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Chaucer's reading list: Sir Thopas, Auchinleck, and Middle English romances in translation

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ABSTRACT

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Middle English romance has never attained critical respectability, dismissed as "vayn carpynge" in its own age and treated as a junk-food form of medieval literature or kidnapped for political or psychoanalytical readings. Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas* has been explained as an acidly sarcastic satire of the romances' supposedly clichéd formulas and poetically unskilled authors. Yet such assumptions require investigation of how Chaucer and his ostensible audience might have viewed romance as a genre. Chaucer's likely use of the Auchinleck manuscript forms a convenient basis for examination of the romances listed in *Thopas*. With the aid of a modern translation, the poems turn out to form a rich interplay of symbolical, theological, and historical meanings. Viewed in a more sensitive light, the Middle English romances in turn give *Thopas* new meaning as a poem written affectionately to parody romance but chiefly to effect a humorous contrast. Rather than condemning romances, Chaucer uses their best examples to heighten Thopas' comic impotence as a knight and to provide self-deprecating carnival laughter at Chaucer the narrator's failed story.

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Soli Deo Gloria.

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INTRODUCTION

The Medieval Romance and *Sir Thopas*

A wit-besotting trash of books. —Montaigne, on medieval romances.[1]

One frustration of engaging in any branch of European medieval studies as an academic pursuit is that few claim expertise about the ancient or Roman worlds, but seemingly everyone on an internet discussion forum believes him or herself knowledgeable about the medieval period, usually based on patently false beliefs. Outside academia, the popular understanding of the period usually presumes one of two stereotypes. The first is the 'merry-old-England' cliché of the renaissance fair, where undergraduates dress as Vikings with *Hagar the Horrible* horns and discuss trivial minutiae of medieval weaponry, while flirting with underdressed wenches who serve mead. Hollywood films similarly depict any English century before the nineteenth as one where knights exclaim "forsooth, varlet" in stilted Victorian accents. While puerile and anachronistic, the trope is at least benign in comparison to the second common image of the era, which persistently retains the pejorative mislabel *dark ages*. This Monty Pythonesque world reeks of ignorance, plague, war, an oppressive and misogynist church, violence, inquisitions, and witch hunts, hence the slang *get medieval* on someone. The medieval Europeans enjoyed regular baths, but to state that they bathed at all invites incredulity among non-specialists.

Doubly frustrating is the practice among scholars to belittle and misrepresent the medieval period in order to place other eras in brighter relief. Just as classicists depict

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[1] John Florio, trans., *The Essayes of Michael Lord of Montaigne*, 2 vols. (London, 1603), vol. 2, ch. 25, quoted in Nicola McDonald, *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England* (Manchester: University Press, 2004), 3.

Greco-Roman culture as fantastically idyllic and sophisticated, Renaissance humanists imagine a sudden birth of civilization in post-plague Europe and present, "for purposes of contrast, a grossly simplified image of the preceding age."[2] The early modern appraisal of the medieval period and its literature was consistently disdainful. Just as gunpowder helped make chivalry obsolete, its poetic values were regarded as primitive. Nashe was typical in writing about *Bevis of Hampton* in 1589 and asking who "can forbeare laughing" at the "worne out absurdities" of its "plodding meeter."[3] Milton disparages poetic rhyme itself as "the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame meter."[4] Caxton ostensibly still held a sentimental view of a passing age when he wrote in 1483, "O ye knyghtes of Englond, where is the custome and usage of noble chivalry that was used in tho days?"[5] Yet in general, medieval literature and romance in particular had few friends in high places in the early modern era.

Much of the condemnation was moral. Even in its own time, the romance genre was dismissed as "vayn carpynge" by medieval churchmen, a sentiment going back as far as Alcuin's complaint in 797 to the monks at Lindisfarne, "Quid enim Hinieldus cum Christo?" ("What has Ingeld to do with Christ?") A homily complains that men who are unmoved by an account of Christ's passion are "stirred to tears when the tale of *Guy of*

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[2] John A. Burrow, "*Alterity* and Middle English Literature," *Review of English Studies* 50:200 (1999): 491.

[3] Thomas Nashe, *The Anatomy of Absurdity* (1589), in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, Vol. III, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow (London, 1905), 26.

[4] John Milton, Introduction ("The Verse"), *Paradise Lost*, Second Edition (1674), in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, The Sixteenth Century and Early Seventeenth Century Vol. B eighth ed.*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).

[5] William Caxton, "Exhortation to the Knights of England" (1483), quoted in Larry D. Benson and John Leyerle, ed., *Chivalric Literature* (Kalamazoo: The Board of the Medieval Institute, 1980), xiii.

Warwick is read."[6] Such reproaches evidently did not go beyond sporadic grumbling, for romances required expensive parchment and clerics to write them, but the condemnations intensified in Elizabethan England even as printing eased their transmission. Churchman Francis Meres cautioned that such wanton stories were "hurtful to youth."[7] The early humanists had equally firm if secular objections against the corrupting moral example of the sensational plots and heroes of romances. Juan Luis Vives, Spanish humanist and friend to Thomas More, warned that romances make their audiences "wylye and craftye, they kindle and styr up couetousnes, inflame angre, and all beastly and filthy desyre."[8] Roger Ascham thundered in 1545 that their reading leads to "none other ends, but only manslaughter and baudrye."[9]

Nicola McDonald notes that modern critics have treated such remarks with "humorous detachment," [10] wondering how the genre could ever be seen as threatening enough to exercise its critics so. Like early fulminations against rock music in the 1950s, the comments seem amusingly quaint. Yet Restoration and Romantic era academics were no less hostile to medieval English literature. Partly the criticism originated in post-medieval and anti-Catholic prejudice.[11] Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

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[6] In G.R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1933), 14, quoted in Albert C. Baugh, "The Middle English Romance: Some Questions of Creation, Presentation, and Preservation," *Speculum* 42:1 (1967): 2.

[7] Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury* (1598), ed. Gregory Smith, *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1904) 308-309, quoted in Ronald S. Crane, "The Vogue of *Guy of Warwick* from the Close of the Middle Ages to the Romantic Revival," *PMLA* 30:2 (1915): 139.

[8] McDonald, 3.

[9] Roger Ascham, *Toxophilus*, ed. W.A. Wright, *English Works* (Cambridge, 1904) xiv, quoted in McDonald, 3.

[10] McDonald, 3-4.

[11] McDonald, 4.

(1782) is still lauded as a magisterial work in historical analysis. Among other feats, he helped to establish the modern footnote system.[12] Nevertheless, his work extols Rome by negatively juxtaposing it against "the triumph of barbarism and religion"[13] following the empire's decline. For Gibbon's contemporaries who esteemed the Latin of Cicero as the apex of language and rhetoric, modern English was an inferior replacement and early grammars often forced English into procrustean Latin models.[14] Medieval English romance, mostly treating of non-classical narratives and, even worse, set in a Christian world, would have been beneath contempt.

Yet on the whole modern critics have shifted the basis of their condemnation of medieval romance from moral to aesthetic grounds. McDonald again notes that romance's putative friends have been no kinder than its enemies, as scholarship has repeatedly been colored by a "veiled repugnance" to the genre.[15] The first major modern anthology of romance, Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), was considered a sort of youthful indulgence by its author, who declined to sign his name to later editions upon taking up more serious interests. Similarly, in George Ellis' *Specimens*

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[12] Robert J. Connors, "The Rhetoric of Citation Systems, Part I: The Development of Annotation Structures from the Renaissance to 1900," *Rhetoric Review* 17:1 (1998): 35.

[13] Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1782), Vol. 6, Ch. 71, Part 1. Gibbon argues that "the introduction, or at least the abuse of Christianity, had some influence on the decline and fall of the Roman empire. The clergy successfully preached the doctrines of patience and pusillanimity; the active virtues of society were discouraged; and the last remains of military spirit were buried in the cloister" (Vol. 3, Ch. 38, Part 6). While respecting his acumen, some modern historians object that the eastern empire was no less devout and lasted another eleven centuries after Constantine.

[14] Celia M. Millward, *A Biography of the English Language* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 210.

[15] McDonald, 5.

of Early English Metrical Romances (1805), there is a sort of proper embarrassment at a gentleman dignifying such vulgarisms:

> [Ellis] mocks their long-winded plots, ludicrous emotions and general absurdity, retelling romances like *Guy of Warwick* and *Amis and Amiloun*, with the kind of smug irony that is designed only to assert his, and his reader's superiority over the imagined and denigrated medieval.[16]

Even among medieval specialists of the twentieth century, a critical binary prevails with Chaucer, Gower, *Gawain* / *Pearl*, and devotional texts comprising high culture. English romances, conversely, are the junk food of the period, seen as degenerated pastiches of continental originals cobbled together by "literary hacks,"[17] with formulaic plots and stereotyped characters. Baugh takes it as a commonplace that "every one knows that the Middle English romances are honeycombed with stock phrases and verbal clichés, often trite and at times seemingly forced."[18] At best their stylized repetition provides childish diversion, such as "children feel in *The Three Bears*."[19] Pearsall notes his difficulty in comprehending "why poems that are so bad according to almost every criteria of literary value should have held such a central position in the literature culture of their own period."[20]

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[16] McDonald, 7.

[17] Laura A. Hibbard Loomis, "The Auchinleck Manuscript and a Possible London Bookshop of 1330-1340," *PMLA* 57:3 (1942): 608.

[18] Albert C. Baugh, "Improvisation in the Middle English Romance," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 103:3 (1959): 420.

[19] J.S.P. Tatlock, "Epic Formulas, Especially in *Layamon*," *PMLA* 38:3 (1923): 528-529, quoted in Baugh, "Improvisation," 421.

[20] Derek Pearsall, "Understanding Middle English Romance," *Review* 2 (1980): 105, quoted in McDonald, 9.

The underlying tone in much criticism is the belief that romance chiefly sins by *being* popular, failing to be more rarified or serious in tone for the aesthete or to be more socially subversive for the revisionist. Unlike epic, which Bakhtin categorizes as a completed genre,[21] medieval romance grew into modern iterations from Una to Elizabeth Bennett to Bridget Jones. The manuscripts stubbornly survive in numbers larger and more geographically varied than any other medieval English genre, and the recorded libraries of everyone from well-off fishmongers to grocers to aristocrats included them.[22] By the thirteenth century the earliest recorded French bookseller appears with the nickname "Herneis le Romanceur."[23] Although probably not borne in fact, a claimed mark of breeding for a knight was reading romances,[24] and Chaucer depicts Creseyde with ladies listening to a reading of the Siege of Thebes (*TC* II.82-4). Edward II had fifty-nine books of romance in his library.[25] Well into Elizabethan England the tastes of the literate public remained medieval and romances were among the first popular printed books,[26] providing further materials for dramas and ballads. While by the Restoration the

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[21] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel," ed. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson, trans. Michael Holquist *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 3.

[22] An inventory of two bankrupt London grocers in the 1390s contained four books of romance. Ralph Hanna, *London Literature 1300-1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12. See also John Bowers, *The Politics of Pearl: Court Poetry in the Age of Richard II* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), who lists romances in the libraries of Sir Simon Burley and the Duke of Gloucester.

[23] J.S.P. Tatlock, "The Canterbury Tales in 1400," *PMLA* 50:1 (1935): 108.

[24] Harriet E. Hudson, "Construction of Class, Family, and Gender in Some Middle English Popular Romances," in *Class and Gender in Early English Literature,* ed. Britton J. Harwood and Gillian R. Overing (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 78. For arguments that the ideal was not reflected in reality see Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 140.

[25] Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England 1225-1360* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 54.

[26] Roland Crane asserts that early English humanists were less concerned with literature than with philosophical or theological matters. Roland S. Crane, 132-33.

Middle English language had become increasingly difficult, some verse and prose modernizations remained popular into the next century.[27]

McDonald sees a sort of secular Calvinist guilt in academia, which disparages medieval romances because they are enjoyable, with probably more than a little snobbery due to the cliché of present-day romances being the province of teenagers and housewives. Yet the themes and content of English medieval romances are not the same as modern exemplars, with their flavor of improbable *chick-flicks* and Harlequin novels at supermarket checkouts. Medieval romance suffers the additional problem of a lack of scholarly definition, and there was and is no consensus on just what comprises a romance. The earliest usage referred more to a story's Old French or Latinate origins, and for many the twelfth-century narratives of Chrétien de Troyes form "the 'paradigm' of romance."[28] Chaucer and his contemporaries also seem to have generalized romances as secular and not specifically historical works in French,[29] though later usage has the broader idea of any "fictitious narratives"[30] involving chivalrous or aristocratic deeds. English romance is thus a blurry designation which bleeds into genres as divergent as Arthurian legend, history, hagiography, and folktale.

Medieval romances often featured some quest or journey, which could be literal or emotional but often spiritual. Such pursuits include courtship and marital love, but not

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[27] See Roland Crane for editions and reworkings of *Guy of Warwick*, which continued to enjoy a readership, albeit increasingly as juvenilia, until the 1700s. Roland S. Crane, 193.

[28] Robert M. Jordan, "Chaucerian Romance?" *Yale French Studies* 51 (1974): 225.

[29] Susan Crane, *Gender and Romance in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (Princeton: University Press, 1994), 9.

[30] John Finlayson, "Definitions of Middle English Romance I," *Chaucer Review* 15:1 (1980): 46.

essentially—there are almost no women in *Gamelyn*, although its genre status as a romance is also questioned. Finlayson suggests that romances depict courtly adventure with "little or no connection with medieval actuality… not unlike the basic cowboy film."[31] Ker states that the old epic warriors always have "good reasons of their own for fighting"[32] which connect to external and real needs, whereas in romance the emphasis falls on the hero's individual achievements, with the causes a background and often perfunctory device. Hanna asserts the opposite, that although romance heroes lack psychological interiority, the narratives symbolically convey such emotions and meanings.[33] I can make no better synthesis than to argue that romances tend to have an escapist ethos which idealizes rather than realistically portrays. Thus while it serves the purpose here to speak of the style as a subgenre, it may be more accurate to call medieval English romance, like satire, a register or mode.[34]

Identifying the class audience of romance has been an equally contentious pursuit. Detractors assert that English romances, with their sentimental themes and oral-based structures, appealed almost exclusively to lower-class and non-literate audiences. Ostensibly, French stories were for court audiences and English ones for the *hoi polloi*,[35] with Latin, French, and English forming a clear hierarchy of taste and value regardless of content. English romances frequently feature scenes of civic celebration, and if they were

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[31] Finlayson, 55.

[32] W.P. Ker, *Epic and Romance* (London: MacMillan, 1922), 6.

[33] Hanna, 108-9.

[34] Pamela Graden does just this in "The Romance Mode," in *Form and Style in Early English Literature* (London: Methuen, 1971), 212-272.

[35] Robert Levine, "Who Composed *Havelock* For Whom?" *Yearbook of English Studies* 22 (1992): 97.

recited at such events—Havelock's coronation features games, music, and "romanz reding on the bok" (2327)[36]—they would have had a broad lay audience. Even if the *Havelock* poet lets the mask slip at the end by mentioning how he stayed up long nights writing the story (2998-9), he presents himself as a minstrel, at ease in a public space with an audience and "a cuppe of ful god ale" (14).

Yet recent scholarship points to a widely heterogeneous audience for English romances which included the lower aristocracy. *Sir Thopas*, albeit in parody, is addressed to "knyght and lady free" (*CT* VII.892). English works were not automatically seen as ignoble, as attested by rapidly declining levels of French fluency in the English gentry. Late in the thirteenth century, the *Arthur and Merlin* narrator notes that "mani noble ich haue yseiȝe / þat no Freynsche couþe seye" (25-6).[37] Scholars have judged English romances as vulgar corruptions of French originals, often misapplying the standards of Chrétien to a fundamentally different genre. Seaman argues that the English preference for less courtly rigor and more dragons in romance reflects a distinct and equally valid poetic culture.[38] Where continental romances endorse a value system of chivalry, the English ones are often homiletic.[39] We also forget that many of Chaucer's narratives (and nearly all of Shakespeare's) equally derive from continental originals and were praised for their respect and fidelity to *auctoritee*.

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[36] For *Havelock* and all other non-Chaucerian romances here I use TEAMS as sources unless noted.

[37] In Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 10.

[38] Myra Seaman, "Engendering Genre in Middle English Romance: Performing the Feminine in Beves of Hamtoun," *Studies in Philology* 98:1 (2001): 51.

[39] Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 5.

Moreover, the metafictional sense that exists within many romances suggests a skillful author able to appeal to multiple levels. The numerous references to the storytelling narrator, to other romances the audience is expected to know, and the "citation of bookish sources"[40] requires a certain sophistication to apprehend information above the narrative plane. Chaucer also occasionally drops metafictional touches, telling his "litel book" to go (*TC* V.1786). The requisite invocation to listen at the beginning of most romances may suggest a traditional oral situation but does not necessarily mean the author is literally a wandering minstrel,[41] any more than the fictional audience of "ye lovers" (*TC* I.22) that Chaucer addresses is a real one. Nevertheless, if romances were indeed sung out loud, as the invocation in *King Horn* suggests—"alle beon he blithe / that to my song lythe / a sang ich schal you singe / of Murry the Kinge" (1-4)— their performance may continue the same aristocratic tradition as the *Beowulf* scop who sings heroic lays before Hrothgar and his retainers.[42]

Chaucer and His Audience

There are few established facts about Chaucer's original audience for his works. Evidently he had one if his texts survived and were copied into the fifteenth century. Eighty-two manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales* are extant, a considerable number only surpassed by the *Prick of Conscience*. Much of his verse was disseminated in

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[40] McDonald, 14.

[41] Baugh, "Questions," 3.

[42] Baugh, "Questions," 18. Hrothgar's bard is lavishly praised as the "cyninges þegn / guma gilphlæden" ("the king's thane, a man of skilled eloquence"). *Beowulf*, ed. and trans. Howell D. Chickering, Jr. (Toronto: Anchor Books, 1977), lines 867-8.

"compilations for gentlemen, lawyers, and merchants,"[43] and he appears early in print in editions of Caxton and others. Some of his contemporary intimates refer to him in their own fiction. The poem *The Boke of Cupide* (or *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*), attributed to friend John Clanvowe, begins with a quote from the *Knight's Tale* (*CT* I.1785-6) and evinces a style deeply responsive to Chaucer's. Henry Scogan also alludes to *The Wife of Bath* in his works.[44] Paul Strohm's *Social Chaucer* asserts that Chaucer and his contemporaries would have considered writing without having an audience absurd. In the *Tale of Melibee*, signally, a wise man shamefully sits down upon losing the attention of his auditors, "for Salomen seith: 'Ther as thou ne mayst have noon audience, enforce thee nat to speke" (*CT* VII.1047-49). Chaucer's recurrent use of abbreviating phrases such as the tag "what nedeth wordes mo?" perhaps suggests a rhetorical anxiety about boring an audience of high-ranking listeners.[45] But who was Chaucer's audience in his own lifetime?

Chaucer is depicted reciting to a gentle audience in an early copy of *Troilus and Criseyde* (Cambridge MS 61) of about 1400-10. The picture is enticing but little is known. Richard II encouraged and rewarded cultural pursuits in his court, becoming close to several young literary courtiers.[46] Chaucer's poems textually "bespeak a courtly

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[43] Michael J. Bennett, "The Court of Richard II and the Promotion of Literature," in *Chaucer's England: Literature in Historical Context*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 5.

[44] Strohm, 77.

[45] W. Nelson Francis, "Chaucer Shortens a Tale," *PMLA* 68:5 (1953): 1137.

[46] Bennett, 10.

ambience."[47] Strohm depicts Chaucer as sometimes writing for a specific patron or intimate (*Book of the Duchess*, *L'Envoy to Bukton*), but more often writing for fellow civil servants, non-landed esquires, and knights who formed a sort of nascent and emergent class on the lower fringes of gentle rank.[48] *Troilus* was possibly read at court, but Chaucer's dedicatees are Gower and Strode and not royalty. This group of aspirants, continually in flux throughout his life, formed Chaucer's associates and friends, and Strohm even names men such as John Gower, William Beauchamp, Lewis Clifford, Philip la Vache, John Clanvowe, William Neville, Richard Stury, Thomas Hoccleve, and intermittent or later personalities including Ralph Strode, Henry Scogan, and Peter Bukton.[49] All seem to be men who took advantage of the social ruptures and temporary openings of post-plague England to better themselves.

