396 Wounds (*Vulnera*)

A sinner is wounded when he falls in some mortal sin, Job 24[:12]: “The soul of the wounded hath cried out.” According to Isidore, *Etymologia* 12,[[1]](#endnote-1) poison does not work until the flesh is wounded or it arrives at the blood. The flesh is wounded so that it may arrive at the blood, so neither does sin work until it enters to the consent. About which it is to be known that the world wounds through avarice, the flesh through concupiscence, and the devil through pride.

Concerning the first, Jer. 51[:52]: “In all her land the wounded shall groan.” It is impossible for a man to be well versed about thorns unless he has sometime been wounded. For “he that cuts trees, shall be wounded by them,” Eccle. 10[:9]. Wherefore that is verified of Lam. 2[:12]: “They fainted away as the wounded in the streets of the city.” Ambrose says,[[2]](#endnote-2) that crows lead storks toward Asia if they always return wounded. So, men who leave off from the nest. Seneca, *Epistula* 60,[[3]](#endnote-3) Alexander the Great while he went about besieging a city was wounded, and thus he recognized himself to be a man. Can. 5[:7] it is read that while the bride went out through the roads and streets of the city and the watchmen wounded her and took away her veil. So, sin injures, and conversation takes away honesty.

Concerning the second, that the flesh wounds through concupiscence, Can. 4[:9]: “You have wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, with one of your eyes.” So, it is concerning the concupiscence of women says Isidore, book [12], chapter 27,[[4]](#endnote-4) the basilisk wounds birds flying above it and makes them fall by its poisonous sight. So, one is wounded, Prov. 7[:26]: “She has cast down many wounded.” This is evident, Gen. 34[:25-26] concerning Dina on account of whom many were wounded and killed, when the pain of the wound was greatest. Wherefor it is read in Dan 13[:9] concerning those elders that both were wounded. Wherefore Pamphilus,[[5]](#endnote-5) the author of his own young foolishness: I am wounded and bear the arrow deep in my breast.

¶ Concerning the third, that the devil wounds through pride, Isai. 14[:12]: “How are you fallen to the earth, that did wound the nations.” The wound of pride always has a fall. Pliny says,[[6]](#endnote-6) that no matter what, the big dog naturally chases the stag. However, if he is wounded, he descends from the mountain and fleeing hides himself. So ought a man wounded by pride descend to humility, Eccli. 27[:22]: “He is fled, as a roe escaped out of the snare: because his soul is wounded.” David bewails this fall, [2] Kings 1[:18]: “Consider, O Israel, for them that are dead, wounded on your high places.”

¶ Again, Augustine, in the book *De singulis clericorum*,[[7]](#endnote-7) says sharper than riches are envied by the poor, and not destitute, but the wealthy are disturbed by the harassment of robbers. More dukes and princes than soldiers are attacked in battle. More violently are they driven back by the winds to the higher summits. Wherefore 3 Kings 2[:34] in the war of the king of Israel against the Syrians only Achab is read to have been wounded, Isai. 53[:5]: “He was wounded for our iniquities, by his bruises we are healed.” The pelican[[8]](#endnote-8) wounds herself to heal her chicks killed by the serpent. So, Christ on account of humanity, Luke 10[:33] it is read that the Samaritan approaching the wounded, bound up his wounds, so also Christ. Wherefore according to Bernard,[[9]](#endnote-9) he says the souls of the sinner weigh me down more, your sins than my wounds. Note how Theseus[[10]](#endnote-10) coming in aid of the Trojans was wounded by Achilles. So, because he could not be cured by the physicians, consulting Apollo received in response that he would be cured if he were struck on the same road and by the same lance which also was to be done by the same Achilles. Wherefore Ovid, *De remedia*,[[11]](#endnote-11)the Achillean wound which formerly the spear made; the help for the wound was the spear of Peleus.

1. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 12.4.42 (PL 82:447): Unde non potest venenum nocere, nisi hominis tetigerit sanguinem. Lucanus:

Noxia serpentum est admisto sanguine pestis.

