325 Arrow (*Sagitta*)

According to Gregory, book 6 *Moralia*,[[1]](#endnote-1)an arrow sometimes is said to be preaching, sometimes a turning of the mind to divine matters. For the first, Psal. [44:6]: “The arrows of the powerful are sharp: under you shall people fall, into the hearts [of the king's enemies].” For the second, Job [6:3-4]: “My words are full of sorrow: For the arrows of the Lord are in me.”

Concerning the first, it is to be known that an arrow is most apt in hunting heaven because it quickly reaches a fleeing beast. So is the word of the preacher. For the preacher is the hunter of souls. Therefore, he ought to send sharp words as if arrows which pierce sinners, Psal. [126:4]: *“*As arrows in the hand of the mighty, so the children of them that have been shaken,” that is, of the preachers who are the sons of the apostles who are said to be shaken. Therefore, Christ said to them, “Shake off even the dust of your feet,” Luke 9[:5]. Isai. 49[:2] even says, “He has made me as a chosen arrow.” David was armed with these arrows by Jonathan for the enemies of Saul, 1 Kings 20[:20-40], so through the word of preaching, man is armed for the persecution of the devil against him.

¶ By this arrow the king of Israel was wounded, [3 Kings 22:34]. It was directed by someone and it went into his insides not at a small determined place, and when he was pierced where the principle archer God wished, who says in Deut. 32[:23]: “I will fill them with my arrows.” Therefore, that appears to be true, Psal. [17:15]: “He sent forth his arrows, and he scattered them.” Because the word of God scatters the sinners. Here however note just as it is said in 4 Kings 13[:16-17] that when the king of Israel Joas had to shoot arrows against the Syrians, Eliseus the prophet put his hand upon the hand of the archer saying, “The arrow of the Lord's deliverance from Syria.” There according to the Master in the *Historiale* 2 Kings 1[:22]:[[2]](#endnote-2) “The arrow of Jonathan never turned back,” because it was directed by a boy. Therefore, believing to pierce a wild beast, he pierced a wild beast, he pierced a man, [Gen. 4:23].

¶ Again, sometimes by arrow is understood temptation as suggested by Prov. 7[:23] even “he knows not that the arrow pierces his liver,” because just as the arrow wounds from afar and gravely. And temptation is costlier because according to Jerome,[[3]](#endnote-3) lust tames the iron minds. But according to the Philosopher, book 8 *De animalibus* c. 3,[[4]](#endnote-4) goats in Crete seek the herb pennyroyal to draw out the arrow from a wound, so to draw out the wound of temptation, namely, bitter penance.

1. Gregory, *Moralia* 7.4.4 (PL 75:769): Sagittis praedicatio vel poena signatur.---Sagittarum [Col.0769A] quippe nomine aliquando praedicationis verba, aliquando animadversionis sententiae designantur. Praedicationis namque eloquia sagittis exprimuntur, quia in eo quod vitia feriunt, male viventium corda transfigunt. De his sagittis venienti Redemptori dicitur: Sagittae tuae acutae, potentissime; populi sub te cadent in corde (Psal. XLIV, 6). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Peter Comestor, *Historia scholastica* 2 Regum 1 (PL 198:1323-1324): «Et praecepit David, ut patres docerent filios suos carmen arcuum,» ubi alii habent, «docerent filios [Col.1324B] suos arcum,» id est artem sagittandi, eo quod audierit populum a sagittariis interfectum, sicut scriptum est in libro Justorum.

   Cf. Peter Comestor, *Historia scholastica* Genesis 28 (PL 198:1079): Lamech vero vir sagittarius diu vivendo caliginem oculorum incurrit, et habens adolescentem ducem; dum exerceret venationem, pro delectatione tantum, et usu pellium, quia non erat usus carnium ante diluvium, casu interfecit [Col.1079D] Cain inter fructeta, aestimans feram, quem, quia ad indicium juvenis dirigens sagittam, interfecit. Et cum experiretur quod hominem, scilicet Cain, interfecisset, iratus illic cum arcu ad mortem verberavit eum. Occiderat ergo Cain in vulnere, adolescentem in livore vulneris. Vel utrumque occiderat in vulnus, et livorem suum, id est in damnationem suam. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Jerome, *Epistola* 117.6 (PL 22:957): Inter has et tantas illecebras voluptatum, etiam ferreas mentes libido domat: quae majorem in virginibus patitur famem, dum dulcius putat omne quod nescit. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Aristotle, *History of Animals* 9.6 612a3 (Barnes 1.954):

   Wild goats in Crete are said, when wounded by arrows, to go in search of dittany, which is supposed to have the property of ejecting arrows in the body. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)