What ties these individuals together otherwise is not only court connections to Richard but their interests as learned and literary men, many of them authors in their own right. Chaucer seemingly encodes Boethian arguments into *Troilus* that only a Merton College fellow such as Strode can fully appreciate,[50] and Chaucer himself apparently was considered somewhat of a difficult poet. Windeatt notes that some of Chaucer's scribes added marginal or superscript glosses in the manuscripts where they saw "unusual and difficult" terms,[51] writing explanations to Chaucer's innovative or archaic usages: Anglo-

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[47] Bennett, 7. The royal court was not necessarily a physical place or formal institution. Bennett notes that it referred to a broad "cultural construct" of family, friends, knights, clerics, and visitors (8).

[48] Strohm, 11.

[49] Strohm, 42.

[50] Strohm, 58.

[51] B.A. Windeatt, "The Scribes as Chaucer's Early Critics," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 1 (1979): 125.

Saxon "wyerdes" is glossed as "destine" (*TC* III.617). Scogan also famously praises Chaucer in his *Moral Balade* as "my mayster Chaucer, god his soulë have / that in his langage was so curious."[52] Chaucer's attention to intricate astronomical symbolism, such as in the *Parson's Tale* 1-11, and to technical details in his *Treatise on the Astrolabe* suggests a varied readership of polymaths.

Strohm asserts that Chaucer avoided openly antagonizing the Appellants by surrendering lucrative offices and removing to Kent during parliamentary hostilities.[53] Some of his less politic friends, such as Thomas Usk who was appointed undersheriff of London by Richard, protested and clung to their positions out of pride or avarice and did not survive the Merciless Parliament. Chaucer's partial exile from the dangerous court politics of the 1380s perhaps gives the *Canterbury Tales* a more isolated feel than his other works. Chaucer especially avoids explicit personal or political references and seems to address no familiar community of listeners but rather unspecified, silent readers in posterity. The ostensibly oral character of his earlier poetry becomes more textual: "whoso list it nat yheere / turn over the leef and chese another tale" (*CT* I.3176-77). Nevertheless, he likely continued to circulate portions of his stories among his literary circle at least after his return to London,[54] and presumably he assumed his intimates to be familiar enough with the tales to humorously invoke the Wife of Bath in his later poem to

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[52] Henry Scogan, "A Moral Balade," quoted in W.W. Skeat, ed., *Chaucerian and Other Pieces* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1897), 239. See also Kathleen Forni, ed., *The Chaucerian Apocrypha: A Selection* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2005).

[53] Hanna disagrees, arguing that Chaucer already wished to vacate Aldgate and his controllership of customs (205). Nevertheless, Chaucer surrendered a large portion of his income at a moment when the Appelants were agitating for such acts of royal favoritism to be abrogated.

[54] Strohm, 66, 67. Clanvowe died in October 1391 and so he must have read the *Knight's Tale* before that time in order to include it in his poem.

Bukton. Again, Chaucer's invitation to his friend to "rede" the *Wife of Bath* (29) signifies a private reading act and not public recitation.[55]

Chaucer suggests a familiarity with the physical details of acting and staging of drama in the *Miller's Tale*, where Absolon "pleyeth Herodes upon a scaffold hye" (I.3384),[56] and he may have witnessed occasions of public festivity where he heard the same sort of "romanz reding on the bok" as is featured in *Havelock*. Some scholars have attempted to draw upon French burlesques instead as the source of his *Tale of Sir Thopas* parody, with Burrow positing the thirteenth-century *Prise de Nuevile*.[57] Nevertheless, his usage of *Bevis of Hampton* and *Guy of Warwick* suggest that he had such texts at hand. Strong identifies several narrative similarities. Both Guy and Thopas have bright yellow hair and are educated to hunt and hawk,[58] although such might simply be commonplaces trotted out by Chaucer from the romances he read or glanced at, which Loomis posits to be about fifteen to twenty.[59]

Yet there are also more compelling matches of phrases between the texts, which both Strong and Loomis catalogue in side-by-side comparisons of Guy, identifying some fifty places where the *Thopas* line echoes one in *Guy*.[60] Loomis argues strongly that

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[55] Admittedly, ME *rede* can be broader in meaning than PDE *read* and might also denote "advise, tell" from Anglo-Saxon *rædan*. But for Chaucer to tell Bukton to advise or obey Alison does not make sense.

[56] P.M. Kean, *Chaucer and the Making of English Poetry* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972): 5.

[57] John A. Burrow, "Chaucer's *Sir Thopas* and *La Prise de Nuevile*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 14 (1984): 44-55.

[58] Caroline Strong, "Sir Thopas and Sir Guy I," *Modern Language Notes* 23:3 (1908): 76.

[59] Laura A. Hibbard Loomis, "Sir Thopas," in *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, ed. W.F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster (New York: Humanities Press, 1958), 488.

[60] Laura A. Hibbard Loomis, "Chaucer and the Auchinleck MS: *Thopas* and *Guy of Warwick*," in *Essays and Studies in Honor of Carleton Brown*, ed. Percy W. Long (Freeport: New York University Press, 1940), 111-128.

Chaucer had use of the Auchinleck manuscript while composing *Thopas*, noting that other known manuscripts of such romances all have their own textual variations and none match Chaucer's borrowings so closely. In particular, the stanzaic version of *Guy* is only in Auchinleck.[61] More compellingly, Chaucer names *Horn*, *Guy*, and *Bevis* together in *Thopas* (898-9), three works which only occur jointly in Auchinleck. Moreover, *Thopas* contains the only known reference to *Horn*.[62] Loomis concedes that Auchinleck was not necessarily Chaucer's sole source and that the other works cited in *Thopas* are not in the manuscript, but notes that they could have been in Chaucer's time, as the codex contained at least seventeen more texts. Another clue links MS Hale 150, copied just after 1400, and containing the Auchinleck romances *Arthour and Merlin*, *Kyng Alisaunder*, and the *Lybeaus Desconus* cited in *Thopas*.[63]

The Auchinleck manuscript, now National Library of Scotland Adv. MS 19.2.1, is believed the product of London scribes writing between 1330-40. Hanna posits that the manuscript's frequent geographical references to London and its literary influences from Yorkshire suggest its assembly in the old west end, a "particularly vibrant place for cultural interchanges."[64] A volume of some sixty Middle English texts with forty-three now at least partly extant, Loomis asserts it was likely the product of a lay bookseller, as it was unlikely for a scriptorium to dedicate the labor of six clerks to copying English

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[61] Loomis, "Auchinleck," 118.

[62] Loomis, "Sir Thopas," 489. *Horn Childe* is slightly different from *King Horn*, which appears here and does have older manuscript versions (including Laud Misc. 108).

[63] Hanna, 16. *Lybeaus* was less likely to be in Auchinleck as it was supposedly written by Thomas Chestre in the mid-fourteenth century (British Museum MS Cotton Caligula A.ii). See George Shuffelton, "*Lybeaus Desconus*: Introduction," TEAMS, http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/sgas20int.htm

[64] Hanna, 129.

romances. This was particularly so in an England where monastic copying was in decline: "In Chaucer's day the time was long past when almost all book-making was in the hands of 'the old monks,'"[65] and long before printing there were dealers in London selling books to order or pre-made for a growing literate readership, with the first *venditor librorum* recorded as early as 1223.[66] A booksellers guild seems to have formed by 1357 with a London street for their trade, Paternoster Row. While lending hand-copied anthologies between friends in the 1380s would still have been the equivalent of passing around sports cars now (a similar-sized book prepared for the Countess of Core in 1324 cost over £10, about US$5300 now[67]), the manuscript itself is fairly simple in execution and illumination and may have been affordable to the sort of burgeoning gentry in which Chaucer moved.

Sir Thopas and the Project

Chaucer was evidently familiar with the romances he parodies in *Sir Thopas*, as he explicitly names six in the text in addition to the Sir Percival reference and imitates their phrasings and materials. With limited examples available in the language, his decision to write poetry in English may have been influenced by such romances.[68] That he expects his audience to recognize them in order to understand the parodic intent of *Thopas* also seems clear. In other texts Chaucer demonstrates an ongoing concern with

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[65] Tatlock, 108.

[66] Hanna, 2.

[67] J. W. Thompson, *The Medieval Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 646, quoted in Timothy A. Shonk, "A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript: Bookmen and Bookmaking in the Early Fourteenth Century," *Speculum* 60:1 (1985): 89. Modern price from the National Archives Currency Converter, accessed 2 October 2010 at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency.

[68] Derek Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), 74.

adjusting his voice to his audience's needs and aptitudes, explaining that he needs to simplify his tutorial of the astrolabe for little Lewis, as "curious endityng and hard sentence is ful hevy at onys for such a child to lerne" (45-6). Additionally, in *Troilus* he glosses obscure deities—"Thesiphone… thow goddesse of torment" (I.6-8)—as an aid but assumes prior familiarity with Hector.[69] Here Chaucer also seemingly presupposes that his audience already knows who characters such as Bevis and Guy are, as extended explanation would deflate the joke.

Whether Chaucer intended *Sir Thopas* to be a festive, carnivalesque parody of the romance genre or a biting Swiftian satire will be addressed later. For now it suffices to say that, whether his circle of literary friends and associates greeted romances with fondness or eye-rolling, they likely recognized and knew them firsthand as members of the first English-speaking court since Harold Godwineson.[70] Hanna notes that "Chaucerian parody, like all parody, depends upon the accepted status of its target."[71] But to explore how Chaucer and his audience understood and viewed the works that underlie *Thopas* for the purposes of appreciating its humor requires digging beyond the poem's references and examining the romances themselves. In this way it will perhaps be possible to see how these romances organically function as source material for *Thopas*, and then finally to speculate with more intelligence on Chaucer's, and his contemporary audience's, relationship to them. The question has additional relevance in that usually the

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[69] Strohm, 61.

[70] Pearsall, 65.

[71] Hanna, 108.

opposite has happened—romances have been critically defined and evaluated in terms of how *Thopas* allegedly views them.[72]

The secondary goal of this project is to provide a scholarly translation into Modern English of these romances in order to facilitate both comprehension and appreciation of the texts. Middle English romances are now sparsely anthologized and dedicated volumes such as French and Hale (1930) are increasingly out of print. Many of these stories are only accessible online as very dated works in public domain, such as Ellis' compilation from 1805, with the provident exception of the excellent TEAMS editions. Yet most importantly, few are available in unabridged translation.[73] The situation completes a vicious circle: the romances are unpublished because they are obscure, and they are obscure because they are inaccessible in Modern English. A clear academic need stands for close Present Day English (PDE)[74] renderings of these texts for the non-specialist. Because Auchinleck is so indispensible a source and one which Chaucer likely read, it forms the basic structure of the project, though I also include works from the four other minor manuscripts of English romance which predate

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[72] Cory James Rushton, "Modern and Academic Reception of the Popular Romance," in Raluca L. Radulescue, and Cory James Rushton, ed., *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009), 172.

[73] Roger Sherman and Laura Hibbard Loomis' *Medieval Romances* (New York: Modern Library, 1957) has shortened but well-translated texts. Romances in translation tend to be presented as juvenalia. For examples see F.J. Harvey Darton, *A Wonder Book of Old Romances* (London: Wells Gardner Darton, 1907) and Andrew Lang, ed., *The Red Romance Book* (New York: Longmans and Green, 1921).

[74] Within this project I also use OE, Old English, ME, Middle English, EME, Early Modern English, and OF, Old French. These are understood as loose and flexible divisions. For more discussion of these periods and terms, see Millward.

Auchinleck.[75] *Plendamour* is believed lost, and I confess to making some choices based on modern and personal tastes. *Ypotis* is more didactic poem than romance, and *Lybaeus Desconus* and *Sir Perceval* belong more to the Arthurian tradition, already a well-trod subgenre. Moreover, from their absence of textual correspondences in *Thopas*, they may have been little more than name-dropping for effect by Chaucer.[76]

Translation is not usually a glamorous academic pursuit, and few works attain the status of Chapman's Homer. Chaucer is available in translation, but as with Shakespeare, PDE versions are generally considered nonscholarly, consigned to lay readers or non-native English learners. I attended sessions at the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo in 2009 and sat in on a discussion of *Beowulf* translations. Opinions varied from grudging acceptance that translations such as Chickering's (1989) were necessary concessions to snide remarks about "Heaneywulf." While Seamus Heaney's version is not textually perfect, it serves as an invaluable access point for the non-specialist. The alternative is still more execrable movie adaptations and a tiny pool of readers with the specialized training to interpret Anglo-Saxon English, and fewer still able to move beyond language issues into appreciating the story as an aesthetic product, which was Tolkien's special cause in "*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics" (1936). The same reality is nearing for Shakespeare and long ago arrived for works in Early Middle English. Amazon.com currently lists a "translation" into Modern English of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* from 1678!

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[75] Loomis lists the four before Auchinleck as: Cambridge University Library G g.4 27.2 (*King Horn, Floris & Blancheflor*); Cotton Vitellius D. III (*Floris and Blancheflor*); Harley 2253 (*King Horn*); Laud Miscellany 108 (*King Horn, Havelock*). "London Bookshop," 626.

[76] Loomis, "Sir Thopas," 487.

Yet first such a project must be seen as worthwhile. The assumption that educated fourteenth-century audiences viewed English romances with disdain for their "worn devices of minstrel style" and "stereotyped diction"[77] may betray only modern sensibilities with our different expectations of structure and distaste for formulaic language. Chaucer uses such oral patterns as "the sothe to say" or "tell" twenty-three times in *Troilus*,[78] and the *scop* of *Beowulf*, no less prone to lengthy digressions, constantly reiterates titles or family lineages with metrical appositives such as "Hroðgar maþelode, helm Scyldinga" ("Hrothgar made a speech, protector of the Scyldings," 370). These stock epithets link to those used by the improvisational *guslars* documented by Milman Parry in the Balkans, and occur in works as high-culture as Homer's *Odyssey* with its repetition of "the blue-eyed goddess Athene."[79] Rhyme and alliterative schemes themselves function as oral and memory devices that are not only pleasurable but add form and meaning to poetry.

McDonald also adds the interesting argument that the relative formulism of medieval romance, with its standard exile/return storylines, evinces not a poverty of imagination but functions as a useful frame within which the author can experiment freely. The predictable happy ending is obligatory but can be very brief and perfunctory, as the story's energy is elsewhere.[80] The more that romance makes itself internally

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[77] Loomis, "Sir Thopas," 491.

[78] Nancy Mason Bradbury, "Chaucerian Minstrelsy: *Sir Thopas*, *Troilus and Criseyde* and English Metrical Romance," in *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Romance*, ed. Rosalind Field (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1999), 120.

[79] Baugh, "Improvisation," 419. Athena is actually called *glaukopis* (γλαυκωπις), "owl-eyed," variously translated as *blue* and *grey*.

[80] McDonald, 14.

obvious as a self-aware fictional structure by repeatedly telling us "so hit is fonde in frensche tale" (*Bevis* 888), the freer the teller is to invent heroines who are all simultaneously the fairest in the world, to have heroes starve in dungeons for years and not die, for men in heavy armor to battle for days without fatigue, for lone warriors to defeat entire Saracen armies, and for murdered children to spring back to life without shattering the audience's suspension of disbelief. The heroes inhabit a world where the normal laws of nature are "slightly suspended."[81] This poetic freedom was especially possible in England, where chivalry had never been as pervasive as in France and was increasingly seen through an antique mist.[82]

Much recent political commentary faults medieval romance for its affirmation of hegemonic feudal values. As Jameson might say, romances perpetuate the "legitimation of concrete structures of power and domination."[83] Susan Crane notes that romances maintain class divisions through "the conception that social differences order the world hierarchically."[84] Yet romances retain a sense of political subversion not only in their lack of official sanction but also in what they conspicuously omit. Events in an overtly fanciful world where the fair and just prosper in the end call sharp contrast to the failings of the actual world where they do *not* normally prosper. The Auchinleck texts often

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[81] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: University Press, 1957), 33, quoted in Diana T. Childress, "Between Romance and Legend: 'Secular Hagiography' in Middle English Literature," *Philological Quarterly* 57 (1978): 313.

[82] Mehl, 4.

[83] In T. A. Shippey, "The *Tale of Gamelyn*: Class Warfare and the Embarrassments of Genre," in *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, ed. Ad Putter and Jane Gilbert Jane (Harlow: Longman, 2000). Shippey cites from Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1981).

[84] Susan Crane, *Gender and Romance*, 98.

achieve this statement by placing their stories in a superior previous age. Holford notes that "*Horn Child* uses the past to compensate for the inadequacies of the contemporary world,"[85] and Wilcox similarly argues that *Guy of Warwick* is set in an alternative time of the crusades where the heroes fight honorably.[86]

Just as modern readers and movie audiences know that in real life the rich boy does not usually marry the poor girl and all prostitutes do not have hearts of gold, a medieval audience was unlikely to be so naïve as to confuse the escapist world of romance with the real one of their own. Popular romances indicate a great deal about actual historical circumstances through their audience's idealized desires. Yet again, this is not where the energy of the romances lay. Chiefly, a medieval English romance was meant by its compositor to be a fun diversion of love, adventure, and exotic locales. The audience desired "a tale of myrthe" (*CT* VII.706) as Harry Bailly requests, and its *doctryne* was a commendable but secondary addition to its *solas*.

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[85] Matthew L. Holford, "History and Politics in *Horn Child and Maiden Rimnild*," *Review of English Studies* 57:229 (2006): 168.

[86] Rebecca Wilcox, "Romancing the East: Greeks and Saracens in *Guy of Warwick*," in McDonald, 221.

Textual Notes

In translating these works I have attempted a line-by-line rendering, although at times in order to obtain a natural English syntax the line orders may vary slightly. To make the story as understandable as possible I have modernized character and geographical names where practicable and have attempted to simplify the more arcane details of armament and feudal rank.

Stylistically, Middle English's main fault as a growing and developing language lies in its occasional lexical poverty and grammatical ambiguity. At times pronouns are unclear and the repetition of verbs such as *said* can be tiresome, and I have made assumptions based on the narrative to give correct or subtler shades of meaning. For this reason the translation is often slightly longer than the original. Despite the metapoetical references of many romances, I have endeavored to avoid breaking the fourth wall of the translation by exposing it as a translation, and so I have not used obviously anachronistic expressions or colloquialisms to render medieval ones. Sir Orfeo does not tune anyone out or step on the gas. Josian is attractive but never hot, except for possibly when she is about to be burned at the stake.

I have gratefully used the TEAMS editions of each poem for the translations and for manuscript details and have referenced the editions as such in footnotes. All Chaucer references are globally from Larry Benson's *The Riverside Chaucer*, third edition, 1987. Other references are translation-specific and noted.

CHAPTER 1

Amis and Amiloun

Amis and Amiloun survives in four manuscripts: Auchinleck (c. 1330), Egerton 2862 (c. 1400), Harley 2386 (c. 1500), and Bodleian 21900 (Douce 326) (c. 1500). I take as my text source Edward E. Foster, ed. *Amis and Amiloun, Robert of Cisyle, and Sir Amadace.* Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997. 2nd ed., 2007. http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/amisfr.htm. Foster uses mainly Auchinleck with some lines from Egerton. Other modern editions include MacEdward Leach, ed., *Amis and Amiloun* (1937), and the facsimile version of Derek Pearsall & I.C. Cunningham, eds., *The Auchinleck Manuscript* (1977).

1	For Goddes love in Trinyté	For the love of God in Trinity,
	Al that ben hend herkenith to me,	I ask all who are courteous
	I pray yow, par amoure,	To listen to me, in kindness,
	What sumtyme fel beyond the see	To what once happened beyond the sea
	Of two Barons of grete bounté	To two barons, men of great generosity
	And men of grete honoure;	And high honor.
	Her faders were barons hende,	Their fathers were noble barons,
	Lordinges com of grete kynde	Lords born of distinguished families
	And pris men in toun and toure;	And men esteemed in town and tower.
10	To here of these children two	To hear about these two children
	How they were in wele and woo,	And how they experienced good and ill
	Ywys, it is grete doloure.	Is a great sorrow, indeed:
	In weele and woo how they gan wynd	How they fared, in good and ill,
	And how unkouth they were of kynd,	How innocent they were of arrogance—[1]
	The children bold of chere,	The children, natural in manner—
	And how they were good and hend	And how they were good and well-raised
	And how yong thei becom frend	And how young when they became friends,
	In cort there they were,	In the court where they stayed,
	And how they were made knyght	And how they were knighted
20	And how they were trouth plyght,	And how they pledged their loyalty,[2]

[1] *Uncouth they were of kynd*: There is disagreement on what exactly this means. Kölbing (1884) rendered this as "what unknown ancestry they were," but contextually the poet is praising their good nature (TEAMS). Eugen Kölbing, ed., *Amis and Amiloun, Zugleich mit der Altfranzõsischen Quelle*, Altenglische Biblioteck 2, Heilbronn: Henninger, 1884.

