning with Wyclif's (*circa* 1384) have this same translation. Similarly Luther's German version has in all of them, *Augapfel*, the modern German word for "pupil." On the other hand the first German Bible of 1466,³¹ although it has a corresponding expression in three of them: Prov. 7, 2: als den Augapffel deins Augen, Deut. 32, 10: als den ogapfel seins ougs, Zach. 2, 8: den augappel meins ougs, shows a different translation in the other two passages: Ps. 16, 8: als den sehen des augen, Lam. 2, 18: das sehen deins augen, thus agreeing with the Kentish gloss quoted above (p. 185).

Previous to Wyclif's translation of the complete Bible, translations had been confined to versions, many of them merely glossed texts, of separate books or groups of books, chiefly the Psalms and Canticles comprising the Psalter, a choice dictated beyond a doubt by their liturgical importance.

The versions of the Psalter which were made during the latter half of the 14th century, such as the so-called Surtees Psalter and "The earliest English Prose Psalter,"³² render *pupilla oculi* by "the apple of the eye" both in Ps. 16, 8 and Deut. 32, 10. Since this, too, as I have pointed out, is the rendering of the phrase in the word-lists of the same, or a slightly later period, it is clear that by the beginning of the 15th century at the latest "the apple of the eye" as the designation of the pupil, whether with the literal or figurative meaning, had become firmly established.

Of the versions of the Psalter made before this period, however, all with one exception have in both Psalms and Deuteronomy "the sight (seeing) of the eye" (seo, seon, sion, eagen). These versions are in the form of a Latin text with interlinear translations or glosses and include the group of O-E Psalters,³³ dating from the

³¹ Cf. *Die Erste Deutsche Bibel von 1466*, hrg. von W. Kurrelmeyer, in Bibliothek des litterarischen Verein in Stuttgart, 4 vols. (Tubingen, 1904-1918).

³² For the "Surtees" Psalter, cf. W. Stevenson, *Surtees Soc.* (1843) p. 39; C. Horstman, *Yorkshire Writers* (London, 1896) 147; for the prose Psalter, cf. K. D. Buelbring, *The Earliest English Prose Psalter*, E.E.T.S. 92 (1891) 248-254.

³³ On these O-E Psalters and their glosses, cf. Linderhof, *Studien zur altenglischen Psalterglossen*, Bonner Beitrage 13, 1904; K. Wildhagen, *Studien zum Psalterium Romanum in England und zu seinen Glossierungen*, in *Studien zur Englischen Philologie*, 13 (1905) 418ff.

ninth to the eleventh centuries, as well as the Anglo-Saxon "Lindisferne Psalter," contained in a MS of the 8th century "with interlinear glosses somewhat later."³⁴ Similarly Bishop Aelfric, a contemporary of Aelfred, by whom he was made Bishop, in his translation of the Heptateuch,³⁵ renders Deut. 32, 10: heold hi swa his eagen seon, just as he employs *seo* to translate *pupilla* in a quotation of Zach. 2, 8 in his Homily 1, 390 and again in a gloss on *pupilla* in his Vocabulary.³⁶ This gloss is the rule also, as has been pointed out,³⁷ in all the early word-lists.

The one exception among these early English Psalters is the West-Saxon prose version of the Paris Psalter. This is contained in a MS of the 11th century but the Anglo-Saxon interlinear version, which was not made from the Latin text it accompanies, is assigned to the late 9th or early 10th century.³⁸ This has for Ps. 16, 8: beoth me swa swa man byrhd þam æplum on his eagum mid his bræwum. When we compare this rendering with Aelfred's paraphrase, quoted above, p. 184, it will be noticed that there is at least one sign of relationship between the two versions; they agree against all the others in having a locative expression, "in (within) the eye," instead of a genitive "of the eye." This suggests that back of them both was a Latin text of St. Jerome's "Hebrew" Psalter, the reading of which is, in most of the MSS, *pupillam in oculo*, as in the Codex Amiatinus, or *pupillam intus in oculo*, as in the Ricemarch Psalter, written in Wales during the latter part of the 11th century.³⁹

There is evidence also that a similar translation of this verse, similar at least as far as the rendering of *pupilla* by "apple" is concerned, was current during this same period among the Saxons on the Continent and that by the side of it there was, just as in Britain, a different rendering. Thus, in the earliest extant version of the complete Psalter, that by Notker Labeo⁴⁰ who died in 1022, our

³⁴ Cf. Stevenson, *op. cit.* 38.

