[128] Exalt or To Elevate (*Exaltare uel Eleuare*)

Exalt or to elevate. Sometimes exaltation happens for the good, Ezech. 17[:24]: “I exalted the low tree.” However much deeper the tree is rooted, so much the more it is elevated. And however much more a person is humble, so much the more is he worthy to be raised up. Wherefore Josh. 3[:7], when the Lord saw him humble he said, “This day will I begin to exalt you.” Therefore, he said to the Blessed Virgin, Luke 1[:52]: “He has put down the mighty from their seat and has exalted the humble.” And Eccli. 11[:1]: “The wisdom of the humble shall exalt his head,” on account of which the first epistle of Pet. 5[:6]: “Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation.” And because Christ “was made obedient unto death … for which cause God also has exalted him,” Philip. 2[8-9]. In which Joseph said, the final chapter of Gen. [50:20], to his brothers, “You thought evil against me: but God turned it into good, that he might exalt me.”

So also, sometimes exaltation in evil, vain, or empty matters are not lightly exalted. Wherefore to raise up the Old Testament because it had to be elevated for carrying from place to place it was empty, Exod. 27[:7]. So those who are empty of grace and virtues are easily raised up by pride, Job. 11[:12]: “A vain man is lifted up into pride.” Therefore, the first angel said that in Isai. 14[:13, 15]: “I will exalt my throne above the stars.” But if follows, “But yet you shall be brought down to hell,” And 3 Kings 1[:5]: “Adonias exalted himself, saying: I will be king.” Because of which he was killed by Solomon.

¶ Again Gregory,[[1]](#endnote-1) speaking of Lucifer said how therefore he ascended the mass of the earth there where he could not so lightly remain. Because of this according to Ambrose, in his *Hexameron*,[[2]](#endnote-2) a bee because it is light and empty when it is moved to ascend takes in its feet a pebble or a portion of the earth lest it be blown about by the wind. So, they ought who are tempted by pride, to think on their earthly matters so that they may be humbled. Wherefore it is read of Nabugodonosor, Dan. 5[:20] because he was raised up too much. Therefore God humbled him until he recognized himself, just as the beetles which are born out of horse manure, according to Isidore, 12 of the *Etymologiae*,[[3]](#endnote-3) are raised up above the horses, but quickly they fall, Prov. 30[:21-22, 32]: “By three things the earth is disturbed,” of which one is “by a slave when he reigns” and it follows “a fool after he was lifted up on high.” It is figured to this in Gen. 40[:17] concerning the baskets which he saw lifted, the birds ate, in which the death of the carrier is figured. Thus spiritually in exaltation through pride is signified death of the proud man, the greatest turpitude, then one appears great when he is elevated, thus it is concerning the foolish, just as it is evident concerning Saul and Roboam, a yellow earthen pot, however much more it is elevated, so much the more it is crushed when it falls, just as in Prov. 18[:12]: “Before destruction, the heart of a man is exalted: and before he is glorified, it is humbled.” *De consolacione*,[[4]](#endnote-4) touches upon this because Hercules could not conquer that giant brought forth from the earth, in humility he raised him up and conquered.

1. Cf. Gregory, *Moralia* 10.18.34 (PL 75:940): Ruituram se per momenta conspicit, eique ne arma repugnationis arripiat gravius moeror ipse contradicit. Circumductos quolibet oculos obscuritas obsidet, et cum visum tenebrae semper impediant, moesta mens nihil aliud quam tenebras videt. Sed apud misericordem judicem saepe haec ipsa, quae adnisum quoque orationis aggravat, pro nobis subtilius tristitia exorat.

It sees itself momentrily on the point of falling headlong, and grief itself withstands it worse, that it should not lay hold of the arms of resistance. Mists encompass the eyes, wherever turned about, and whereas darkness ever obstructs the sight, the sad sould sees nought else than darkness; but with the merciful Judge it often happens that this very sadness, which even weighs down the effect of prayer, intercedes for us the more piercingly. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Ambrose, cf. Virgil, *Georgics* 4.194-196 (LCL 63:232-233): et saepe lapillos, ut cumbae instabiles fluctu iactante saburram,

tollunt, his sese per inania nubila librant.

and often they raise tiny stones, as unsteady barques take up ballast in a tossing sea, and with these balance themselves amid the unsubstantial clouds. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 12.8.4 (PL 82:470): Crabrones vocati a cabo, id est, caballo, quod ex his creentur, sicut autem crabrones nascuntur de equorum carnibus putridis, ita ex eis iterum saepe nascuntur scarabaei, unde et cognominati sunt. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Boethius, *De consolatione Philosophiae* 4, met. 7.25 note (PL 63:827): Stravit Antaeum Libycis arenis.] Nonus Herculis labor. Antaeus Neptuni ex terra filius tanto corpore praeditus, ut in quadraginta cubitos excreverit. Hic cum Hercule congressus, quoties membra deficiebant, toties, tacta terra, recreabatur, quod animadvertens Hercules, eumdem in aere pressum interfecit. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)