	The children both in fere,	Both of the children together;
	And in what lond thei were born	And in what land they were born
	And what the childres name worn,	And what the boys' names were,
	Herkeneth and ye mow here.	Listen and you will learn.
	In Lumbardy, y understond,	In Lombardy, as I understand,
	Whilom bifel in that lond,	It happened once in that land
	In romance as we reede,	In the romance as we read it,
	Two barouns hend wonyd in lond	That two noble barons lived there,
	And had two ladyes free to fond,	And had two ladies, proven in their nobility,
30	That worthy were in wede;	Who were regal in their dress.
	Of her hend ladyes two	From those two courteous ladies
	Twoo knave childre gat they thoo	They had two boys,
	That douhty were of dede,	Who were valiant in deeds,
	And trew weren in al thing,	And were true in all things.
	And therfore Jhesu, hevynking,	And thus Jesus, Heaven's king,
	Ful wel quyted her mede.	Fully gave them their reward.
	The childrenis names, as y yow hyght,	I will properly relate in rhyme
	In ryme y wol rekene ryght	The children's names, as I promised,
	And tel in my talkyng;	And tell you in my speech;
40	Both they were getyn in oo nyght	Both of them were conceived on one night
	And on oo day born aplyght,	And born the same day, in fact,
	For soth, without lesyng;	Truthfully, without a lie;
	That oon baroun son, ywys	One of the baron's sons, in honesty,
	Was ycleped childe Amys	Was named Amis
	At his cristenyng;	At his christening;
	That other was clepyd Amylyoun,	The other was called Amiloun,
	That was a childe of grete renoun	Who was a child of great renown
	And com of hyghe ofspryng.	And had come from a high lineage.
	The children gon then thryve,	The children began to thrive.
50	Fairer were never noon on lyve,	There were none fairer alive,
	Curtaise, hende, and good;	More courteous, handsome, and good.
	When they were of yeres fyve,	When they were five years old,
	Alle her kyn was of hem blyth,	All their family was pleased with them,
	So mylde they were of mood;	They were so gentle in their manners.
	When they were sevyn yere olde,	When they were seven years old,
	Grete joy every man of hem tolde	Every man spoke of them with great pleasure
	To beholde that frely foode;	To behold those admirable children.
	When they were twel winter olde,	When they were twelve years old,
	In al the londe was ther non hold	There were none in the land
60	So faire of boon and blood.	Regarded so highly in flesh an bone.
	In that tyme, y understond,	In that time, as I understand,
	A duk wonyd in that lond,	A duke resided in that land,
	Prys in toun and toure;	Esteemed in town and castle.
	Frely he let sende his sonde,	He graciously sent his message
	After Erles, Barouns, fre and bond,	To earls and barons, free and bound,
	And ladies bryght in boure;	And ladies shining in their bowers.[3]

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[2] *Trouth plyght*: To swear one's *troth* in friendship, duty, or marriage is to make a serious and unbreakable vow of fidelity. See *Athelston*, line 23 for another friendship pledge.

[3] *Ladies bryght in boure*: A recurring poetic phrase. A *bower* is a lady's bedroom, whereas a *chamber* usually refers to any room in a castle. Like *toun and tour* (9) and *worthy in wede* (30), this sort of

	A ryche fest he wolde make	He was to host a rich feast
	Al for Jhesu Cristes sake	All for Jesus Christ's sake,
	That is oure savyoure;	Who is our savior.
70	Muche folk, as y yow saye,	He sent his invitation that day
	He lete after sende that daye	To many people, as I tell you,
	With myrth and grete honoure.	With celebration and great ceremony.
	Thoo Barouns twoo, that y of tolde,	These two barons that I spoke of,
	And her sones feire and bolde	And their sons, fair and brave,
	To court they com ful yare.	Came promptly to the court.
	When they were samned, yong and olde,	When they were gathered, young and old,
	Mony men gan hem byholde	Of the lordings who were there,
	Of lordynges that there were,	Many men looked upon them:
	Of body how wel they were pyght,	How well-shaped they were in body,
80	And how feire they were of syght,	And how fair they were in sight
	Of hyde and hew and here;	In skin and complexion and hair.
	And al they seide without lesse	And they all said, without deceit,
	Fairer children than they wesse	That they had never before seen
	Ne sey they never yere.	Finer young men than they were.
	In al the court was ther no wyght,	In all the court there was nobody,
	Erl, baroun, squyer, ne knyght,	Earl, baron, squire, or knight,
	Neither lef ne loothe,	Neither fair nor foul,
	So lyche they were both of syght	Like them in their appearance.
	And of waxing, y yow plyght,	And in stature, I swear to you
90	I tel yow for soothe,	That I tell you the truth,
	In al thing they were so lyche	In every way they were so alike
	Ther was neither pore ne ryche,	That there was no one, rich or poor,
	Who so beheld hem both,	Father or mother,
	Fader ne moder that couth say	Who beheld them both and could say
	Ne knew the hend children tway	Or tell the two handsome youths apart
	But by the coloure of her cloth.	Except by the color of their clothes.
	That riche douke his fest gan hold	That rich duke held his festivities,[4]
	With erles and with barouns bold,	With earls and with brave barons,
	As ye may listen and lithe,	As you may listen and learn,
100	Fourtennight, as me was told,	For fourteen nights, as I have been told,
	With meet and drynke, meryst on mold	With food and drink, the merriest on earth,
	To glad the bernes blithe;	To cheer the joyful men.
	Ther was mirthe and melodye	There was entertainment and melody
	And al maner of menstracie	And all types of musicians
	Her craftes for to kithe;	There to show their skills.
	Opon the fiftenday ful yare	Upon the fifteenth day, with earnestness,
	Thai token her leve forto fare	They made their goodbyes to leave
	And thonked him mani a sithe.	And thanked him many times.
	Than the lordinges schuld forth wende,	When the gentlemen had gone forth,
110	That riche douke comly of kende	That splendid duke, noble in lineage,

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alliterative doublet is omnipresent in ME romances, perhaps a holdover from Anglo-Saxon poetic modes. Chaucer only uses the expression once in his writings, fittingly in *Sir Thopas* (*CT* VII.742).

[4] *That riche douke*: In early Middle English the Old English articles / demonstratives *se*, *seo*, and *þæt* were gradually replaced by the definite article *the* (*þe*), and at times *the* and *that* seem poorly distinguished. Recurring formulas such as *that rich duke* might have been phrased for poetic reasons and not grammatical ones. A similar process was happening in Old French where Latin *ille*, *illa* (that) had become *li*, *la* (the). *Rich* in ME has a variety of nuances, from "powerful" or "high-ranking" to "wealthy."

	Cleped to him that tide	Called to him on that occasion
	Tho tuay barouns, that were so hende,	The two barons, who were so courteous,
	And prayd hem also his frende	And invited them as his friend
	In court thai schuld abide,	That they should allow
	And lete her tuay sones fre	Their two fine sons to stay in the court
	In his servise with him to be,	And be with him in his service,
	Semly to fare bi his side;	To live fittingly by his side.
	And he wald dubbe hem knightes to	And he would dub them both knights
	And susten hem for ever mo,	And support them forevermore,
120	As lordinges proude in pride.	As lords proud in honor.
	The riche barouns answerd ogain,	The elegent barons replied in answer,
	And her levedis gan to sain	And their ladies began to speak
	To that douke ful yare	To the duke with eagerness,
	That thai were bothe glad and fain	That they were both glad and pleased
	That her levely children tuain	That their two beloved children
	In servise with him ware.	Would be in service with him.
	Thai gave her childer her blisceing	They gave their children their blessing
	And bisought Jhesu, heven king,	And entreated Jesus, Heaven's king,
	He schuld scheld hem fro care,	That He would shield them from harm,
130	And oft thai thonked the douke that day	And they thanked the duke continually that day,
	And token her leve and went oway	And they took their leave and went away.
	To her owen contres thai gun fare.	They set off to journey to their own lands.
	Thus war tho hende childer, ywis,	Thus those lovely youths,
	Child Amiloun and child Amis,	Child Amiloun and Amis, were in truth
	In court frely to fede,	Free to dine in the court,
	To ride an hunting under riis;	And to ride and hunt under the branches.
	Over al the lond than were thai priis	In all the land, they were respected
	And worthliest in wede.	And held as worthiest in appearance.
	So wele tho children loved hem tho,	So well did each love the other that
140	Nas never children loved hem so,	Never were young men so close to each other,[5]
	Noither in word no in dede;	Neither in word nor in deed.
	Bituix hem tuai, of blod and bon,	Between the two, in blood and bone,
	Trewer love nas never non,	There was never truer friendship,
	In gest as so we rede.	In the stories that we read.
	On a day the childer, war and wight,	On one day the youths, keen and brave,
	Trewethes togider thai gun plight,	Pledged their loyalty together,
	While thai might live and stond	That while they might live and stand,
	That bothe bi day and bi night,	By both day and night,
	In wele and wo, in wrong and right,	In good and ill, in right and wrong,
150	That thai schuld frely fond	They would freely try
	To hold togider at everi nede,	To hold together in every need,
	In word, in werk, in wille, in dede,	In word, in works, in will, in deeds,
	Where that thai were in lond,	Wherever they were in the land.
	Fro that day forward never mo	From that day forward they would never
	Failen other for wele no wo:	Fail the other, neither in prosperity or woe.
	Therto thai held up her hond.	To this they held up their hands.

[5] ME is fairly poor in words for friendship, usually resorting to *love*. Throughout the text I am reading in various synonyms, as the repeated allusions to marital fidelity would not have suggested anything to a romance audience beyond deep *amicus*. Not everyone agrees: see Sheila Delaney, "A, A, and B: Coding Same-Sex Union in *Amis and Amiloun*," in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 63–81.

	Thus in gest as ye may here,	So in the story as you may hear,
	Tho hende childer in cuntré were	These gentle young men of that country
	With that douke for to abide;	Were living with that duke.
160	The douke was blithe and glad of chere,	The duke was pleased and glad at heart,
	Thai were him bothe leve and dere,	And they were beloved and dear to him,
	Semly to fare bi his side.	And fared honorably by his side.
	Tho thai were fiften winter old,	When they were fifteen years old,
	He dubbed bothe tho bernes bold	He dubbed both of the youths
	To knightes in that tide,	As knights at that time,
	And fond hem al that hem was nede,	And gave them all that they needed,
	Hors and wepen and worthly wede,	Horse and weapon and fine clothes,
	As princes prout in pride.	As princes who were proud in bearing.
	That riche douke, he loved hem so,	That rich duke loved them so.
170	Al that thai wald he fond hem tho,	All that they wished for he provided,
	Bothe stedes white and broun,	Steeds for both, white and brown,
	That in what stede thai gun go,	So that in whatever place they went,
	Alle the lond spac of hem tho,	All the land spoke of them later,
	Bothe in tour and toun;	Both in tower and in town.
	In to what stede that thai went,	At whatever place that they went,
	To justes other to turnament,	To jousts or to tournaments,
	Sir Amis and Sir Amiloun,	Sir Amis and Sir Amiloun,
	For douhtiest in everi dede,	Being the bravest in every deed,
	With scheld and spere to ride on stede,	With shield and spear as they rode on steeds,
180	Thai gat hem gret renoun.	Won great renown for themselves.
	That riche douke hadde of hem pris,	That regal duke had great regard for them,
	For that thai were so war and wiis	For they were so keen and wise
	And holden of gret bounté.	And esteemed for their great generosity.
	Sir Amiloun and Sir Amis,	He set Sir Amiloun and Sir Amis,
	He sett hem bothe in gret office,	Both of them, in key offices,
	In his court for to be;	In order to be in his court.
	Sir Amis, as ye may here,	Sir Amis, as you may hear,
	He made his chef botelere,	Was made his chief butler,
	For he was hend and fre,	For he was courteous and gracious.
190	And Sir Amiloun of hem alle	And Sir Amiloun was made
	He made chef steward in halle,	Chief steward of the hall over everyone
	To dight al his meine.	To keep his household in order.
	In to her servise when thai were brought,	When they were brought into their services,
	To geten hem los tham spared nought,	They spared nothing to bring themselves praise,
	Wel hendeliche thai bigan;	And they acted very gentlemanly.
	With riche and pover so wele thai wrought,	They served rich and poor so admirably
	Al that hem seighe, with word and thought,	That all who saw them, many a man,
	Hem loved mani a man;	Cherished them in word and thought.
	For thai were so blithe of chere,	For they were so graceful in manner
200	Over al the lond fer and nere	That over all the land, near and far,
	The los of love thai wan,	They won praise for being loved,
	And the riche douke, withouten les,	And the mighty duke, without a lie,
	Of all the men that olive wes	Of all the men that were alive,
	Mest he loved hem than.	Loved them most of all then.
	Than hadde the douke, ich understond,	At the time the duke, as I understand,
	A chef steward of alle his lond,	Had a chief steward of all his land,
	A douhti knight at crie,	A formidable knight at his call,
	That ever he proved with nithe and ond	Who incessantly schemed, with spite and malice,
	For to have brought hem bothe to schond	To have them both brought to shame
210	With gile and trecherie.	With guile and treachery.

	For thai were so gode and hende,	For they were so good and so courteous,
	And for the douke was so wele her frende,	And because the duke was so close a friend,
	He hadde therof gret envie;	He had great envy because of it.
	To the douke with wordes grame	With cruel words to the duke,
	Ever he proved to don hem schame	He continually tried to do them harm
	With wel gret felonie.	With some outrageous crime.
	So within tho yeres to	So then, within two years
	A messanger ther com tho	A messenger arrived there,
	To Sir Amiloun, hende on hond,	Skillful in hand, to Sir Amiloun
220	And seyd hou deth hadde fet him fro	And said how death had taken from him
	His fader and his moder also	His father and his mother as well
	Thurch the grace of Godes sond.	Through the grace of God's command.
	Than was that knight a careful man,	Then that knight was a sorrowful man.
	To that douke he went him than	He took himself to the duke
	And dede him to understond	And had him understand
	His fader and his moder hende	That his father and his gracious mother
	War ded, and he most hom wende,	Were dead, and he had to travel home
	For to resaive his lond.	In order to receive his land.
	That riche douke, comly of kende,	That stately duke, of a noble family,
230	Answerd ogain with wordes hende	Answered in reply with kindly words
	And seyd, "So God me spede,	And said, "So God help me,
	Sir Amiloun, now thou schalt wende	Sir Amiloun, now that you must go
	Me nas never so wo for frende	I was never so sad to see a friend
	That of mi court out yede.	Go out of my court.
	Ac yif ever it befalle so	But if it ever happens so
	That thou art in wer and wo	That you are at war or in woe
	And of min help hast nede,	And have need of my help,
	Saveliche com or send thi sond,	Just come or send your word,
	And with al mi powere of mi lond	And with all my powers in my land
240	Y schal wreke the of that dede."	I will avenge you of that injury."
	Than was Sir Amiloun ferli wo	Then Sir Amiloun was bitterly sad
	For to wende Sir Amis fro,	To part from Sir Amis.
	On him was al his thought.	On him were all his thoughts.
	To a goldsmithe he gan go	He made his way to a goldsmith
	And lete make gold coupes to,	And had two gold cups made.
	For thre hundred pounde he hem bought,	He paid three hundred pounds for them,[6]
	That bothe were of o wight,	So that both were the same weight,
	And bothe of o michel, yplight;	And both were the same size, truly.
	Ful richeliche thai were wrought,	They were fabricated lavishly,
250	And bothe thai weren as liche, ywis,	And both were as alike, I know,
	As was Sir Amiloun and Sir Amis,	As Sir Amiloun and Sir Amis were;
	Ther no failed right nought.	There was no defect at all in them.
	When that Sir Amiloun was al yare,	When Sir Amiloun was all ready,
	He tok his leve for to fare,	He made his goodbyes to set forth,
	To wende in his jorné.	To travel on his journey.
	Sir Amis was so ful of care,	Sir Amis was so full of sadness,
	For sorwe and wo and sikeing sare,	That for sorrow and woe and sighing bitterly,

[6] According to the UK National Archives website, £300 in 1340 is roughly US$250,000 in modern money, a preposterous amount only credible in a medieval romance. Even the extravagantly lavish ring Havelock gives Ubbe is mentioned as worth £100. Accessed May 17, 2010 at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/.

	Almest swoned that fre.	That sensitive man almost fell faint.
	To the douke he went with dreri mode	He went to the duke in dreary spirits
260	And praid him fair, ther he stode,	And addressed him reverently where he stood
	And seyd, “Sir, par charité,	And said, “Sir, for charity’s sake,
	Yif me leve to wend the fro,	Give me permission to travel from you.
	Bot yif y may with mi brother go,	Unless I may go with my brother,
	Mine hert, it breketh of thre!”	My heart, it will break in three!”
	That riche douke, comly of kende,	The regal duke, of a noble family,
	Answerd ogain with wordes hende	Answered in reply with gracious words
	And seyd withouten delay,	And said with no delay,
	“Sir Amis, mi gode frende,	“Sir Amis, my good friend,
	Wold ye bothe now fro me wende?”	Would you both now leave me?
270	“Certes,” he seyd, “nay!	Surely not!” he said.
	Were ye bothe went me fro,	“If you were both gone from me,
	Than schuld me waken al mi wo,	Then all my sorrows would be awakened
	Mi joie were went oway.	And my joy would be gone away!
	Thi brother schal in to his cuntré;	Your brother will go to his country.
	Wende with him in his jurné	Accompany him on his journey
	And com ogain this day!”	And return again today.”
	When thai were redi forto ride,	When they were ready to ride,
	Tho bold bernes for to abide	Those brave men readied
	Busked hem redy boun.	Themselves for the journey.
280	Hende, herkneth! Is nought to hide,	Gentle people, listen! There’s nothing to hide.
	So douhti knightes, in that tide	Such sturdy knights, at that time,
	That ferd out of that toun,	Traveled out of the town.
	Al that day as thai rade	All that day, as they rode on,
	Gret morning bothe thai made,	They both made great mourning,
	Sir Amis and Amiloun,	Sir Amis and Amiloun.
	And when thai schuld wende otuain,	And when they had to part in two,
	Wel fair togider opon a plain	They nobly dismounted from their horses
	Of hors thai light adoun.	Together upon a plain.
	When thai were bothe afot light,	When they were both set on foot,
290	Sir Amiloun, that hendi knight,	Sir Amiloun, that faithful knight,
	Was rightwise man of rede	Was a just man of counsel,
	And seyd to Sir Amis ful right,	And said straightaway to Sir Amis,
	“Brother, as we er trewthe plight	“Brother, as we earlier vowed loyalty,
	Bothe with word and dede,	Both in words and deeds,
	Fro this day forward never mo	From this day on we promise
	To faile other for wele no wo,	To never fail the other, for better or worse,
	To help him at his nede,	To help him in his need.
	Brother, be now trewe to me,	Friend, be true to me now,
	And y schal ben as trewe to the,	And I will be as true to you,
300	Also God me spede!	As God may help me!
	Ac brother, ich warn the biforn,	But brother, I warn you beforehand,
	For His love that bar the croun of thorn	For His love, who wore a crown of thorns
	To save al mankende,	To save all mankind,
	Be nought ogain thi lord forsworn,	Do not swear falsely against your lord
	And yif thou dost, thou art forlorn	In any way. And if you do, you are lost
	Ever more withouten ende.	Forevermore without end.
	Bot ever do trewthe and no tresoun	But always be true and never treasonous;
	And thenk on me, Sir Amiloun,	And think of me, Sir Amiloun,
	Now we asondri schal wende.	Now that we must travel apart.
310	And, brother, yete y the forbede	And friend, again I warn you against
	The fals steward felawerede;	Fellowship with the false steward.