³⁵ Cf. S. J. Crawford, *The Earliest English Version of the Heptateuch*, E.E.T.S. Orig. Ser. 160 (London, 1922) 370.

³⁶ See above, p. 183.

³⁷ See above, p. 183.

³⁸ Cf. Bright-Ramsey, *Liber Psalmorum* (Boston, 1907) p. 30. For a discussion of the date of the original version, cf. D. Bruce, "The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Psalms," *PMLA* 9 (1904) 43-164; Wildhagen, *op. cit.* 464-472.

³⁹ For the text of St. Jerome's "Hebrew" version, cf. J. M. Harden, *Psalterium Juxta Hebraeos Hieronymi* (London, 1922) p. 15; for the Ricemarch Ps., cf. H. J. Lawler, *The Psalter and Martyrology of Ricemarch*, H. B. Soc. 47 (London, 1914) 1.33.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Die Schriften Notkers u. seiner Schule*, ed. by P. Piper, Band II (Freiburg u. Tübingen, 1882) pp. 45.626.

phrase is rendered in Ps. 16, 8: also dia sehein sines ougen, and in Deut. 32, 10: also sines ougen. On the other hand, in a 10th century Psalter, from which fragments of the Canticles only survive,⁴¹ the rendering of the phrase in Deuteronomy is "the apple of the eye"; "also aphilon (MS aphhum) ougun sin."

Our evidence for the use of the word "apple" to translate the Latin *pupilla* carries us back into the latter half of the 9th century, although "apple" as the name of the fruit occurs earlier.⁴² It suggests also that, since the figurative meaning is not found among the northern branches of the Germanic family and does not occur in Aelfric, in the earliest English Psalters except the West-Saxon, or in Notker, this use of the word was restricted in extent and was perhaps confined at first to a gloss on the verses in a Psalter or on the Versicle in some other type of service-book.

To account for this restricted use of the word and at the same time for the curious semantic shift by which the pupil of the eye is designated "apple," an explanation is necessary and I offer the following as one that at least fits in with the facts.

Among the books which King Aelfred translated, or adapted, from the Latin was *The Soliloquies* of St. Augustine. Here in a passage dealing with geometric figures, the question is asked: *nosti etiam pilam quam sphaeram nominant?* where *pila* has its usual meaning of "round object," "ball." In the corresponding passage in Aelfred's adaptation⁴³ he employs the word *æpple*, apparently as a translation of *pila*; his words are: on ānum þōdera (= sphaera) oðþe on æpple oðþe on æge ātēfred. There is a similar use of "apple" in the sense of "round object," "ball,"⁴⁴ in the Anglo-Saxon version of the Solomon and Saturn story, dating perhaps from the ninth century: ⁴⁵ worpað hine deofol . . . of blacere lidran irenum

⁴¹ Ed. by Huet, Bibl. de l'École des Chartes, 46 (1885) 496–502; cf. W. Braune, *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, 9te Aufl., bearbeitet von K. Helm (Halle, 1928) p. 43.

⁴² For example, in the Corpus Glossary of the 8th century, ed. by Lindsay (Cambridge, 1926) p. 39, s.v. Citonium: good æppel.

⁴³ Cf. H. L. Hargrove, *King Aelfred's Old English Version of St. Augustine's Soliloquies* (N. Y. 1902) (Yale Studies in English 13) p. 20.

⁴⁴ Cf. W. M. Grein, *Sprachschatz der Angelsächsischen Dichter*, neu herausgegeben von J. J. Kohler (Heidelberg, 1912) s.v. *aepl*, *æppel*, who cites the verse quoted to illustrate the meaning, *quidvis globosum*. The reading given by J. M. Kemble in his edition of the poem, *The Dialogue of Salomon and Saturnus* (London, Printed for the Aelfric Society, 1843) 135.55, is "irenum afalum" which he translates, "with iron strength." The *New Dictionary* cites another example from Maundray (about 1366): "he was wont to holden a round Appelle of gold in his honde."