Omne autem venenum frigidum est, et ideo anima, quae ignea est, fugit venenum frigidum. In naturalibus bonis, quae nobis et irrationabilibus animantibus videmus esse communia, vivacitate quadam sensus serpens excellit. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Ambrose, *Hexameron* 5.16.53 (PL 14:228-229): Ciconias ferunt collecto proficisci agmine, si quo pergendum putant, et simul plerisque circa Orientem locis invehi, et quasi tessera militari pariter omnes moveri. Exercitum credas cum signis suis pergere, sic omnes viandi comitandique et praeeundi ordinem servant. Cornices autem deducunt eas ac [Col.0229A] dirigunt, et velut quibusdam turmis stipatricibus prosequuntur; adeo ut adjumenta quaedam bellantibus adversus iynimicas aves conferre credantur, et propriis periculis bella aliena suscipere. Cujus rei indicium est, quia nullae per intervallum aliquod temporis residere in iis locis reperiuntur; et quia cum vulneribus revertentes manifesta quadam sanguinis sui voce caeterisque loquuntur indiciis gravium se certaminum subiisse conflictum.

Cf. Bartholomaeus Anglicus [13th century CE] (De proprietatibus rerum, book 12): The crow is a bird of long life, and diviners tell that she taketh heed of spyings and awaitings, and teacheth and sheweth ways, and warneth what shall fall. But it is full unlawful to believe, that God sheweth His privy counsel to crows. It is said that crows rule and lead storks, and come about them as it were in routs, and fly about the storks and defend them, and fight against other birds and fowls that hate storks. And take upon them the battle of other birds, upon their own peril. And an open proof thereof is: for in that time, that the storks pass out of the country, crows are not seen in places there they were wont to be. And also for they come again with sore wounds, and with voice of blood, that is well known, and with other signs and tokens and show that they have been in strong fighting. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Seneca, *Epistula* 59.12 (LCL 75:416-417): Alexander cum iam in India vagaretur et gentes ne finitimis quidem satis notas bello vastaret, in obsidione cuiusdam urbis, dum2 circumit muros et inbecillissima moenium quaerit, sagitta ictus diu persedere et incepta agere perseveravit. Deinde cum represso sanguine sicci vulneris dolor cresceret et crus suspensum equo paulatim optorpuisset, coactus apsistere “Omnes,” inquit, “iurant esse me Iovis filium, sed vulnus hoc hominem esse me clamat.”

Alexander was roaming as far as India, ravaging tribes that were but little known, even to their neighbours. During the blockade of a certain city, while he was reconnoitring the walls and hunting for the weakest spot in the fortifications, he was wounded by an arrow. Nevertheless, he long continued the siege, intent on finishing what he had begun. The pain of his wound, however, as the surface became dry and as the flow of blood was checked, increased; his leg gradually became numb as he sat his horse; and finally, when he was forced to withdraw, he exclaimed: “All men swear that I am the son of Jupiter, but this wound cries out that I am mortal.” [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 12.4.6 (PL 82:443): Basiliscus Graece, Latine interpretatur regulus, eo quod rex serpentium sit, adeo ut eum videntes fugiant, quia olfactu suo eos necat, nam et hominem, vel si aspiciat, interimit. Siquidem ad ejus aspectum nulla avis volans illaesa transit, sed quamvis procul sit, ejus ore combusta devoratur. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. *Pamphilus, de Amore*, lines 1-2 ed. Jakob Ulrich, *Pamphilus: comoedia elegiaca medioaevalis: ex codice turicensi* (Turici: Typis Zuercheri et Furreri, 1893, p. 1): Vulneror et clausum porto sub pectore telum / Crescit et assidue plaga dolorque mihi.

Cf. Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, “The Franklin’s Tale” lines 1109-1112: Under his brest he baar it moore secree / Than evere dide Pamphilus for Galathee. / His brest was hool, without for to sene, / But in his herte ay was the arwe kene.