	Certes, he wil the schende!”	Surely, he will destroy you!”
	As thai stode so, tho bretheren bold,	As they stood so, the brave brothers,
	Sir Amiloun drought forth tuay coupes of gold,	Sir Amiloun drew out the two gold cups,
	Ware liche in al thing,	Which were alike in every way,
	And bad sir Amis that he schold	And asked Sir Amis if he would
	Chese whether he have wold,	Choose which one he wished for,
	Withouten more duelling,	Without more delay.
	And seyd to him, “Mi leve brother,	And he said to him, “My dear comrade,
320	Kepe thou that on and y that other,	Keep that one and I will the other,
	For Godes love, heven king;	For God’s love, Heaven’s king;
	Lete never this coupe fro the,	Let this cup never go from you,
	Bot loke heron and thenk on me,	But look on it and think of me.
	It tokneth our parting.”	It is a token of our parting.”
	Gret sorwe thai made at her parting	They made great sorrow at their leaving
	And kisten hem with eighen wepeing,	And kissed each other with weeping eyes,
	Tho knightes hende and fre.	Those knights, noble and free.
	Aither bitaught other heven king,	Each commended the other to Heaven’s king,
	And on her stedes thai gun spring	And they jumped on their steeds
330	And went in her jurné.	And went on their journeys.
	Sir Amiloun went hom to his lond	Sir Amiloun went home to his land
	And sesed it al in to his hond,	Which his ancestors had held,
	That his elders hadde be,	And claimed it all into his hand,
	And spoused a levedy bright in bour	And wedded a lady, beautiful in her bower,
	And brought hir hom with gret honour	And brought her home with great ceremony
	And miche solempneté.	And much stately formality.
	Lete we Sir Amiloun stille be	We will leave Sir Amiloun alone
	With his wiif in his cuntré -	With his wife in his country.
	God leve hem wele to fare -	God grant that he fare well!
340	And of Sir Amis telle we;	And we will talk of Sir Amis.
	When he com hom to court oye,	When he came back home to the court,
	Ful blithe of him thai ware;	They were very pleased to see him.
	For that he was so hende and gode,	For he was so gracious and good
	Men blisced him, bothe bon and blod,	That men blessed the two, both flesh and blood,
	That ever him gat and bare,	Who had conceived and given birth to him,
	Save the steward of that lond;	Except for the steward of that land.
	Ever he proved with nithe and ond	He forever tried with spite and hostility
	To bring him into care.	To bring him into grief.
	Than on a day bifel it so	Then one day it so happened
350	With the steward he met tho,	That he met with the steward,
	Ful fair he gret that fre.	Who greeted that noble man courteously.
	“Sir Amis,” he seyd, “the is ful wo	“Sir Amis,” he said, “It is very sad for you
	For that thi brother is went the fro,	Because your friend has gone from you,
	And, certes, so is me.	And certainly it is the same for me.
	Ac of his wendeing have thou no care,	But do not be troubled by his going,
	Yif thou wilt leve opon mi lare,	If you will trust in my instruction,
	And lete thi morning be,	And let your mourning go.
	And thou wil be to me kende,	You will be kin to me,
	Y schal the be a better frende	And I will be a better friend to you
360	Than ever yete was he.	Than he ever was.
	“Sir Amis,” he seyd, “do bi mi red,	Sir Amis,” he said, “Do as I advise,
	And swere ous bothe brotherhed	And swear our brotherhood together
	And plight we our trewthes to;	And pledge our fidelity as well.
	Be trewe to me in word and dede,	Be true to me in word and deed,
	And y schal to the, so God me spede,	And I will to you, so help me God,

	Be trewe to the also."	Be true as well."
	Sir Amis answerd, "Mi treuthe y plight	Sir Amis answered, "I gave my word
	To Sir Amiloun, the gentil knight,	To Sir Amiloun, the noble knight,
	Thei he be went me fro.	Though he has departed from me.
370	Whiles that y may gon and speke,	While I can walk and speak,
	Y no schal never mi treuthe breke,	I will never break my vow,
	Noither for wele no wo.	Neither for riches nor poverty.
	For bi the treuthe that God me sende,	For by the truth that God sends me,
	Ichave him founde so gode and kende,	I have found him so good and kind
	Seththen that y first him knewe,	Since the time I first knew him;
	For ones y plight him treuthe, that hende,	For since I pledged him loyalty, that friend,
	Where so he in warld wende,	Wherever he goes in the world,
	Y schal be to him trewe;	I will be true to him.
	And yif y were now forsworn	And if I now swore against him
380	And breke mi treuthe, y were forlorn,	And broke my oath, I would be lost.
	Wel sore it schuld me rewe.	I would rue it bitterly.
	Gete me frendes whare y may,	Though I get friends where I may,
	Y no schal never bi night no day	I will never by night or day
	Chaunge him for no newe."	Exchange him for someone new."
	The steward than was egre of mode,	Then the steward was in a furious mood;
	Almest for wrethe he wex ner wode	He almost grew mad with rage
	And seyd, withouten delay,	And said, without any pause,
	And swore bi Him that dyed on Rode:	And swore by Him who died on the Cross,
	"Thou traitour, unkinde blod,	"You traitor, low blood!
390	Thou schalt abigge this nay.	You will pay for this snub!
	Y warn the wele," he seyd than,	I warn you well," he said then,
	"That y schal be thi strong foman	"That I will be your sworn enemy
	Ever after this day!"	Ever after this day!"
	Sir Amis answerd tho,	Sir Amis then answered,
	"Sir, therof give y nought a slo;	"Sir, I don't care a blueberry about it![7]
	Do al that thou may!"	Do as you like!"
	Al thus the wrake gan biginne,	And so the emnity began to rise,
	And with wrethe thai went atuinne,	And in wrath they separated,
	Tho bold bernes to.	Those two bold young men.
400	The steward nold never blinne	The steward would never stop,
	To schende that douhti knight of kinne,	Always attempting to ruin
	Ever he proved tho.	That indomitable knight of honor.
	Thus in court togider thai were	Thus in court they coexisted
	With wrethe and with loureand chere	With antipathy and surly glares
	Wele half a yere and mo,	Well more than half a year.
	And afterward opon a while	And afterward, upon one occasion,
	The steward with tresoun and gile	The steward caused great woe for him
	Wrought him ful michel wo.	With treason and guile.
	So in a time, as we tel in gest,	So one time, as we say in stories,
410	The riche douke lete make a fest	The rich duke held a feast,
	Semly in somers tide;	Fittingly in summertime.
	Ther was mani a gentil gest	There were many noble guests
	With mete and drink ful onest	With the finest food and drink
	To servi by ich a side.	Served all around.

[7] *Sloe*: a tart plum-like fruit resembling a blueberry. As the berries were of little value, the idiom is close in meaning to PDE "I don't give a crap."

	Miche semly folk was samned thare,	Many worthy people were gathered there,
	Erls, barouns, lasse and mare,	Earls, barons, high and low,
	And levedis proude in pride.	And ladies magnificent in appearance.
	More joie no might be non	There could be no greater joy
	Than ther was in that worthly won,	Than there was in that stately place,
420	With blisse in borwe to bide.	With the pleasures to enjoy in the castle.
	That riche douke, that y of told,	This grand duke, which I spoke of,
	He hadde a douhter fair and bold,	Had a daughter who was fair and bold,
	Curteise, hende and fre.	Courteous, attractive, and generous.
	When sche was fiften winter old,	When she was fifteen years old,
	In al that lond nas ther non yhold	There was no one known in all the land
	So semly on to se,	So lovely to look on,
	For sche was gentil and avenaunt,	For she was graceful and beautiful.
	Hir name was cleped Belisaunt,	As you may listen to me,
	As ye may lithe at me.	Her name was called Belisaunt.
430	With levedis and maidens bright in bour	She stayed with the ladies and maidens,
	Kept sche was with honour	Shining in their bowers, living in honor
	And gret solempnité.	And great dignity.
	That fest lasted fourten night	The feast lasted fourteen nights,
	Of barouns and of birddes bright	With barons and beautiful lasses
	And lordinges mani and fale.	And lords, numerous and abundant.
	Ther was mani a gentil knight	There was many a gentle knight
	And mani a serjaunt, wise and wight,	And many a servant, strong and wise,
	To serve tho hende in halle.	To serve those nobles in the hall.
	Than was the boteler, Sir Amis,	But the butler, Sir Amis,
440	Over al yholden flour and priis,	Held the flower and the prize over all,
	Trewely to telle in tale,	To speak truly in the tale,
	And douhtiest in everi dede	And most valiant in every deed
	And worthliest in ich a wede	And worthiest in all his attire,
	And semliest in sale.	And most dignified in the hall.
	Than the lordinges schulden al gon	When the lordings all had to leave
	And wende out of that worthli won,	And departed from that stately dwelling,
	In boke as so we rede,	In the book as we read it,
	That mirie maide gan aske anon	The merry maid soon asked
	Of her maidens everichon	Each one of her maidens,
450	And seyd, “So God you spede,	And said, “So God help you,
	Who was hold the doughtiest knight	Who was considered the bravest knight
	And semlyest in ich a sight	And finest in every aspect,
	And worthliest in wede,	And worthiest in attire,
	And who was the fairest man	And who was seen as the fairest man
	That was yholden in lond than,	In the land at the time,
	And doughtiest of dede?”	The most valiant of deeds?”
	Her maidens gan answere ogain	Her maidens answered in return
	And seyd, “Madame, we schul the sain	And said, “My lady, we will tell you
	That sothe bi Seyn Savour:	The truth, by our Holy Savior.
460	Of erls, barouns, knight and swain	Out of earls, barons, knights, and youths,
	The fairest man and mest of main	The fairest man and greatest of might,
	And man of mest honour,	And the man of highest honor,
	It is Sir Amis, the kinges boteler;	Is Sir Amis, the king’s butler.
	In al this warld nis his per,	In all this world he has no equal,
	Noither in toun no tour;	Neither in town nor castle.
	He is douhtiest in dede	He is bravest in deed
	And worthliest in everi wede	And worthiest in every clothing
	And chosen for priis and flour.”	And takes the prize and flower.”

	Belisaunt, that birdde bright,	Belisaunt, that beautiful lass,
470	When thai hadde thus seyd, yplight,	When they had spoken so, truly,
	As ye may listen and lithe,	As you may listen and learn—
	On Sir Amis, that gentil knight,	Her heart was all set on fire
	Ywis, hir love was al alight,	For Sir Amis, the noble knight,
	That no man might it kithe.	With a love no man could know.
	Wher that sche seighe him ride or go,	Wherever she saw him ride or walk,
	Hir thought hir hert brac atuo,	She thought her heart would break in two.
	That hye no spac nought with that blithe;	Because she never spoke with that elegant man,
	For hye no might night no day	As she had no opportunity by night or day
	Speke with him, that fair may,	To speak with him, that fair maiden,
480	Sche wepe wel mani a sithe.	She wept a good number of times.
	Thus that miri maiden ying	Thus the merry young maiden
	Lay in care and lovemorning	Lay in sadness and lovesickness
	Bothe bi night and day;	Both by day and night.
	As y you tel in mi talking,	As I tell you in my speaking,
	For sorwe sche spac with him no thing,	For sorrow she said nothing to him,
	Sike in bed sche lay.	But lay ill in bed.
	Hir moder com to hir tho	Her mother then came to her
	And gan to frain hir of hir wo,	And asked her about her malaise,
	Help hir yif hye may;	To help her if she could.
490	And sche answerd withouten wrong,	And she answered without deceit
	Hir pines were so hard and strong,	That her pains were so hard and strong
	Sche wald be loken in clay.	She wanted to be buried in the clay.
	That riche douke in o morning	That majestic duke, on one morning,
	And with him mani a gret lording,	Along with many a great lording,
	As prince prout in pride,	As princes proud in their bearing,
	Thai dight him withouten dueling,	Prepared themselves without delay
	For to wende on dere hunting,	To go out deer hunting,
	And busked hem for to ride.	And so they dressed themselves to ride.
	When the lordinges everichon	When every one of the lordings
500	Were went out of that worthli won -	Was gone out of that regal residence,
	In herd is nought to hide -	Sir Amis, without a lie,
	Sir Amis, withouten les,	Because of a minor illness he had—
	For a malady that on him wes,	And because one cannot hide in a crowd—
	At hom he gan to abide.	Stayed behind at home.
	When tho lordinges were out ywent	When the lordings were all gone out,
	With her men hende and bowes bent,	With their men, skillful and bows bent,
	To hunte on holtes hare,	To hunt in the deep woods,
	Than Sir Amis, verrament,	Then Sir Amis, in truth,
	He bileft at hom in present,	Was left at home for the day
510	To kepe al that ther ware.	To attend to all who were there.
	That hendi knight bithought him tho,	Then the gracious knight thought to himself
	Into the gardin he wold go,	That he would go into the garden
	For to solas him thare.	To relax himself there.
	Under a bough as he gan bide,	Under a bough as he rested.
	To here the foules song that tide,	To hear the birds sing for the moment
	Him thought a blisseful fare.	Seemed a peaceful state to him.
	Now, hende, herkneth, and ye may here	Now, gentle people, listen and you will hear
	Hou that the doukes douhter dere	How the duke’s dear daughter
	Sike in hir bed lay.	Lay in distress in her bed.
520	Hir moder com with diolful chere	Her mother came in doleful spirits
	And al the levedis that ther were,	With all the ladies that were there
	For to solas that may:	To give comfort to that maiden.

	"Arise up," sche seyd, "douhter min,	"Rise up," she said, "daughter of mine,
	And go play the in to the gardin	And go play in the garden
	This semly somers day;	This lovely summer's day.
	Ther may thou here the foules song	There you can hear the birds sing
	With joie and miche blis among,	With joy and great bliss among them,
	Thi care schal wende oway."	And your troubles will pass away."
	Up hir ros that swete wight.	The sweet creature rose up.
530	Into the gardine sche went ful right	She went straightaway into the garden
	With maidens hende and fre.	With maidens, gracious and noble.
	The somers day was fair and bright,	The summer's day was fair and bright.
	The sonne him schon thurch lem of light,	The sun shone down in a gleaming light,
	That semly was on to se.	Which was pleasant to see.
	Sche herd the foules gret and smale,	She heard the birds, great and small.
	The swete note of the nightingale	The sweet note of the nightingale
	Ful mirily sing on tre;	Sang merrily in the tree.
	Ac hir hert was so hard ibrought,	But her heart was so heavy
	On love-longing was al hir thought,	That all her thoughts were on love-longing,
540	No might hir gamen no gle.	And she could not play or enjoy herself.
	And so that mirie may with pride	And so that lovely maid
	Went into the orchard that tide,	Went gracefully into the orchard that day
	To slake hir of hir care.	To relieve herself of her cares.
	Than seyghe sche Sir Amis biside,	When she saw Sir Amis nearby
	Under a bough he gan abide,	Under a bough where he had settled
	To here tho mirthes mare.	To better hear the singing.
	Than was sche bothe glad and blithe,	Then she was both glad and elated.
	Hir joie couthe sche noman kithe,	She could not express her joy to any man
	When that sche seighe him thare;	When she saw him there.
550	And thought sche wold for noman wond	She would not stop for anyone
	That sche no wold to him fond	To make her way toward him
	And tel him of hir fare.	And tell him about her feelings.
	Than was that may so blithe o mode,	Then the maiden's spirits were so light
	When sche seighe were he stode,	When she saw where he stood.
	To him sche went, that swete,	She went to him, that sweet one,
	And thought, for alle this warldes gode,	And thought that, for all this world's goods,
	Bot yif hye spac that frely fode,	She would not let that time pass
	That time no wold sche lete.	Without speaking to the valiant young man.
	And as tite as that gentil knight	And as soon as the gentle knight
560	Seighe that bird in bour so bright	Saw that lass, so beautiful in her bower,
	Com with him for to mete,	Coming nearer to meet with him,
	Ogaines hir he gan wende,	He made his way toward her.
	With worde bothe fre and hende	With words both noble and gracious
	Ful fair he gan hir grete.	He greeted her courteously.
	That mirie maiden sone anon	The merry maiden quickly
	Bad hir maidens fram hir gon	Told her ladies to go from her
	And withdrawe hem oway;	And take themselves away.
	And when thai were togider alon,	And when they were alone together,
	To Sir Amis sche made hir mon	She made her plea to Sir Amis
570	And seyd opon hir play,	And said coquettishly,
	"Sir knight, on the mine hert is brought,	"Sir Knight, my heart is set on you.
	The to love is al mi thought	To love you is all my desire,
	Bothe bi night and day;	Both by night and day.

	That bot thou wolt mi leman be,	Unless you will be my beloved,
	Ywis, min hert breketh a thre,	I know my heart will break in three![8]
	No lenger libben y no may.	I will not live any longer.
	"Thou art," sche seyd, "a gentil knight,	You are," she said, "a stately knight,
	And icham a bird in bour bright,	And I am a woman, shining in my bower,
	Of wel heighe kin ycorn,	And born into a noble family.
580	And bothe bi day and bi night	And both by day and by night,
	Mine hert so hard is on the light,	My heart has fallen on you so hard
	Mi joie is al forlorn;	That my joys are all lost.
	Plight me thi trewthe thou schalt be trewe	Pledge me your vow that you will be true
	And chaunge me for no newe	And will not exchange me for someone new
	That in this world is born,	Who is born into this world,
	And y plight the mi treuthe also,	And I will pledge you my fidelity also.
	Til God and deth dele ous ato,	Until God and death part us in two,
	Y schal never be forsworn."	I will never break my vow."
	That hende knight stille he stode	That gentle knight stood still
590	And al for thought chaunged his mode	And, deep in thought, changed his mood
	And seyd with hert fre,	And said with a dutiful heart,
	"Madame, for Him that dyed on Rode,	"My lady, for Him who died on the Cross,
	Astow art comen of gentil blode	If you have come from noble blood
	And air of this lond schal be,	And will be heir of this land,
	Bithenke the of thi michel honour;	Think of your high honor!
	Kinges sones and emperour	The sons of kings and emperors
	Nar non to gode to the;	Are none too good for you.
	Certes, than were it michel unright,	Surely, it would be a great wrong
	Thi love to lain opon a knight	For your love to be given to a knight
600	That nath noither lond no fe.	Who has neither land nor income.
	"And yif we schuld that game biginne,	And if we should begin a courtship,
	And ani wight of al thi kinne	And anyone from all your family
	Might it undergo,	Would discover it, we would lose
	Al our joie and worldes winne	All our joys and world's pleasures,
	We schuld lese, and for that sinne	And for that sin
	Wrethi God therto.	Anger God as a result.
	And y dede mi lord this deshonour,	If I did my lord this dishonor,
	Than were ich an ivel traitour;	Then I would be an evil traitor.
	Ywis, it may nought be so.	Surely it cannot be so!
610	Leve madame, do bi mi red	Dear lady, do as I advise
	And thenk what wil com of this dede:	And think what will come of this deed.
	Certes, no thing bot wo."	For certain, nothing but woe."[9]
	That mirie maiden of gret renoun	The lovely lady of great renown
	Answerd, "Sir knight, thou nast no croun;	Answered, "Sir Knight, you have no tonsure![10]
	For God that bought the dere,	By God who redeemed you dearly,

[8] Medieval hearts seem to break into two, three, or five with no particular significance, although there may be a reference either to the Trinity or to other significant numbers in scripture. See also the essay on *Guy of Warwick* for more on medieval numerology.

[9] Amis believes that his rank and status are too low to become romantically involved with the king's daughter, and that doing so would be a punishable act of disloyalty. He is also continuing to keep his vow to Amiloun, "Be nought ogain thi lord forsworn" (304).

[10] *Tonsure*: the partly-shaved hairstyle common to medieval clergy. Belisaunt makes fun of Sir Amis by suggesting that he is acting like a celibate monk.