⁴⁵ On the question of the date, cf. AR. von Vincenti, *Drei altenglische Dialoge von Salomon und Saturn*, Diss. (Naum a.S., 1904) 38–42.

aplum. This is a natural semantic shift, one that may be illustrated by our modern use of "apple" for "ball" in base-ball slang. If, then, when once the association of *pila* = "ball" = "apple" had been established, there was current a Latin MS, either of the Psalter or of the Hours, in which the word *pupilla*, or *pupula* as it is sometimes spelled,⁴⁶ had come to be written, owing either to a ligature or to syllabic division or to haplography,⁴⁷ in some form that suggested *pila*, an Anglo-Saxon scribe might easily have glossed this by "apple" in the sense of "ball."

The chances of such confusion would have been numerous, if, as the evidence suggests, the Latin MS in which the scribe wrote his gloss, had been written by an Irish hand, for Irish MSS show many examples of similar peculiarities of writing.⁴⁸ The gloss itself, however, certainly was not of Irish provenience since in early Irish documents the word for pupil is *macc immlesén*, *lit.* "son of the eye"⁴⁹ and this is the word which appears as a gloss on *pupillam oculi* in the Old Irish glosses which accompany the Latin Commentary on the Psalms, sometimes attributed to St. Columban.⁵⁰ In any event, when the Anglo-Saxon translation had once been written over the Latin text, any succeeding scribe who wished to copy it would have copied "apple" into his book, just as the writer of the Paris Psalter did, whether *pupilla* or some other form similar to it stood in his Latin text. It must be borne in mind that such a gloss was made, no doubt by some monk who knew little Latin,

⁴⁶ Cf. above p. 183, n. 5.

⁴⁷ As an illustration of such a possibility, it may be noted that in the MS of the Hours, ed. by Dewick, *op. cit.* we find in the facsimile, fol. 5b, the Versicle written: *custodi nos Dñe ut pp.* A similar misreading may have resulted in the gloss in a Pictorial Vocabulary of the 15th cen.: *pupilla*, the balle of the ye; cf. Wright-Wuelcker, *op. cit.* 1.747.

⁴⁸ Cf. W. M. Lindsay, *Notae Latinae* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1915) p. 439. *Early Irish Minnscale Script* (Oxford, 1910) 70ff.; and especially E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, Part III (Oxford, 1938) No. 326, for examples from Cod. Ambros. C. 301, written in Ireland, 8th-9th century, containing a Latin commentary in the Psalms with Old-Irish glosses.

⁴⁹ Cf. E. W. Windisch, *Irische Texte* (Leipzig, 1886-94) 1.626. This expression is analogous with the Latin *pupilla*, the Greek *κόρη* and Hebrew *ishôn*, "little man" which occur in the O-T. passages cited above.

⁵⁰ For this MS cf. E. A. Lowe, cited in the above note and the references given by him on p. 44. The MS and the glosses are edited by G. I. Ascoli, *Il Codice Irlandese dell' Ambrosiana*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1878-9); for Ps. 16, 8, cf. 1.131-2. I am indebted to my colleague, Professor Konstantin Reichardt, for a translation of the glosses. There is some relationship, I may note, between this Commentary and the Paris Psalter, as far at least as Ps. 16, 8 is concerned, for we find in both a reference to the protection of the pupil by the eye-lids; cf. above, p. 188.

for a practical purpose, to enable his fellows, who may have known less, to say their daily devotions in their own tongue. If they said the Latin at all, they said *pupillam oculi*, in Psalm and Chant and Sentence, if in English, "apple of the eye" and the mental association *pupilla* = apple would have become firmly established. This association would, however, have been confined at first to the community wherein the translation had found a place as part of the daily office and the result would have been precisely that which the evidence presented above discloses; the phrase "apple of the eye" was current at first within narrow limits, Winchester and its environs; it was confined to Aelfred's translations from Latin and to the West-Saxon version of the Psalter; it was not in general use at the time these were written, otherwise it is impossible to explain why some traces of it do not appear in the contemporary Psalters and word-lists. After the phrase had become established in a community through its daily use in monastic devotions, some missionary doubtless carried it to the continent and translated⁵¹ it into the corresponding German phrase seen in the canticle quoted above (p. 189). In England, the cultural influence of Winchester and Salisbury is sufficient to explain its appearance in the 14th century Psalters, and in Wyclif's Bible, whence it passed into all the later versions and into our common speech.

⁵¹ In a note on an Old-German fragment of the Psalms, dating from the 9th century, Schmeller, *Germania* 2.100 notes that the translation was not made by a native German and compares the appearance in England of the contemporary West-Saxon version.