Cf. Thomas Jay Garbaty, “‘Pamphilus, de Amore’: An Introduction and Translation,” *The Chaucer Review* 2.2 (Fall, 1967), pp. 108-134, p. 111: I am wounded, and bear the arrow deep in my breast; / My injury and grief wax in me ever…. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Pliny, [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Augustine, cf. Cyprianus Carthageinensis, *De singularitate clericorum* (PL 4:867): Acrius divitibus quam pauperibus invidetur, et non inopes, sed locupletes inquietat infestatio saeva [Col.0868A] latronum. Plus duces et principes quam milites ab hostibus appetuntur in pugna: et violentibus propulsantur ventis et turbinibus culmina, quaecumque sunt altiora. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Cf. Bartholomaeus Anglicus [13th century CE] (De proprietatibus rerum, book 12): they smite the father and the mother in the face, wherefore the mother smiteth them again and slayeth them. And the third day, the mother smiteth herself in her side, that the blood runneth out, and sheddeth that hot blood on the bodies of her children. And by virtue of that blood, the birds that were before dead quicken again. Master Jacobus de Vitriaco in his book of the wonders of the Eastern parts telleth another cause of the death of pelicans' birds. He saith that the serpent hateth kindly this bird. Wherefore when the mother passeth out of the nest to get meat, the serpent climbeth on the tree, and stingeth and infecteth the birds. And when the mother cometh again, she maketh sorrow three days for her birds, as it is said. Then (he saith) she smiteth herself in the breast and springeth blood upon them, and reareth them from death to life, and then for great bleeding the mother waxeth feeble, and the birds are compelled to pass out of the nest to get themselves meat. And some of them for kind love feed the mother that is feeble, and some are unkind and care not for the mother, and the mother taketh good heed thereto, and when she cometh to her strength, she nourisheth and loveth those birds that fed her in her need, and putteth away her other birds, as unworthy and unkind, and suffereth them not to dwell nor live with her. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Bernardus, *Exordium Magnum Ordinis Cisterrciensis* 4.1 (PL 185:1096): Ecce peccata tua deleta sunt a facie mea. Veni ergo securus, veni et vide, ac deosculare vulnera mea quae tantum dilexisti et toties confovisti. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Theseus, this story is that of Telephus. Telephus was wounded by Achilles when the Achaeans came to his kingdom on their way to sack Troy, and later healed by Achilles. Telephus' wound would not heal. Telephus consulted the oracle of Apollo which gave the reply, your assailant will heal you. So Telephus went to Argos to seek a cure, and there was healed by Achilles.

Cf. Dictys Cretensis 2.3: Thereupon Achilles who, from some distance, had seen what had happened, hurled his spear and pierced the king’s left thigh. But Telephus rose quickly and, having drawn out the spear, escaped immediate destruction under cover of a group of his men who had come to the rescue.

2.10: At the same time Telephus hastened to sail to Argos to find relief for the wound he had received while fighting our men. Having suffered a long time and found no remedy, he had gone to the oracle of Apollo, and there been told to consult Achilels and the sons of Aesculapius. He reported the oracle to all or our leaders, who were wondering why he had come, and begged them – they were his friends – not to deny the predicted remedy. On hearing his plea, Achilles, Machaon, and Podalirius treated his wound, and thus soon proved the oracle true.

<https://www.theoi.com/Text/DictysCretensis2.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 13.171-172 (LCL 43:240-241): ergo opera illius mea sunt: ego Telephon hasta pugnantem domui, victum orantemque refeci;

So then, all that he did is mine. ’Twas I who conquered the warring Telephus with my spear and healed him, vanquished and begging aid.

Cf. Apollodorus, *The Library*, Epitome 20 (LCL 122:188-189): But Telephus, because his wound was unhealed, and Apollo had told him that he would be cured when the one who wounded him should turn physician, came from Mysia to Argos, clad in rags, and begged the help of Achilles, promising to show the course to steer for Troy. So Achilles healed him by scraping off the rust of his Pelian spear. Accordingly, on being healed, Telephus showed the course to steer, [↑](#endnote-ref-11)