	Whether artow prest other persoun,	Are you a priest or parson,
	Other thou art monk other canoun,	Or are you a monk or clergyman
	That prechest me thus here?	That preaches to me so here?
	Thou no schust have ben no knight,	You shouldn't have been a knight,
620	To gon among maidens bright,	Mingling among fair maidens;
	Thou schust have ben a frere!	You should have been a friar!
	He that lerd the thus to preche,	Whoever taught you to sermonize so,
	The devel of helle ichim biteche,	The devil can take him to Hell,
	Mi brother thei he were!	Even if he were my brother!
	"Ac," sche seyd, "bi Him that ous wrought,	But," she continued, "by Him who created us,
	Al thi precheing helpeth nought,	All your homilies accomplish nothing,
	No stond thou never so long.	No matter how long you resist!
	Bot yif thou wilt graunt me mi thought,	Unless you will grant me my desires,
	Mi love schal be ful dere abought	My love will be dearly paid for
630	With pines hard and strong;	With pains, hard and strong.
	Mi kerchef and mi clothes anon	My headscarf and my clothes,
	Y schal torende doun ichon	I will tear all of them down at once
	And say with michel wrong,	And say with great deception
	With strengthe thou hast me todrawe;	That you violated me with force!
	Ytake thou schalt be londes lawe	You will be taken by the law of the land
	And dempt heighe to hong!"	And condemned to hang high!"
	Than stode that hendy knight ful stille,	Then the noble knight stood still
	And in his hert him liked ille,	And he was troubled at heart;
	No word no spac he tho;	He spoke no words then.
640	He thought, "Bot y graunt hir wille,	He thought, "Unless I grant her will,
	With hir speche sche wil me spille,	She will destroy me with her speech
	Er than y passe hir fro;	Before I pass away from her.
	And yif y do mi lord this wrong,	And if I do my lord this wrong,
	With wilde hors and with strong	I will be drawn as well
	Y schal be drawe also."	Behind wild and strong horses."[11]
	Loth him was that dede to don,	He was loath to do that deed,
	And wele lother his liif forgon;	And more unwilling to lose his life.
	Was him never so wo.	He was never so woeful.
	And than he thought, withouten lesing,	And then he thought, without lying,
650	Better were to graunt hir asking	It would be better to grant her plea
	Than his liif for to spille.	Than to lose his life.
	Than seyd he to that maiden ying,	Then he said to that young maiden,
	"For Godes love, heven king,	"For God's sake, Heaven's king,
	Understond to mi skille.	Listen to my reasons.
	Astow art maiden gode and trewe	If you are a maiden, good and true,
	Bithenk hou oft rape wil rewe	Think how often haste is regretted
	And turn to grame wel grille,	And turns to fearful disaster.
	And abide we al this sevennight,	And let us wait these seven nights,
	As icham trewe gentil knight,	As I am a true noble knight,
660	Y schal graunt the thi wille."	And I will grant you your will."
	Than answerd that bird bright	Then that beautiful lass answered,
	And swore, "Bi Jhesu, ful of might,	And swore, "By Jesus, full of might,
	Thou scapest nought so oway.	You do not escape so easily!

[11] Sir Amis is referring to the capitol punishment for high treason of being hanged and *drawn*—dragged by horses—for Belisaunt's false charge of rape. Sir Amis' squire mentions being ripped apart in 2046, perhaps the final punishment of *quartering*, having the body cut into four pieces.

	Thi treuthe anon thou schalt me plight,	You will pledge your vow to me at once.
	Astow art trewe gentil knight,	If you are a true and noble knight,
	Thou schalt hold that day."	You will hold to that day."
	He graunted hir hir wil tho,	He granted her will to her then,
	And plight hem trewthes bothe to,	And pledged fidelity between them both,
	And seththen kist tho tuai.	And then the two kissed.
670	Into hir chaumber sche went ogain,	She returned to her chamber.
	Than was sche so glad and fain,	Then she was glad and pleased;
	Hir joie sche couthe no man sai.	She could not express her joy to anyone.[12]
	Sir Amis than withouten duelling,	Sir Amis, without more delay,
	For to kepe his lordes coming,	In order to prepare for his lord's coming,
	Into halle he went anon.	Went into the hall at once.
	When thai were comen fram dere hunting	When the duke came from deer hunting
	And with him mani an heighe lording	Into that stately dwelling,
	Into that worthly won,	And with him many a high lord,
	After his douhter he asked swithe;	He quickly asked about his daughter.
680	Men seyd that sche was glad and blithe,	Men said that she was cheerful and at ease;
	Hir care was al agon.	Her troubles were all gone.
	To eten in halle thai brought that may,	They brought the maiden to dine in the hall.
	Ful blithe and glad thai were that day	They were very relieved and glad that day,
	And thonked God ichon.	And everyone thanked God.
	When the lordinges, withouten les,	When the lordings, without a lie,
	Hendelich were brought on des	Were escorted courteously to the table
	With levedis bright and swete,	As princes that were proud in battle,
	As princes that were proude in pres,	With ladies beautiful and sweet,
	Ful richeliche served he wes	They were served splendidly
690	With menske and mirthe to mete.	With grace and delight at dinner.
	When that maiden that y of told,	When the maiden that I spoke of
	Among the birdes that were bold,	Sat there in her seat,
	Ther sche sat in her sete,	Among the ladies who were merry,
	On Sir Amis, that gentil knight,	She cast her glance a hundred times
	An hundred time sche cast hir sight,	On Sir Amis, that noble knight.
	For no thing wald sche lete.	She would not stop for anything.
	On Sir Amis, that knight hendy,	On Sir Amis, that handsome knight,
	Ever more sche cast hir eyghe,	She continually cast her eye;
	For no thing wold sche spare.	She would not cease for anything.
700	The steward ful of felonie,	The steward, full of wickedness,
	Wel fast he gan hem aspie,	Began to watch them attentively
	Til he wist of her fare,	Until he observed her situation,
	And bi her sight he parceived tho	And by her look he then perceived
	That gret love was bituix hem to,	That there was great love between the two.
	And was agreved ful sare,	He was sorely aggrieved
	And thought he schuld in a while	And thought he might in a while,
	Bothe with tresoun and with gile	With both treason and with guile,
	Bring hem into care.	Bring them into trouble.
	Thus, ywis, that miri may	Thus, indeed, that sweet maiden
710	Ete in halle with gamen and play	Ate in the hall with playfulness and fun

[12] *Hir joie sche couthe no man sai*: This, along with 474, 548, and 1238, is a problematic line. The meaning may be that Belisaunt is too coy or timid to reveal her joy, but it seems unlike her when she aggressively threatens Sir Amis with an accusal of rape and flirts with him at the supper table. The poetic idea may be that her joy is so overwhelming that it is beyond expression for her.

	Wele four days other five,	Well over four days or five,
	That ever when sche Sir Amis say,	So that always, when she saw Sir Amis,
	Al hir care was went oway,	All her cares were gone away;
	Wele was hir o live.	It was good to her to be alive.
	Wher that he sat or stode,	Whether he sat or stood,
	Sche biheld opon that frely fode,	She openly watched that noble youth,
	No stint sche for no strive;	Nor did she hold back for any danger.
	And the steward for wrethe sake	And the steward, for wrath's sake,
	Brought hem bothe in ten and wrake.	Brought them both to pain and harm.
720	Wel ivel mot he thrive.	May he have foul fortune![13]
	That riche douke opon a day	The rich duke, on one afternoon,
	On dere hunting went him to play,	Took himself out deer hunting,
	And with him wel mani a man;	And many men went with him.
	And Belisaunt, that miri may,	And Belisaunt, the merry maiden,
	To chaumber ther Sir Amis lay,	Went to the chamber where Sir Amis lay,
	Sche went, as sche wele kan;	As she knew the way well.
	And the steward, withouten les,	And the steward, without a lie,
	In a chaumber bisiden he wes	Was in a chamber nearby
	And seighe the maiden than	And saw the maiden then
730	Into chaumber hou sche gan glide;	And how she breezed into the room.
	For to aspie hem bothe that tide,	In order to spy on them both that moment,
	After swithe he ran.	He ran quickly toward them.
	When that may com into that won,	When the maiden came into that place,
	Sche fond Sir Amis ther alon,	She found Sir Amis there alone.
	"Hail," sche seyd, that levedi bright,	"Hello," she said, that beautiful lady.
	"Sir Amis," sche sayd anon,	"Sir Amis," she then continued,
	"This day a sevennight it is gon,	"As of today seven nights have passed,
	That trewthe we ous plight.	Since the vow that we pledged.
	Therfore icham comen to the,	Therefore I have come to you to know,
740	To wite, astow art hende and fre	If you are courteous and generous,
	And holden a gentil knight,	And trusted as a noble knight,
	Whether wiltow me forsake	Whether you will reject me
	Or thou wilt trewely to me take	Or you will take me faithfully
	And hold as thou bihight?"	And keep me as you promised?"
	"Madame," seyd the knight ogain,	"My lady," said the knight in response,
	"Y wold the spouse now ful fain	"I would marry you now gladly
	And hold the to mi wive;	And keep you as my wife.
	Ac yif thi fader herd it sain	But if your father heard it said
	That ich hadde his douhter forlain,	That I had slept with his daughter,
750	Of lond he wald me drive.	He would drive me out of the land.
	Ac yif ich were king of this lond	But if I were king of this realm
	And hadde more gode in min hond	And had more possessions in my hand
	Than other kinges five,	Than five other kings,
	Wel fain y wald spouse the than;	I would happily marry you then.
	Ac, certes, icham a pover man,	But I am, sincerely, a poor man!
	Wel wo is me o live!"	It is woe for me to live!"
	"Sir knight," seyd that maiden kinde,	"Sir Knight," said that elegant maiden,
	"For love of Seyn Tomas of Ynde,	"For the love of Saint Thomas of India,[14]

[13] *Wel ivel mot he thrive*: "May he thrive evilly." A moderately strong curse often found in ME, along with "Datheit hwo recke" ("Curse anyone who cares.")

	Whi seystow ever nay?	Why do you keep saying no?
760	No be thou never so pover of kinde,	No matter how poor your family was,
	Riches anough y may the finde	I can find riches enough for you,
	Bothe bi night and day."	By both night and day!"
	That hende knight bithought him than	The noble knight thought to himself
	And in his armes he hir nam	And then took her in his arms
	And kist that miri may;	And kissed the sweet maiden.
	And so thai plaid in word and dede,	And so they played in word and deed,
	That he wan hir maidenhede,	So that he won her virginity
	Er that sche went oway.	Before she went away.
	And ever that steward gan abide	And that steward continually waited
770	Alon under that chaumber side,	Alone alongside the chamber
	Their consail hem for to here.	In order to overhear their secrets.
	In at an hole, was nought to wide,	Through a hole, which was not very wide,
	He seighe hem bothe in that tide	He saw them both at that moment
	Hou thai seten yfere.	And how they sat together.
	And when he seyghe hem bothe with sight,	And when he saw them both with his eyes—
	Sir Amis and that bird bright,	Sir Amis and that lovely lass,
	The doukes douhter dere,	The duke's dear daughter—
	Ful wroth he was and egre of mode,	He was vengeful and fierce at heart,
	And went oway, as he were wode,	And stole away, as if he were mad,
780	Her conseil to unskere.	In order to expose their secrets.
	When the douke come in to that won	When the duke came into the residence,
	The steward ogain him gan gon,	The steward went up to him
	Her conseyl forto unwrain,	To betray their privacy.
	"Mi lord, the douke," he seyd anon,	"My lord, Sir Duke," he said at once,
	"Of thine harm, bi Seyn Jon,	"By Saint John, I sincerely wish[15]
	Ichil the warn ful fain;	To warn you about your harm!
	In thi court thou hast a thef,	In your court you have a thief,
	That hath don min hert gref,	Who has done my heart grief,
	Schame it is to sain,	It is a shame to say.
790	For, certes, he is a traitour strong,	For, certainly he is a foul traitor
	When he with tresoun and with wrong	When he has, with treason and injustice,
	Thi douhter hath forlain!"	Bedded your daughter!"
	The riche douke gan sore agrame:	The great duke became greatly enraged.
	"Who hath," he seyd, "don me that schame?	"Who has," he said, "done me this shame?
	Tel me, y the pray!"	Tell me, I ask you!"
	"Sir," seyd the steward, "bi Seyn Jame,	"Sir," said the steward, "By Saint James,
	Ful wele y can the tel his name,	I can full well tell you his name.
	Thou do him hong this day;	Have him hanged this day!
	It is thi boteler, Sir Amis,	It is your butler, Sir Amis.
800	Ever he hath ben traitour, ywis	He has always been a traitor, truly;
	He hath forlain that may.	He has deflowered that maiden.
	Y seighe it me self, for sothe,	I saw it myself, to tell the truth,

[14] *Seyn Tomas of Ynde*: Christ's disciple, the "doubting Thomas" who was also obstinate in questioning Jesus. There were medieval traditions that Thomas later evangelized in India (TEAMS).

[15] *Seyn Jon*: Swearing by saints was common in romances, just as modern French cursing favors religious epithets over sex or bathroom functions. Often the choice of saint is meaningful, but not always. Ford argues that particular saints are sometimes invoked simply to fit the poetic line. John C. Ford, "A New Conception of Poetic Formulae Based on Prototype Theory and the Mental Template," *Neuphilologishche Mitteilungen* 103 (2002): 218–24.

	And wil aprove biforn hem bothe,	And will swear it before both of them,
	That thai can nought say nay!"	So that they cannot deny it!"
	Than was the douke egre of mode,	Then the duke was in a livid passion.
	He ran to halle, as he were wode,	He ran to the hall as if he were mad;
	For no thing he nold abide.	He would not stop for anything.
	With a fauchoun scharp and gode	With a long curved sword, sharp and good,
	He smot to Sir Amis ther he stode,	He slashed at Sir Amis where he stood,
810	And failed of him biside.	But failed to hit him.
	Into a chaumber Sir Amis ran tho	Sir Amis ran into a chamber
	And schet the dore bituen hem to	And shut the door between the two of them
	For drede his heved to hide.	To hide his head for fear.
	The douke strok after swiche a dent	The duke struck such a blow at him
	That thurch the dore that fauchon went,	That the blade pierced through the door.
	So egre he was that tide.	So furious was he that moment
	Al that ever about him stode,	That all who stood around him
	Bisought the douke to slake his mode,	Begged the duke to control his emotions,
	Bothe erl, baroun, and swain;	Both earl, baron, and servant.
820	And he swore bi Him that dyed on Rode	But he swore by Him who died on the Cross
	He nold for al this worldes gode	That he would not stop for all the world's goods
	Bot that traitour were slain.	Unless that traitor was slain.
	"Ich have him don gret honour,	"I have given him great honor
	And he hath as a vile traitour	And he has behaved as a vile criminal
	Mi douhter forlain;	And slept with my daughter!
	Y nold for al this worldes won	I wouldn't turn away for all the world
	Bot y might the traitour slon	Until I might slay this traitor
	With min hondes tuain."	With my own two hands!"
	"Sir," seyd Sir Amis anon,	"Sir," Sir Amis pleaded at once,
830	"Lete thi wrethe first overgon,	"Let your rage first die down,
	Y pray the, par charité!	I beg of you, for charity's sake!
	And yif thou may prove, bi Sein Jon,	And if you can prove, by Saint John,
	That ichave swiche a dede don,	That I have done such a thing,
	Do me to hong on tre!	Have me hanged on a tree!
	Ac yif ani with gret wrong	But if anyone has defamed the two of us
	Hath lowe on ous that lesing strong,	With a foul lie, with great injustice—
	What bern that he be,	Whatever man that he be
	He leighth on ous, withouten fail,	Who lies about us—without fail
	Ichil aprove it in bataile,	I will prove it by combat
840	To make ous quite and fre."	To acquit and clear ourselves."
	"Ya," seyd the douke, "wiltow so,	"So!" said the duke, "Will you do so!
	Darstow into bataile go,	Do you dare to go into battle
	Al quite and skere you make?"	To clear and prove yourselves innocent?"
	"Ya, certes, sir!" he seyd tho,	"Yes, certainly, sir!" he replied then,
	"And here mi glove y give ther to,	"And I give my glove to you here:
	He leighe on ous with wrake."	This man lies about us with hatred."
	The steward stirt to him than	The steward bolted to him then
	And seyd, "Traitour, fals man,	And yelled, "Traitor! False man!
	Ataint thou schalt be take;	You will be seized and condemned!
850	Y seighe it me self this ich day,	I saw it myself this very day
	Where that sche in thi chaumber lay,	Where she lay in your chamber.
	Your noither it may forsake!"	Neither of you can deny it!"
	Thus the steward ever gan say,	The steward continually charged so,
	And ever Sir Amis seyd, "Nay,	And Sir Amis always said, "No,
	Ywis, it nas nought so!"	In truth, it was not so."
	Than dede the douke com forth that may,	Then the duke had the maiden come forth

	And the steward withstode al way	And the steward persisted all the time
	And vouwed the dede tho.	And vowed on the deed.
	The maiden wepe, hir hondes wrong,	The maiden wept, she wrung her hands,
860	And ever swore hir moder among,	And her mother continually defended her,
	"Certain, it was nought so!"	Saying "For sure, it was not so!"
	Than seyd the douke, "Withouten fail,	Finally the duke said, "Without a doubt,
	It schal be proved in batail	It will be proved in battle
	And sen bituen hem to."	And witnessed between the two of them."[16]
	Than was atuix hem take the fight	Then the fight was arranged between them,
	And sett the day a fourtennight,	And the time was set for fourteen days after
	That mani man schuld it sen.	So that many men should see it.
	The steward was michel of might;	The steward was great in might.
	In al the court was ther no wight	In all the court there was no one
870	Sir Amis borwe durst ben.	Who dared to be Sir Amis' guarantor.[17]
	Bot for the steward was so strong,	But because the steward was so strong,
	Borwes anowe he fond among,	He found seconds enough,
	Tuenti al bidene.	Twenty altogether.
	Than seyd thai all with resoun,	Then they all said, that with good reason,
	Sir Amis schuld ben in prisoun,	Sir Amis should be in prison,
	For he no schuld nowhar flen.	For he should not flee anywhere.
	Than answerd that maiden bright	Then the beautiful maiden protested
	And swore bi Jhesu, ful of might,	And swore by Jesus, full of might,
	That were michel wrong,	That it would be a great injustice.
880	"Taketh mi bodi for that knight,	"Take my body for that knight,
	Til that his day com of fight,	Until his day comes to fight,
	And put me in prisoun strong.	And put me in a strong prison.
	Yif that the knight wil flen oway	If the knight flees away
	And dar nought holden up his day,	And does not dare to keep his day,
	Bataile of him to fong,	To face the steward in combat,
	Do me than londes lawe	Then do to me as the law requires
	For his love to be todrawe	And have me drawn apart for his love
	And heighe on galwes hong."	And hanged high on the gallows!"
	Hir moder seyd with wordes bold	Her mother said, with bold words,
890	That with gode wil als sche wold	That, in good faith, she would
	Ben his borwe also,	Be his second as well,
	His day of bataile up to hold,	To guarantee his day of battle,
	That he as gode knight schold	So that he would, as a good knight,
	Fight ogain his fo.	Fight against his foe.
	Thus tho levedis fair and bright	Thus those ladies, fair and beautiful,
	Boden for that gentil knight	Pledged to offer both of their bodies
	To lain her bodis to.	For that gentle knight.

[16] Trial by combat was an established practice in Germanic law, with the victor assumed to be in the right. The practice faded away by the renaissance in favor of trial by jury and would have been slightly antique even in Auchinleck's time, but dueling continued up to the twentieth century, even in America.

[17] *Borwe*: Similar to the surety agreement that Gamelyn's brother enters into, the steward finds supporters who will assume legal responsibility if he absconds, and Sir Amis does not find a guarantor as the royal court believes he will flee from the steward's formidable strength. Skeat etymologizes *bail* as coming from OF *baillier*, to keep in custody. As with the Anglo-Saxons, the system seems to have been originally based on hostages and not money. The fact that no one helps Sir Amis after the affection shown him earlier (342-5) may partly underscore the fact that he *is* in the wrong, but also highlights Sir Amiloun's unquestioning loyalty.

	Than seyd the lordinges everichon,	Every one of the lordings said
	That other borwes wold thai non,	That they needed no other guarantors,
900	Bot graunt it schuld be so.	And granted that it should be so.
	When thai had don, as y you say,	When this was done, as I say to you,
	And borwes founde withouten delay,	And seconds were arranged without delay,
	And graunted al that ther ware,	And all who were there were in agreement,
	Sir Amis sorwed night and day,	Sir Amis was in sorrow night and day.
	Al his joie was went oway,	All his joy had gone away,
	And comen was al his care,	And all his troubles had multiplied.
	For that the steward was so strong	For the steward was so formidable
	And hadde the right and he the wrong	And was in the right, and he was guilty
	Of that he opon him bare.	Of the offence that was laid on him.
910	Of his liif yaf he nought,	He did not care about his life,
	Bot of the maiden so michel he thought,	But he thought so much about the maiden
	Might noman morn mare.	That no man might mourn more.
	For he thought that he most nede,	He felt that it was necessary for him,
	Ar that he to bataile yede,	Prior to going to battle,
	Swere on oth biforn,	To swear an oath beforehand,
	That al so God schuld him spede	That God might support him
	As he was giltles of that dede,	As much as he was guiltless of the deed
	That ther was on him born;	Which he had been accused of.
	And than thought he, withouten wrong,	And then he resolved, without wrong,
920	He hadde lever to ben anhong	That he would rather be hanged
	Than to be forsworn.	Than to swear falsely.
	Ac oft he bisought Jhesu tho,	But he continually called on Jesus
	He schuld save hem bothe to,	That He would save both of them
	That thai ner nought forlorn.	So that they would not be lost.
	So if bifel opon a day	So it happened that one day
	He mett the levedi and that may	He met the lady and the maiden
	Under an orchard side.	Under the shade of an orchard.
	"Sir Amis," the levedy gan say,	"Sir Amis," her mother began to say,
	"Whi mornestow so withouten play?	"Why do you grieve so without any joy?
930	Tel me that sothe this tide.	Tell me the truth this time.
	No drede the nought," sche seyd than,	Do not be afraid," she continued,
	"For to fight with thi foman,	"To fight with your enemy,
	Whether thou wilt go or ride,	Whether you will walk or ride.
	So richeliche y schal the schrede,	I will equip you so lavishly
	Tharf the never have of him drede,	That you need never have fear of him
	Thi bataile to abide."	In enduring your battle."
	"Madame," seyd that gentil knight,	"Madam," said that gracious knight,
	"For Jhesus love, ful of might,	"For Jesus' love, full of might,
	Be nought wroth for this dede.	Do not be anxious about that day.
940	Ich have that wrong and he the right,	I am in the wrong and he is in the right,
	Therfore icham aferd to fight,	And so I am afraid to fight,
	Al so God me spede,	So help me God![18]
	For y mot swere, withouten faile,	For I must swear, without fail,
	Al so God me spede in bataile,	That God should support me in battle
	His speche is falshede;	As much as his words are falsehoods.
	And yif y swere, icham forsworn,	And if I swear, I swear falsely,
	Than liif and soule icham forlorn;	And then in life and soul I am lost.

[18] *So God me spede*: ME is full of emphatic oaths and this line is likely meant as such.

	Certes, y can no rede!”	For sure, I know no solution!”
	Than seyd that levedi in a while,	Then after a while the lady said,
950	“No mai ther go non other gile	“Is there no trick that will work
	To bring that traitor doun?”	To bring that traitor down?”
	“Yis, dame,” he seyd, “bi Seyn Gile!	“Yes, my lady,” he said, “By Saint Giles![19]
	Her woneth hennes mani a mile	Many a mile from here, there lives
	Mi brother, Sir Amiloun,	My brother in arms, Sir Amiloun.
	And yif y dorst to gon,	And if I dare to go,
	Y dorst wele swere bi Seyn Jon,	I would swear by Saint John,
	So trewe is that baroun,	That baron is so loyal that
	His owhen liif to lese to mede,	He would help me in my need,
	He wold help me at this nede,	Even if he lost his own life as a reward,
960	To fight with that feloun.”	To fight with that criminal.”
	“Sir Amis,” the levedi gan to say,	“Sir Amis,” the mother said,
	“Take leve to morwe at day	“Leave tomorrow at daybreak
	And wende in thi jurné.	And travel on your journey.
	Y schal say thou schalt in thi way	I will say that you are on your way
	Hom in to thine owhen cuntray,	Home to your own country
	Thi fader, thi moder to se;	To see your father and your mother.
	And when thou comes to thi brother right,	And when you come to your friend,
	Pray him, as he is hendi knight	Ask him, if he is a noble knight
	And of gret bounté,	And of great generosity,
970	That he the batail for ous fong	That he accept the battle for us
	Ogain the steward that with wrong	Against the steward, who will unjustly
	Wil stroie ous alle thre.”	Destroy all three of us.”
	A morwe Sir Amis made him yare	In the morning Sir Amis readied himself
	And toke his leve for to fare	And took his leave to travel
	And went in his jurnay.	And went on his journey.
	For nothing nold he spare,	He would not stop for anything.
	He priked the stede that him bare	He spurred the horse that carried him
	Bothe night and day.	Both day and night.
	So long he priked withouten abod	So long did he spur the steed
980	The stede that he on rode	That he rode on without rest,
	In a fer cuntray	That in a faraway country
	Was overcomen and fel doun ded;	It was exhausted and collapsed dead.
	Tho couthe he no better red,	Then he knew no other course.
	His song was, “Waileway!”	His refrain was “Alas the day!”
	And when it was bifallen so,	And when it had happened so
	Nedes afot he most go,	That he had to go on foot,
	Ful careful was that knight.	That knight was sorely aggrieved.
	He stiked up his lappes tho,	He tucked up the hems of his coat[20]
	In his way he gan to go,	And began to go on his way
990	To hold that he bihight;	To keep what he had promised.
	And al that day so long he ran,	And so all the day long he ran
	In to a wilde forest he cam	Until he came into a wild forest

[19] *Dame*: From Latin *domina*, *dame* is difficult to translate here as the sense is highly contextual in ME. It can be a formal title, serving as the female counterpart to *Sir* (*Lady*), or it can simply mean a matron or mistress of a household (*madam*, *ma’am*). It seldom has the disrespectful nuance of modern slang.

[20] *Lappes*: Leach explains that “knights wore long coats that had to be tucked up for walking or riding” (quoted in TEAMS). MacEdward Leach, ed., *Amis and Amiloun*, EETS OS 203 (London: Oxford University Press, 1937).

	Bituen the day and the night.	Between the day and the night.
	So strong slepe yede him on,	Such a strong fatigue came upon him
	To win al this warldes won,	That for all this world's possessions
	No ferther he no might.	He could not go any further.
	The knight, that was so hende and fre,	The knight, who was so gracious and noble,
	Wel fair he layd him under a tre	Laid himself comfortably under a tree
	And fel in slepe that tide.	And fell asleep at that moment.
1000	Al that night stille lay he,	All the night he lay still
	Til amorwe men might yse	Until the morning when men might see
	The day bi ich a side.	The day on all sides.
	Than was his brother, Sir Amiloun,	At the time his brother, Sir Amiloun,[21]
	Holden a lord of gret renoun	Was esteemed as a lord of great renown
	Over al that cuntré wide,	Over all that wide country
	And woned fro thennes that he lay	And lived only half a day's journey,
	Bot half a jorné of a day,	Whether on foot or riding,
	Noither to go no ride.	Away from where he lay.
	As Sir Amiloun, that hendi knight,	As Sir Amiloun, that gracious knight,
1010	In his slepe he lay that night,	Lay asleep that night,
	In sweven he mett anon	In his nightmare he dreamed at once
	That he seighe Sir Amis bi sight,	That he saw Sir Amis with his eyes,
	His brother, that was trewethe plight,	His brother, who was bound in loyalty,
	Bilapped among his fon;	Surrounded by his enemies.
	Thurch a bere wilde and wode	By means of a bear, wild and crazed,
	And other bestes, that bi him stode,	And other beasts that stood nearby him,
	Bisett he was to slon;	He was about to be killed.
	And he alon among hem stode	And he stood among them alone
	As a man that couthe no gode;	As a man who hoped for no help.
1020	Wel wo was him bigon.	He was in great despair.
	When Sir Amiloun was awake,	When Sir Amiloun was awake,
	Gret sorwe he gan for him make	He felt great sorrow in himself
	And told his wiif ful yare	And told his wife immediately
	Hou him thought he seighe bestes blake	How he dreamed he saw dark beasts
	About his brother with wrake	Around his friend with rage
	To sle with sorwe and care.	Ready to kill with sorrow and grief.
	"Certes," he seyd, "with sum wrong	"Surely," he said, "By some wrong
	He is in peril gret and strong,	He is in peril, great and strong.
	Of blis he is ful bare."	He is bereft of joy!"
1030	And than seyd he, "For sothe ywis,	And then he said, "For sure, in truth,
	Y no schal never have joie no blis,	I will never have happiness or rest
	Til y wite hou he fare."	Until I know how he is doing."
	As swithe he stirt up in that tide,	Just as quickly he started up that moment.
	Ther nold he no leng abide,	He would not wait there longer,
	Bot dight him forth anon,	But prepared himself at once.
	And al his meine bi ich a side	And all his company, on each side,
	Busked hem redi to ride,	Equipped themselves to be ready to ride
	With her lord for to gon;	To set forth with their lord.
	And he bad al that ther wes,	But he ordered all who were there
1040	For Godes love held hem stille in pes,	To keep still, for the love of God, in peace.
	He bad hem so ich-chon,	He spoke to every one of them

[21] ME can use *brother* in the same sense as PDE does with expressions such as *blood brother* or *brothers in arms*.

	And swore bi Him that schop mankende,	And swore by Him who made mankind
	Ther schuld no man with him wende,	That no man should go with him
	Bot himself alon.	But himself alone.
	Ful richeliche he gan him schrede	He dressed himself splendidly
	And lepe astite opon his stede,	And leaped straightaway upon his steed,
	For nothing he nold abide.	Unwilling to wait for anything.
	Al his folk he gan forbede	He had forbidden all of his people
	That non so hardi were of dede,	So that none were so daring
1050	After him noither go no ride.	As to walk or ride after him.
	So al that night he rode til day,	So all that night he rode until daylight,
	Til he com ther Sir Amis lay	Until he came where Sir Amis lay
	Up in that forest wide.	Up in the wild forest.
	Than seighe he a weri knight forgon	He saw a weary knight, lost,
	Under a tre slepeand alon;	Sleeping under a tree alone.
	To him he went that tide.	He went to him that instant.
	He cleped to him anon right,	He called to him at once:
	"Arise up, felawe, it is light	"Rise up, fellow, it is light
	And time for to go!"	And time to go!"
1060	Sir Amis biheld up with his sight	Sir Amis looked up with his eyes
	And knewe anon that gentil knight,	And knew at once the noble knight
	And he knewe him also.	And he recognized him as well.
	That hendi knight, Sir Amiloun,	The noble knight, Sir Amiloun,
	Of his stede light adoun,	Got down off his horse
	And kist hem bothe to.	And the two of them kissed.
	"Brother," he seyd, "whi listow here	"Brother," he said, "why are you lying here
	With thus mornand chere?	With such a mournful face?
	Who hath wrought the this wo?"	Who has brought you this sadness?"
	"Brother," seyd Sir Amis tho,	"Friend," Sir Amis then said,
1070	"Ywis, me nas never so wo	"For sure, I was never so distressed
	Seththen that y was born;	Since the day I was born.
	For seththen that thou was went me fro,	For since the time that you went from me,
	With joie and michel blis also	I have served before my lord
	Y served mi lord biforn.	With joy and great happiness as well.
	Ac the steward ful of envie,	But the steward, full of jealousy,
	With gile and with trecherie,	And with guile and treachery,
	He hath me wrought swiche sorn;	Has brought me such sorrow!
	Bot thou help me at this nede,	Unless you can help me in my need,
	Certes, y can no nother rede,	For sure, I know no other course.
1080	Mi liif, it is forlorn!"	My life, it is lost!"
	"Brother," Seyd Sir Amiloun,	"Brother," said Sir Amiloun,
	"Whi hath the steward, that feloun,	"Why has the steward, that scoundrel,
	Ydon the al this schame?"	Done you all this shame?"
	"Certes," he seyd, "with gret tresoun	"For sure," he said, "with great infamy
	He wald me driven al adoun	He wants to drive me down
	And hath me brought in blame."	And has brought me into blame."
	Than told Sir Amis al that cas,	Then Sir Amis explained all his situation,
	Hou he and that maiden was	How he and the maiden were
	Bothe togider ysame,	Both in each other's company,
1090	And hou the steward gan hem wrain,	And how the steward had accused them,
	And hou the douke wald him have slain	And how the duke would have slain him
	With wrethe and michel grame.	With fury and hot rage.
	And also he seyd, yplight,	And he also said, truly,
	Hou he had boden on him fight,	How he had offered to fight him,
	Batail of him to fong,	To face him in combat,

	And hou in court was ther no wight,	And how in the court there was no one
	To save tho tuay levedis bright,	Except those two beautiful ladies
	Durst ben his borwe among,	Who dared to be among his seconds,
	And hou he most, withouten faile,	And how he must, without fail,
1100	Swere, ar he went to bataile,	Swear before he went to battle
	It war a lesing ful strong;	That it all was a foul lie.
	"And forsworn man schal never spede;	"And a false man will never succeed.
	Certes, therfore y can no rede,	Therefore, for certain, I know no answer.
	'Allas' may be mi song!"	My song will be 'Alas'!"
	When that Sir Amis had al told,	When Sir Amis had told all,
	Hou that the fals steward wold	How that false steward wanted to
	Bring him doun with mode,	Bring him down with angry passion,
	Sir Amiloun with wordes bold	Sir Amiloun swore with bold words:
	Swore, "Bi Him that Judas sold	"By Him that Judas sold out
1110	And died opon the Rode,	And who died upon the Cross,
	Of his hope he schal now faile,	He will now fail in his hopes!
	And y schal for the take bataile,	And I will take the battle for you
	Thei that he wer wode;	Even if he is a madman.
	Yif y may mete him aright,	If I can meet him to his face,
	With mi brond, that is so bright,	With my blade, which is so bright,
	Y schal sen his hert blode!	I will see his heart's blood!
	Ac brother," he seyd, "have al mi wede,	But friend," he said, "take all my clothes,
	And in thi robe y schal me schrede,	And I will dress myself in your robe,
	Right as the self it ware;	Right as it were yourself.
1120	And y schal swere so God me spede	And I will swear, so help me God,
	As icham giltles of that dede,	That I am guiltless of that deed
	That he opon the bare."	Which he charged upon you!"[22]
	Anon tho hendi knightes to	At once those two wily knights
	Alle her wede chaunged tho,	Exchanged all their clothes.
	And when thai were al yare,	And when they were all ready,
	Than seyd Sir Amiloun, "Bi Seyn Gile,	Then Sir Amiloun said, "By Saint Giles,[23]
	Thus man schal the schrewe bigile,	Thus so a man will trick the criminal
	That wald the forfare!	Who would destroy you!
	"Brother," he seyd, "wende hom now right	Brother," he said, "now go right home
1130	To mi levedi, that is so bright,	To my lady, who is so beautiful,
	And do as y schal the sain;	And do as I tell you to do.
	And as thou art a gentil knight,	And if you are a virtuous knight,
	Thou ly bi hir in bed ich night,	Lie beside her in bed each night
	Til that y com ogain,	Until I come back again.
	And sai thou hast sent thi stede ywis	And say you have sent your steed, in truth,
	To thi brother, Sir Amis;	To your brother, Sir Amis.
	Than wil thai be ful fain,	Then I will be very glad.
	Thai wil wene that ich it be;	They will assume that you are me;
	Ther is non that schal knowe the,	The two of us are so alike
1140	So liche we be bothe tuain!"	That there is no one who will know you!"
	And when he hadde thus sayd, yplight,	And when he had spoken so indeed,

[22] Sir Amis' moral conundrum is that they have sworn to be truthful to their lords, and he will be a liar if he swears to the court that he never slept with Belisaunt. The steward is justified in accusing Amis, however spiteful his motives. Sir Amiloun's trick is to impersonate Sir Amis, as Amiloun will technically be telling the truth if he vows that he has not corrupted the king's daughter.

[23] *Seyn Gile*: Saint Giles (c. 650-710), a hermit saint from Athens associated with cripples and beggars.

	Sir Amiloun, that gentil knight,	Sir Amiloun, that noble knight,
	Went in his jurnay,	Went on his journey.
	And Sir Amis went hom anon right	And Sir Amis went home at once
	To his brother levedi so bright,	To his brother's lady, who was so beautiful,
	Withouten more delay,	Without any more delay.
	And seyd hou he hadde sent his stede	And he explained how he had sent his steed
	To his brother to riche mede	To his brother as a valuable gift
	Bi a knight of that cuntray;	Via a knight of that country.
1150	And al thai wende of Sir Amis	And all of them thought that Sir Amis
	It had ben her lord, ywis,	Was their lord, in fact,
	So liche were tho tuay.	So alike were the two of them.
	When that Sir Amis hadde ful yare	When Sir Amis had fully
	Told him al of his care,	Told them what had happened to him,
	Ful wele he wend tho,	He surmised full well that
	Litel and michel, lasse and mare,	Small and great, high and low,
	Al that ever in court ware,	All who were ever in the court,
	Thai thought it hadde ben so.	Believed that it had been so.
	And when it was comen to the night,	And when it came to the night,
1160	Sir Amis and that levedi bright,	Sir Amis and that shining lady
	To bed thai gun go;	Made their way to bed.
	And whan thai were togider ylayd,	And when they were laying together,
	Sir Amis his swerd out braid	Sir Amis drew out his sword
	And layd bituix hem tuo.	And laid it between the two of them.
	The levedi loked opon him tho	The lady looked at him crossly
	Wrothlich with her eighen tuo,	With her two eyes.
	Sche wend hir lord were wode.	She thought that her lord was mad.
	"Sir," sche seyd, "whi farstow so?	"Sir," she said, "why are you behaving so?
	Thus were thou noght won to do,	You have never acted like this.
1170	Who hath changed thi mode?"	What has changed your mood?"
	"Dame," he seyd, "sikerly,	"My lady," he said, "for certain,
	Ich have swiche a malady	I have such an illness
	That mengeth al mi blod,	That it troubles all my blood.
	And al min bones be so sare,	And all of my bones are so sore
	Y nold nought toche thi bodi bare	That I would not touch your bare body
	For al this warldes gode!"	For all this world's goods."
	Thus, ywis, that hendy knight	In this way, in truth, that righteous knight
	Was holden in that fourtennight	Stayed for those fourteen days
	As lord and prince in pride;	Honorably as lord and prince.
1180	Ac he forgat him never a night,	But he never forgot for one night
	Bituix him and that levedi bright	To lay his sword in the middle
	His swerd he layd biside.	Between him and that beautiful lady.
	The levedi thought in hir resoun,	The lady thought in her mind
	It hadde ben hir lord, Sir Amiloun,	That it was her lord, Sir Amiloun,
	That hadde ben sike that tide;	Who was sick at that time.
	Therfore sche held hir stille tho	Therefore she kept herself content
	And wold speke wordes no mo,	And did not speak any more about it,
	Bot thought his wille to abide.	Only wishing to abide by his will.
	Now, hende, herkneth, and y schal say	Now, good people, listen and I will say
1190	Hou that Sir Amiloun went his way;	How Sir Amiloun went his way.
	For nothing wold he spare.	He would not stop for anything.
	He priked his stede night and day,	He spurred his steed by night and day,
	As a gentil knight, stout and gay,	As a noble knight, sturdy and cheerful.
	To court he com ful yare	He came to the court in haste
	That selve day, withouten fail,	The same day, without fail,

	That was ysett of batail,	That was set for the battle,
	And Sir Amis was nought thare.	And Sir Amis was not there.
	Than were tho levedis taken bi hond,	Then the two ladies were seized by the hand
	Her juggement to understond,	To undergo their judgment,
1200	With sorwe and sikeing sare.	With sorrow and bitter sighing.
	The steward hoved opon a stede	The steward waited upon a horse
	With scheld and spere, bataile to bede,	With shield and spear to offer battle.
	Gret bost he gan to blawe;	He began to chatter great boasts.
	Bifor the douke anon he yede	He quickly went before the duke
	And seyd, "Sir, so God the spede,	And said, "Sir, as God protects you,
	Herken to mi sawe!	Listen to my speech!
	This traitour is out of lond ywent;	This traitor has gone out of the land.
	Yif he were here in present,	If he were here in person,
	He schuld ben hong and drawe;	He would be hanged and drawn.
1210	Therefore ich aske jugement,	Therefore I ask for judgment,
	That his borwes be tobrent,	That his guarantors be burned,
	As it is londes lawe."	As it is the law of the land."
	That riche douke, with wrethe and wrake,	The rich duke, with wrath and anger,
	He bad men schuld tho levedis take	Ordered men to take hold of the ladies
	And lede hem forth biside;	And bring them forth beside everyone.
	A strong fer ther was don make	A raging fire was readied there,
	And a tonne for her sake,	And a barrel for them to wear,
	To bren hem in that tide.	To burn them on that day.
	Than thai loked in to the feld	Then they looked toward the field
1220	And seighe a knight with spere and scheld	And saw a knight, with spear and shield,
	Com prikeand ther with pride.	Come spurring there gallantly.
	Than seyd thai everichon, ywis,	Then everyone said, indeed,
	"Yonder cometh prikeand Sir Amis!"	"Here comes Sir Amis riding!"
	And bad thai schuld abide.	And asked that they would wait.
	Sir Amiloun gan stint at no ston,	Sir Amiloun did not rest at any milestone.
	He priked among hem everichon,	He rode past each one of them,
	To that douke he gan wende.	Making his way toward the duke.
	"Mi lord the douke," he seyd anon,	"My lord, the duke," he said at once,
	"For schame lete tho levedis gon,	"For shame, let those women go,
1230	That er bothe gode and hende,	Who are both good and noble!
	For ich am comen hider today	For I have come back here today
	For to saven hem, yive y may,	In order to save them, if I can,
	And bring hem out of bende,	And bring them out of bondage.
	For, certes, it were michel unright	For, certainly, it would be a great wrong
	To make roste of levedis bright;	To make a roast of beautiful ladies.
	Ywis, ye eren unkende."	You are going against nature, indeed."[24]
	Than ware tho levedis glad and blithe,	Then the ladies were glad and relieved.
	Her joie couthe thai noman kithe,	They could express their joy to no man;
	Her care was al oway;	Their troubles had all departed.
1240	And seththen, as ye may list and lithe,	And then, as you may listen and learn,
	Into the chaunber thai went aswithe,	They went into the chamber as quickly
	Withouten more delay,	Without any more delay,
	And richeliche thai schred that knight	And they dressed that knight splendidly
	With helme and plate and brini bright,	With helmet and armor and shining mail.

[24] *Unkende* can mean either *cruel* or *unnatural* (i.e. to one's own kind), and here Sir Amiloun is likely suggesting both senses.

	His tire, it was ful gay.	His appearance was magnificent.
	And when he was opon his stede,	And when he was upon his steed,
	That God hem schuld save and spede	Many men prayed that day
	Mani man bad that day.	That God would save and support them.
	As he com prikand out of toun,	As he came galloping out of town,
1250	Com a voice fram heven adoun,	A voice came down from Heaven,
	That noman herd bot he,	Which no one heard but him,
	And sayd, "Thou knight, Sir Amiloun,	And said, "You knight, Sir Amiloun!
	God, that suffred passioun,	Christ, who suffered passion,
	Sent the bode bi me;	Sends you a warning through me!
	Yif thou this bataile underfong,	If you go through with this battle,
	Thou schalt have an eventour strong	You will have a great reckoning
	Within this yeres thre;	Within the next three years.
	And or this thre yere be al gon,	And before these three years are all gone,
	Fouler mesel nas never non	There will never have been a fouler leper
1260	In the world, than thou schal be!	In all the world than you will be!
	"Ac for thou art so hende and fre,	But because you are so generous and good,
	Jhesu sent the bode bi me,	Jesus sent the warning through me
	To warn the anon;	To warn you at once.
	So foule a wreche thou schalt be,	You will be so foul a wretch,
	With sorwe and care and poverté	With sorrow and trouble and poverty.
	Nas never non wers bigon.	There was never a worse one before,
	Over al this world, fer and hende,	Over all this world, near and far.
	Tho that be thine best frende	Those who are your best friends
	Schal be thi most fon,	Will be your greatest foes,
1270	And thi wiif and alle thi kinne	And your wife and all your kin
	Schul fle the stede thatow art inne,	Will flee the room that you are in,
	And forsake the ichon."	And desert you, every one."
	That knight gan hove stille so ston	The knight stood as still as a stone
	And herd tho wordes everichon,	And heard every one of the words,
	That were so gret and grille.	Which were so serious and terrifying.
	He nist what him was best to don,	He did not know what was best to do,
	To flen, other to fighting gon;	To flee or to go fighting.
	In hert him liked ille.	He was aggrieved at heart.
	He thought, "Yif y beknowe mi name,	He thought, "If I reveal my name,
1280	Than schal mi brother go to schame,	Then my brother will go to shame.
	With sorwe thai schul him spille.	They will kill him in sorrow.
	Certes," he seyd, "for drede of care	For sure," he said, "for fear of worse trouble,
	To hold mi treuthe schal y nought spare,	I will spare nothing to keep my pledge.
	Lete God don alle His wille."	Let God do all that He wills!"
	Al the folk ther was, ywis,	All the people who were there, indeed,
	Thai wend it had ben Sir Amis	Assumed that it was Sir Amis
	That bataile schuld bede;	Who was to offer battle.
	He and the steward of pris	He and the renowned steward
	Were brought bifor the justise	Were brought before the justice
1290	To swere for that dede.	To swear on that deed.
	The steward swore the pople among,	The steward swore in front of the people
	As wis as he seyd no wrong,	That for certain he spoke no wrong;
	God help him at his nede;	God help him in his need.
	And Sir Amiloun swore and gan to say	And Sir Amiloun affirmed and said
	As wis as he never kist that may,	That for certain he never kissed that maid,
	Our Levedi schuld hem spede.	And that Our Lady should reward them.
	When thai hadde sworn, as y you told,	When they had pledged, as I told you,
	To biker tho bernes were ful bold	The men were very keen to fight

	And busked hem for to ride.	And readied themselves to ride.
1300	Al that ther was, yong and old,	All who were there, young and old,
	Bisought God yif that He wold	Beseeched God that He would
	Help Sir Amis that tide.	Help Sir Amis in that moment.
	On stedes that were stithe and strong	On steeds that were firm and strong,
	Thai riden togider with schaftes long,	They rode together with long spears,
	Til thai toschiverd bi ich a side;	Until they were shattered on each side.
	And than drough thai swerdes gode	And then they drew out good swords
	And hewe togider, as thai were wode,	And clashed together as if they were mad.
	For nothing thai nold abide.	They would not stop for anything.
	Tho gomes, that were egre of sight,	Those soldiers, who were a fierce sight,
1310	With fauchouns felle thai gun to fight	Began to fight with deadly curved swords
	And ferd as thai were wode.	And fared as if they were crazed.
	So hard thai hewe on helmes bright	So hard did they strike on shining helmets
	With strong strokes of michel might,	With powerful blows of great might
	That fer biforn out stode;	That fiery sparks flew out from them.
	So hard thai hewe on helme and side,	So hard did they hack at helmets and body
	Thurch dent of grimly woundes wide,	That through the blows of many grisly wounds
	That thai sprad al of blod.	They were all covered with blood.
	Fram morwe to none, withouten faile,	From morning to noon, without fail,
	Bituixen hem last the bataile,	The battle lasted between them,
1320	So egre thai were of mode.	So fierce were they in spirit.
	Sir Amiloun, as fer of flint,	Sir Amiloun, like sparks from flint,
	With wrethe anon to him he wint	Went straight at the steward with anger
	And smot a stroke with main;	And landed a blow with force.
	Ac he failed of his dint,	But he failed in his aim.
	The stede in the heved he hint	He hit the steed in the head
	And smot out al his brain.	And struck out all its brains,
	The stede fel ded doun to grounde;	And the steed fell dead to the ground.
	Tho was the steward that stounde	Then the steward was, at that moment,
	Ful ferd he schuld be slain.	Greatly afraid he would be slain.
1330	Sir Amiloun light adoun of his stede,	Sir Amiloun came down from his steed.
	To the steward afot he yede	He went to the steward on foot
	And halp him up ogain.	And helped him up again.
	"Arise up, steward," he seyd anon,	"Rise up, steward," he said at once,
	"To fight thou schalt afot gon,	"You will walk on foot to fight,
	For thou hast lorn thi stede;	For you have lost your mount.
	For it were gret vilani, bi Seyn Jon,	For it would be great villainy,
	A liggeand man for to slon,	By Saint John, to slay a prostrate man
	That were yfallen in nede."	Who had fallen into helplessness."[25]
	That knight was ful fre to fond	The knight was willing to oblige him
1340	And tok the steward bi the hond	And took the steward by the hand
	And seyd, "So God me spede,	And said, "So help me God,
	Now thou schalt afot go,	Now you will go on foot.
	Y schal fight afot also,	I will fight on foot as well.
	And elles were gret falshed."	Otherwise it would be great unfairness."
	The steward and that douhti man	The steward and that sturdy man

[25] Medieval armor could be so heavy that a warrior thrown from his horse might only get up off the ground with difficulty. Sir Amiloun shows a chivalric sense of fair play in lifting the steward and being willing to fight on foot, not wanting to cheapen his victory by killing a nearly helpless man. A horse being killed is an everpresent romance cliché, perhaps enabling the hero to show off his physical prowess on foot.

	Anon togider thai fight gan	At once began to fight together
	With brondes bright and bare;	With blades that were shining and bare.
	So hard togider thai fight than,	So hard did they battle each other
	Til al her armour o blod ran,	Until all their armor ran with blood;
1350	For nothing nold thai spare.	They would not stop for anything.
	The steward smot to him that stounde	At that moment the steward struck on him
	On his schulder a gret wounde	A great wound on his shoulder
	With his grimly gare,	With his fearsome weapon,
	That thurch that wounde, as ye may here,	So that through that wound, as you may hear,
	He was knowen with reweli chere,	He knew, with a remorseful expression,
	When he was fallen in care.	That he had fallen into danger.
	Than was Sir Amiloun wroth and wode,	Then Sir Amiloun became wild and enraged,
	Whan al his amour ran o blode,	As all his armor ran with blood
	That ere was white so swan;	Which was before as white as a swan.
1360	With a fauchoun scharp and gode	With a curved sword, sharp and fine,
	He smot to him with egre mode	He struck at the steward with a fierce heart
	Al so a douhti man,	As a hardy man,
	That even fro the schulder blade	So that even from the shoulder blade
	Into the brest the brond gan wade,	Into the breast the blade traveled
	Thurchout his hert it ran.	And ran through his heart.
	The steward fel adoun ded,	The steward fell down dead.
	Sir Amiloun strok of his hed,	Sir Amiloun cut off his head,
	And God he thonked it than.	And then thanked God for it.
	Alle the lordinges that ther ware,	All of the lordings who were there,
1370	Litel and michel, lasse and mare,	Small and great, low and high,
	Ful glad thai were that tide.	Were greatly pleased that moment.
	The heved opon a spere thai bare;	They bore the head upon a spear.
	To toun thai dight hem ful yare,	They made their way excitedly to town
	For nothing thai nold abide;	And would not wait for anything.
	Thai com ogaines him out of toun	They came back to him outside town
	With a fair processioun	In a grand procession,
	Semliche bi ich a side.	Splendid on every side.
	Anon thai ladde him to the tour	Soon they escorted him to the tower
	With joie and ful michel honour,	With joy and great honor,
1380	As prince proude in pride.	As a prince proud in nobility.
	In to the palais when thai were gon,	When they had gone into the palace,
	Al that was in that worthli won	All who were in that stately dwelling
	Wende Sir Amis it ware.	Thought it was Sir Amis.
	“Sir Amis,” seyd the douke anon,	“Sir Amis,” the duke soon began,
	“Bifor this lordinges everichon	“Before every one of these lords,
	Y graunt the ful yare,	I readily grant you Belisaunt,
	For Belisent, that miri may,	That sweet maiden,
	Thou hast bought hir ful dere today	For you have bought her dearly today
	With grimli woundes sare;	With sore and horrible wounds.
1390	Therfore y graunt the now here	Therefore I grant you here now
	Mi lond and mi douhter dere,	My land and my dear daughter,
	To hald for ever mare.”	To hold forevermore.”
	Ful blithe was that hendi knight	The noble knight was overjoyed
	And thonked him with al his might,	And thanked him with all his might.
	Glad he was and fain;	He was glad and pleased.
	In alle the court was ther no wight	In all the court there was no one
	That wist wat his name it hight;	Who knew what his real name was,
	To save tho levedis tuain,	Who had saved the two ladies.
	Leches swithe thai han yfounde,	They quickly found doctors

1400	That gun to tasty his wounde	Who examined his wounds
	And made him hole ogain,	And made him whole again.
	Than were thai al glad and blithe	Then everyone was glad and relieved
	And thonked God a thousand sithe	And thanked God a thousand times
	That the steward was slain.	That the steward was slain.
	On a day Sir Amiloun dight him yare	The next day Sir Amiloun hastily readied
	And seyd that he wold fare	Himself and said that he would travel
	Hom into his cuntray	Home into his country
	To telle his frendes, lasse and mare,	To tell his friends, low and high,
	And other lordinges that there ware,	And other lords that were there,
1410	Hou he had sped that day.	How he had fared that day.
	The douke graunted him that tide	The duke gave him permission at that time
	And bede him knightes and miche pride,	And offered him knights and great ceremony,
	And he answerd, "Nay."	But he answered, "No."
	Ther schuld noman with him gon,	No man should go with him,
	Bot as swithe him dight anon	But with equal speed he prepared himself
	And went forth in his way.	And went forth on his way.
	In his way he went alone,	He went alone on his journey.
	Most ther noman with him gon,	No other man could go with him,
	Noither knight no swain.	Neither knight nor servant.
1420	That douhti knight of blod and bon,	The knight, sturdy in flesh and blood,
	No stint he never at no ston	Did not rest at any milestone
	Til he com hom ogain;	Until he came home again.
	And Sir Amis, as y you say,	And Sir Amis, as I tell you,
	Waited his coming everi day	Waited for his coming every day
	Up in the forest plain;	Up in the forest plain.
	And so thai mett togider same,	And so they met together in reunion,
	And he teld him with joie and game	And Sir Amiloun told him with joy and laughter
	Hou he hadde the steward slain,	How he had slain the steward,
	And hou he schuld spousy to mede	And how as a reward he would marry
1430	That ich maide, worthli in wede,	That same maiden of noble dress
	That was so comly corn.	Who was of such royal heritage.
	Sir Amiloun light of his stede,	Sir Amiloun dismounted from his steed,
	And gan to chaungy her wede,	And they exchanged their clothes
	As thai hadde don biforn.	As they had done before.
	"Brother," he seyd, "wende hom ogain."	"Brother," he said, "go back home."
	And taught him hou he schuld sain,	And he told him what he should say
	When he com ther thai worn.	When he arrived there.
	Than was Sir Amis glad and blithe	Then Sir Amis was happy and glad
	And thanked him a thousand sithe	And gave thanks a thousand times
1440	The time that he was born.	For the time that his friend was born.
	And when thai schuld wende ato,	And when they had to part ways,
	Sir Amis oft thonked him tho	Sir Amis continually thanked him
	His cost and his gode dede.	For his trouble and his good deed.
	"Brother," he seyd, "yif it bitide so	"Friend," he said, "if it happens so
	That the bitide care other wo,	That you encounter trouble or woe,
	And of min help hast nede,	And need my help,
	Savelich com other send thi sond,	Just come or send your messenger,
	And y schal never lenger withstond,	And I will delay no longer,
	Al so God me spede;	So help me God!
1450	Be it in peril never so strong,	No matter how much the danger,
	Y schal the help in right and wrong,	I will help you, in right or wrong,
	Mi liif to lese to mede."	Even if I lose my life as a reward."
	Asonder than thai gun wende;	They then parted from each other.

	Sir Amiloun, that knight so hende,	Sir Amiloun, that knight so gentle,
	Went hom in that tide	Went home at that time
	To his levedi that was unkende,	To his lady who was unknowing,
	And was ful welcome to his frende,	And who was so welcoming to his friend,
	As prince proude in pride;	As a prince proud in bearing.
	And when it was comen to the night,	And when it came to the night,
1460	Sir Amiloun and that levedi bright	Sir Amiloun and that beautiful lady
	In bedde were layd biside;	Were lying beside each other in bed.
	In his armes he gan hir kis	In his arms he began to kiss her
	And made his joie and michel blis,	And was joyful and greatly content.
	For nothing he nold abide.	He would not leave for anything.
	The levedi astite asked him tho	The lady then immediately asked him
	Whi that he hadde farn so	Why he had behaved so
	Al that fourtennight,	All those fourteen nights,
	Laid his swerd bituen hem to,	Laying his sword between the two of them
	That sche no durst nought for wele no wo	So that she dared not, for good or ill,
1470	Touche his bodi aright.	Touch his body at all.
	Sir Amiloun bithought him than	Sir Amiloun then was assured
	His brother was a trewe man,	His friend was a faithful man
	That hadde so done, aplight.	Who had done this, truly.
	"Dame," he seyd, "ichil the sain	"My lady," he said, "I will tell you
	And telle the that sothe ful fain,	And explain the truth to you gladly.
	Ac wray me to no wight."	But betray me to no one."
	The levedi astite him frain gan,	The lady at once began to pester him,
	For His love, that this warld wan,	For His love, who redeemed the world,
	Telle hir whi it ware.	To tell her what happened.
1480	Than astite that hendy man,	Then as promptly that gentle man
	Al the sothe he teld hir than,	Told her all the truth,
	To court hou he gan fare,	How he had traveled to the court,
	And hou he slough the steward strong,	And how he killed the fierce steward,
	That with tresoun and with wrong	Who would have destroyed his brother
	Wold have his brother forfare,	With treason and with injustice;
	And hou his brother that hendy knight	And how his friend, that noble knight,
	Lay with hir in bed ich night	Had laid with her in bed each night
	While that he was thare.	While he was there.
	The levedi was ful wroth, yplight,	The lady was very irate, truly,
1490	And oft missayd hir lord that night	And incessantly criticized her lord that night
	With speche bituix hem to,	In speech between the two of them,
	And seyd, "With wrong and michel unright	And complained, "You killed a noble knight
	Thou slough ther a gentil knight;	With foul and great injustice.
	Ywis, it was ivel ydo!"	For certain, it was done in evil!"
	"Dame," he seyd, "bi heven king,	"Lady," he said, "by Heaven's king,
	Y no dede it for non other thing	I did it for no other thing
	Bot to save mi brother fro wo,	But to save my brother from grief.
	And ich hope, yif ich hadde nede,	And I hope, if I had need, that even if
	His owhen liif to lesse to mede,	He shortened his own life as a result,
1500	He wald help me also."	He would help me also."
	Al thus, in gest as we sain,	Meanwhile, in the story as we read it,
	Sir Amis was ful glad and fain,	Sir Amis was glad and at ease
	To court he gan to wende;	And he traveled to the court.
	And when he come to court ogain	And when he came back to the court
	With erl, baroun, knight and swain,	He was honored, that good man,
	Honoured he was, that hende.	By earl, baron, knight, and servant.
	That riche douke tok him bi hond	The rich duke took him by the hand

	And sesed him in alle his lond,	And endowed him with all his land
	To held withouten ende;	To hold without end.
1510	And seththen with joie opon a day	And afterward with joy, upon one day,
	He spoused Belisent, that may,	He married Belisaunt, that maiden
	That was so trewe and kende.	Who was so loyal and kind.
	Miche was that semly folk in sale,	There were many fine people in the hall
	That was samned at that bridale	Who were gathered at that wedding
	When he hadde spoused that flour,	When he wedded that flower:
	Of erls, barouns, mani and fale,	Earls, barons, numerous and plenty,
	And other lordinges gret and smale,	And other gentlemen, great and small,
	And levedis bright in bour.	And ladies, beautiful in their bowers.
	A real fest thai gan to hold	They held a royal feast
1520	Of erls and of barouns bold	With earls and brave barons
	With joie and michel honour;	With joy and stately honor.
	Over al that lond est and west	Over all the land, east and west,
	Than was Sir Amis helden the best	Sir Amis was lauded as the best
	And chosen for priis in tour.	And regarded with praise in the tower.
	So within tho yeres to	So within those two years,
	A wel fair grace fel hem tho,	They were blessed with grace,
	As God almighti wold;	As God Almighty willed:
	The riche douke dyed hem fro	The rich duke was taken from them
	And his levedi dede also,	And his lady passed away as well,
1530	And graven in grete so cold.	And buried in the ground so cold.
	Than was Sir Amis, hende and fre,	Then Sir Amis, generous and noble,
	Douke and lord of gret pousté	Was a duke and lord of great authority
	Over al that lond yhold.	And was obeyed all over the land.
	Tuai childer he bigat bi his wive,	He fathered two children with his wife,
	The fairest that might bere live,	The fairest that might bear life,
	In gest as it is told.	In the story as it is told.
	Than was that knight of gret renoun	Then that knight was of great renown
	And lord of mani a tour and toun	And lord of many a tower and town
	And douke of gret pousté;	And a duke of great power.
1540	And his brother, Sir Amiloun,	But his brother, Sir Amiloun,
	With sorwe and care was driven adoun,	Who was so noble and generous before,
	That ere was hende and fre;	Was weighed down with sorrow and cares.
	Al so that angel hadde hem told,	Just as the angel had told him,
	Fouler messel that nas non hold	There was no leper regarded so foully
	In world than was he.	By the world than he was.
	In gest to rede it is gret rewthe,	To read the story is great sadness,
	What sorwe he hadde for his treuthe	What misery he had for his faithfulness
	Within tho yeres thre.	Within those three years.
	And er tho thre yere com to thende	And before those three years came to their end,
1550	He no wist whider he might wende,	He was so weighed down by woe
	So wo was him bigon;	He did not know where he might go;
	For al that were his best frende,	For all who were his best friends,
	And nameliche al his riche kende,	And, namely, all his rich family,
	Bicom his most fon;	Became his worst foes.
	And his wiif, for sothe to say,	And his wife, to say the truth,
	Wrought him wers bothe night and day	Treated him the worst by day and night
	Than thai dede everichon.	Than anyone else did.
	When him was fallen that hard cas,	When he had fallen into that hard situation,
	A frendeleser man than he was	Men did not know a more friendless man
1560	Men nist nowhar non.	Anywhere than he was.
	So wicked and schrewed was his wiif,	His wife was so wicked and calculating

	Sche brac his hert withouten kniif,	That she pierced his heart without a knife.
	With wordes harde and kene,	With words that were hard and sharp,
	And seyd to him, “Thou wreche chaitif,	She said to him, “You wretched coward,
	With wrong the steward les his liif,	The steward wrongly lost his life;
	And that is on the sene;	It is clear to see what you’ve done!
	Therfore, bi Seyn Denis of Fraunce,	And so, by Saint Denis of France,
	The is bitid this hard chaunce,	This hard luck is fated for you!
	Dathet who the bimene!”	Damn whoever feels sorry for you!”
1570	Wel oft times his honden he wrong,	Continually he wrung his hands
	As man that thenketh his liif to long,	As a man who thinks his life too long
	That liveth in treye and tene.	And lives in trial and pain.
	Allas, allas! that gentil knight	Alas, alas! That gentle knight,
	That whilom was so wise and wight,	Who once was so wise and brave,
	That than was wrought so wo,	Who was ordained such woe
	Than fram his levedi, fair and bright,	That away from his lady, fair and beautiful,
	Out of his owhen chaumber anight	Out of his own chamber at night
	He was yhote to go,	He was forced to go.
	And in his owhen halle o day	And in his own hall, one day
1580	Fram the heighe bord oway	He was also ordered away
	He was ycharged also	From the high table
	To eten at the tables ende;	To eat at the table’s end.
	Wald ther no man sit him hende,	No man there would seat him honorably;
	Wel careful was he tho.	Then he was very miserable.
	Bi than that half yere was ago	By the time half a year was gone
	That he hadde eten in halle so	That he had eaten this way in the hall
	With gode mete and with drink,	With good food and drink,
	His levedi wax ful wroth and wo	His lady grew spiteful and aggrieved
	And thought he lived to long tho -	And thought he had lived too long,
1590	Withouten ani lesing -	Without any lie.
	“In this lond springeth this word,	“Talk is flying throughout this land
	Y fede a mesel at mi bord,	That I feed a leper at my table!
	He is so foule a thing,	He is so foul a thing,
	It is gret spite to al mi kende,	It is a great disgrace to all my kin.
	He schal no more sitt me so hende,	He will no longer sit near at hand to me
	Bi Jhesus, heven king!”	By Jesus, Heaven’s king!”
	On a day sche gan him calle	One day she called for him
	And seyd, “Sir, it is so bifalle,	And said, “Sir, it has come to happen—
	For sothe, y telle it te,	I tell it to you, in truth—
1600	That thou etest so long in halle,	You have eaten so long in this hall
	It is gret spite to ous alle,	That it is a great disgrace to us all.
	Mi kende is wroth with me.”	My family is angry with me.”
	The knight gan wepe and seyd ful stille,	The knight began to weep and said softly,
	“Do me where it is thi wille,	“Have me put where it is your will,
	Ther noman may me se;	Where no man may see me.
	Of no more ichil the praye,	I will ask no more of you
	Bot of a meles mete ich day,	Than a meal’s ration each day,
	For seynt charité.”	For holy charity.”
	That levedi, for hir lordes sake,	The lady, for her lord’s sake,
1610	Anon sche dede men timber take,	At once had men take wood.
	For nothing wold sche wond,	She would not hesitate for anything.
	And half a mile fram the gate	And half a mile from the gate,
	A litel loge sche lete make,	She had a little cabin made,
	Biside the way to stond.	To stand beside the way.
	And when the loge was al wrought,	And when the lodge was all built,

	Of his gode no wold he noght,	He would have nothing of his possessions
	Bot his gold coupe an hond.	But his gold cup in his hand.
	When he was in his loge alon,	When he was in his lodge alone,
	To God of heven he made his mon	He made his lament to God of Heaven
1620	And thonked Him of al His sond.	And thanked Him for all His blessings.
	Into that loge when he was dight	In all the court there was no one
	In al the court was ther no wight	Who would serve him there
	That wold serve him thare,	In that cabin where he was placed,
	To save a gentil child, yplight,	Except a noble child, in truth.
	Child Owaines his name it hight,	His name was called Child Owen.[26]
	For him he wepe ful sare.	For him the boy wept bitterly.
	That child was trewe and of his kende,	The youth was loyal to his family;
	His soster sone, he was ful hende;	His sister's son, he was very gracious.
	He sayd to hem ful yare,	He said to them willingly,
1630	Ywis, he no schuld never wond	For certain, he would never hesitate
	To serven hem fro fot to hond,	To serve him hand and foot
	While he olives ware.	While he was alive.
	That child, that was so fair and bold,	That child, who was so fair and bold—
	Owaines was his name ytold,	Owen was said to be his name—
	Wel fair he was of blode.	Was from very good blood.
	When he was of tuelve yere old,	When he was twelve years old,
	Amoraunt than was he cald,	He was then named Amoraunt,
	Wel curteys, hend and gode.	A courteous, noble and good young man.
	Bi his lord ich night he lay	He lay by his lord each night
1640	And feched her livere ever day	And fetched his provisions every day
	To her lives fode.	For their lives' food.
	When ich man made gle and song,	When each man made celebration and song,
	Ever for his lord among	He always kept a sober manner
	He made dreri mode.	Among them for his lord.
	Thus Amoraunt, as y you say,	Thus Amoraunt, as I tell you,
	Com to court ich day,	Came to court each day.
	No stint he for no strive.	He did not stop for any difficulty.
	Al that ther was gan him pray	All who were there advised him
	To com fro that lazer oway,	To abandon that leper,
1650	Than schuld he the and thrive.	For then he would thrive and prosper.
	And he answerd with milde mode	And he answered in a gentle manner
	And swore bi Him that dyed on Rode	And swore by Him who died on the Cross,
	And tholed woundes five,	And suffered five wounds,
	For al this worldes gode to take	That he would never forsake his lord
	His lord nold he never forsake	For all this world's goods in his hand
	Whiles he ware olive.	While he was still alive.
	Bi than the tuelmoneth was al gon,	When twelve months had all gone,
	Amorant went into that won	Amoraunt went into the residence one day
	For his lordes liveray;	For his lord's supplies.
1660	The levedi was ful wroth anon	The lady finally lost patience[27]
	And comaunde hir men everichon	And commanded all of her men
	To drive that child oway,	To drive that boy away,

[26] *Child*: As in *Sir Thopas*, the *Child* title indicates a youth who is a knight-in-training. In Owen's case, he passes from being a page to the rank of squire. See also the note to line 27 in *King Horn*.

[27] *The levedi was ful wroth anon*: The lady was immediately very angry. But the sense of the line is that she is infuriated by her husband's persistence and not with the boy.

	And swore bi Him that Judas sold,	And swore by Him that Judas sold,
	Thei his lord for hunger and cold	Even if his lord died where he lay
	Dyed ther he lay,	For hunger and cold,
	He schuld have noither mete no drink,	He would have neither food nor drink,
	No socour of non other thing	Nor the aid of any other thing,
	For hir after that day.	From her after that day.
	That child wrong his honden tuain	The young man wrung his two hands
1670	And weping went hom ogain	And went home again weeping
	With sorwe and sikeing sare.	With sorrow and bitter sighing.
	That godeman gan him frain	That good man began to question him
	And bad him that he schuld him sain	And asked him to speak to him
	And telle him whi it ware.	And tell him what had happened.
	And he answerd and seyd tho,	Then he answered and said,
	"Ywis, no wonder thei me be wo,	"Truly, it's no wonder that I am woeful.
	Mine hert, it breketh for care;	My heart, it breaks from worry!
	Thi wiif hath sworn with gret mode	Your wife has sworn in a fierce mood
	That sche no schal never don ous gode;	That she will never do us any more good.
1680	Allas, hou schal we fare?"	Alas, how will we live?"
	"A, God help!" seyd that gentil knight,	"Ah, God help us!" said that noble knight.
	"Whilom y was man of might,	"Once I was a man of might,
	To dele mete and cloth,	One to deal out food and clothing,
	And now icham so foule a wight	And now I am so foul a creature
	That al that seth on me bi sight,	That for anyone who sees me by sight,
	Mi liif is hem ful loth.	My life is loathsome to them.
	Sone," he seyd, "lete thi wepeing,	Son," he said, "let go your weeping,
	For this is now a strong tiding,	For this is serious news;
	That may we se for soth;	We can see that for sure.
1690	For, certes, y can non other red,	For, certainly, I know no other course;
	Ous bihoveth to bid our brede,	We are obliged to beg our bread.
	Now y wot hou it goth."	Now I know how it must go."
	Amorwe astite as it was light,	In the morning, as soon as it was light,
	The child and that gentil knight	The youth and that noble knight
	Dight hem for to gon,	Prepared themselves to go.
	And in her way thai went ful right	And they went straight on their way
	To begge her brede, as thai hadde tight,	To beg their bread, as they had determined,
	For mete no hadde thai none.	For they had no food at all.
	So long thai went up and doun	For a while they went up and down
1700	Til thai com to a chepeing toun,	Until they came to a market town,
	Five mile out of that won,	Five miles away from that area,
	And sore wepeand fro dore to dore,	And they wept bitterly from door to door
	And bad here mete for Godes love,	And begged their food for God's love.
	Ful ivel couthe thai theron.	They had little experience of that!
	So in that time, ich understond,	So in that time, as I understand,
	Gret plenté was in that lond,	There was great plenty in that land,
	Bothe of mete and drink;	Both of food and drink.
	That folk was ful fre to fond	The people were generous in giving
	And brought hem anough to hond	And brought them enough to their hand
1710	Of al kines thing;	Of all kinds of things.
	For the gode man was so messais tho,	For the good man was so wretched then,
	And for the child was fair also,	And the young man was so fair as well,
	Hem loved old and ying,	That young and old pitied them
	And brought hem anough of al gode;	And brought them enough of all necessities.
	Than was the child blithe of mode	Then the youngster was at ease in spirits
	And lete be his wepeing.	And let go his weeping.

	Than wex the gode man fote so sare	Then the good man's feet grew so sore
	That he no might no forther fare	That he could travel no further
	For al this worldes gode;	For all this world's goods.
1720	To the tounes ende that child him bare	The youth carried him to the town's edge
	And a loge he bilt him thare,	And built him a cabin there,
	As folk to chepeing yode;	Where people passed by to the market.
	And as that folk of that cuntray	And as the locals of that country
	Com to chepeing everi day,	Came to the market every day,
	Thai gat hem lives fode;	They received their sustenance.
	And Amoraunt oft to toun gan go	And Amoraunt often walked to town
	And begged hem mete and drink also,	And begged them for food and drink as well
	When hem most nede atstode.	When they stood in greatest need.
	Thus in gest rede we	And so we read in the story
1730	Thai duelled there yeres thre,	That they lived there for three years,
	That child and he also,	The youth and him also,
	And lived in care and poverté	And lived in hardship and poverty
	Bi the folk of that cuntré,	Through the people of that land
	As thai com to and fro,	As they came to and fro,
	So that in the ferth yere	Until the fourth year,
	Corn bigan to wex dere,	When grain began to grow scarce.
	That hunger bigan to go,	Hunger started to increase,
	That ther was noither eld no ying	So that there was no one young or old
	That wald yif hem mete no drink,	Who would give them food or drink.
1740	Wel careful were thai tho.	They were in hard straits then.
	Amorant oft to toun gan gon,	Amoraunt often walked to town,
	Ac mete no drink no gat he non,	But he got no food or drink,
	Noither at man no wive.	Neither from man nor woman.
	When thai were togider alon,	When they were together alone,
	Reweliche thai gan maken her mon,	They began to lament ruefully
	Wo was hem o live;	That it was woe to be alive.
	And his levedi, for sothe to say,	And the knight's lady, to tell the truth,
	Woned ther in that cuntray	Lived there in that country
	Nought thennes miles five,	Not five miles away,
1750	And lived in joie bothe night and day,	And lived in ease both day and night
	Whiles he in sorwe and care lay,	While he lay in sorrow and suffering.
	Wel ivel mot sche thrive!	May she have foul fortune!
	On a day, as thai sete alon,	One day, as they sat alone,
	That hendi knight gan meken his mon	That fatherly knight began his plea
	And seyd to the child that tide,	And said to the child at that moment,
	"Sone," he seyd, "thou most gon	"Son," he said, "You must go
	To mi levedi swithe anon,	To my lady at once,
	That woneth here biside,	Who lives nearby here.
	Bid hir, for Him that died on Rode,	Beseech her, for Him who died on the Cross,
1760	Sende me so michel of al mi gode,	To send me a portion of all my goods,
	An asse, on to ride,	For a donkey to ride on,
	And out of lond we wil fare	And we will journey out of the land
	To begge our mete with sorwe and care,	To beg our food in sorrow and hardship.
	No lenger we nil abide."	We will not stay any longer."
	Amoraunt to court is went	Amoraunt went to the court
	Bifor that levedi fair and gent,	Before that beautiful and well-born lady.
	Wel hendeliche seyd hir anon,	At once he spoke very courteously to her.
	"Madame," he seyd, "verrament,	"Madam," he said, "in truth,
	As messanger mi lord me sent,	My lord has sent me as a messenger,
1770	For himself may nought gon,	For he himself cannot travel,

	And praieste with milde mode	And he pleads in a gentle manner
	Sende him so michel of al his gode	For you to send him enough of his goods
	As an asse to riden opon,	To buy a donkey to ride on,
	And out of lond we schulen yfere,	And we will journey out of the land.
	No schal we never com eft here,	Nor will we ever come back here,
	Thei hunger ous schuld slon."	Even if hunger should finish us."
	The levedi seyd sche wald ful fain	That lady said she would very gladly
	Sende him gode asses tuain,	Send him with two good donkeys
	With thi he wald oway go	Provided that he would go away
1780	So fer that he never eft com ogain.	So far that he never came back again.
	"Nat, certes, dame," the child gan sain,	"No, certainly, my lady," the youth answered,
	"Thou sest ous never eft mo."	"You will never see us again."
	Than was the levedi glad and blithe	Then the lady was pleased and glad
	And comaund him an asse as swithe	And as promptly ordered him a donkey[28]
	And seyd with wrethe tho,	And then ordered sourly,
	"Now ye schul out of lond fare,	"Now you will travel out of the land.
	God leve you never to com here mare,	God grant that you never come back here,
	And graunt that it be so."	And make sure that it is so."
	That child no lenger nold abide,	The young man did not linger any longer.
1790	His asse astite he gan bistride	He immediately got on his donkey
	And went him hom ogain,	And took himself home again
	And told his lord in that tide	And told his lord in that moment
	Hou his levedi proude in pride	How his lady, haughty in her dignity,
	Schameliche gan to sain;	Had spoken so shamefully.
	Opon the asse he sett that knight so hende,	He set that honorable knight on the donkey
	And out of the cité thai gun wende;	And they began to ride out of the city
	Ther of thai were ful fain.	And were very pleased to do so.
	Thurch mani a cuntré, up an doun,	Through many a land, up and down,
	Thai begged her mete fram toun to toun,	They begged for their food from town to town,
1800	Bothe in winde and rain.	Both in the wind and the rain.
	Over al that lond thurch Godes wille	Over all the land, through God's command,
	That hunger wex so gret and grille,	Their hunger grew so sharp and intense
	As wide as thai gun go;	As far as they travelled.
	Almest for hunger thai gan to spille,	They were almost dying from hunger;
	Of brede thai no hadde nought half her fille,	They did not have half their fill of bread.
	Ful careful were thai tho.	They were then very miserable.
	Than seyd the knight opon a day,	Then one day the knight said,
	"Ous bihoveth selle our asse oway,	"We need to sell our donkey away,
	For we no have gode no mo,	For we have no goods anymore,
1810	Save mi riche coupe of gold,	Except my rich cup of gold.
	Ac certes, that schal never be sold,	But for sure that will never be sold
	Thei hunger schuld me slo."	Even if hunger should kill me."
	Than Amoraunt and Sir Amiloun,	Then early one morning,
	With sorwe and care and reweful roun	With sorrow and worry and doleful words,
	Erliche in a morning	Amoraunt and Sir Amiloun
	Thai went hem to a chepeing toun,	Took themselves to a market town.
	And when the knight was light adoun,	And when the knight had dismounted,
	Withouten ani duelling,	Without any delaying,
	Amoraunt went to toun tho,	Amourant went into the town.

[28] Sir Amiloun's wife has just agreed to *asses tuain* (1778), but either there is a scribal error or the poet wishes to emphasize her grudging parsimony in promising two but only delivering one donkey.

1820	His asse he ladde with him also	He led the donkey with him as well
	And sold it for five schilling.	And sold it for five shillings.[29]
	And while that derth was so strong,	And while the bad harvest was so biting,
	Ther with thai bought hem mete among,	They bought food among themselves with it
	When thai might gete no thing.	When they could not beg anything.
	And when her asse was ysold	And when their donkey was sold
	For five schilling, as y you told,	For five shillings, as I told you,
	Thai duelled ther dayes thre;	They stayed for three days there.
	Amoraunt wex strong and bold,	Amoraunt had grown strong and hardy.
	Of fiftene winter was he old,	He was fifteen years old,
1830	Curtays, hende and fre.	Courteous, handsome, and generous.
	For his lord he hadde gret care,	For his lord he had great concern,
	And at his rigge he dight him yare	And he placed him cheerfully on his back
	And bare him out of that cité;	And carried him out of the city.
	And half a yere and sum del mare	For half a year and somewhat more
	About his mete he him bare,	He bore him about for his food.
	Yblisced mot he be.	May he be blessed for it!
	Thus Amoraunt, withouten wrong,	Thus Amoraunt, without fail,
	Bar his lord about so long,	Carried his lord around for so long,
	As y you tel may.	As I can tell you.
1840	That winter com so hard and strong,	That winter came so hard and fiercely
	Oft, "Allas!" it was his song,	That "Alas!" was constantly his song,
	So depe was that cuntray;	The country was so muddy.
	The way was so depe and slider,	The way was so slushy and slippery
	Oft times bothe togider	That they often both together
	Thai fel doun in the clay.	Fell down into the dirt.
	Ful trewe he was and kinde of blod	He was faithful and kind-natured
	And served his lord with mild mode,	And served his lord with a gentle spirit
	Wald he nought wende oway.	And would not turn away.
	Thus Amoraunt, as y you say,	Thus Amoraunt, as I tell you,
1850	Served his lord bothe night and day	Served his lord both night and day
	And at his rigge him bare.	And carried him on his back.
	Oft his song was, "Waileway!"	His refrain was continually "Woe is us!"
	So depe was that cuntray,	The winter slush was so deep
	His bones wex ful sare.	That his bones grew sore.
	Al her catel than was spent,	All their money was spent then,
	Save tuelf pans, verrament,	Except for twelve pennies, in truth.
	Therwith thai went ful yare	With that they quickly went
	And bought hem a gode croudewain,	And bought themselves a sturdy pushcart.
	His lord he gan ther-in to lain,	He laid his lord inside it;
1860	He no might him bere namare.	He could carry him no more.
	Than Amoraunt crud Sir Amiloun	Then Amoraunt carted Sir Amiloun
	Thurch mani a cuntré, up and doun,	Through many a land, up and down,
	As ye may understond;	As you may understand.

[29] *Five schilling*: About £130 (US$200) in modern money (UK National Archives). This is two to three days wages for a knight, but enough for simple provisions for a long time. Hodges gives the typical price of a chicken in 1338 at two for 1d (1/12 of a shilling, £2.25 in modern money). Kenneth Hodges, "Medieval Sourcebook: Medieval Prices," Fordham University Center for Medieval Studies. Accessed 19 May 2010 at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/medievalprices.html#WAGES. The Lombards would of course have used florins or other coins rather than shillings and pounds, but romance audiences would have cheerfully ignored such inaccuracies just as Shakespeare's did with his Italian settings.

	So he com to a cité toun,	And so he came to a city
	Ther Sir Amis, the bold baroun,	Where Sir Amis, the brave baron,
	Was douke and lord in lond.	Was duke and lord of the land.
	Than seyd the knight in that tide,	Then the knight said at that moment,
	"To the doukes court here biside	"Try to bring me forth
	To bring me thider thou fond;	To the duke's court near here.
1870	He is a man of milde mode,	He is a man of a gentle nature.
	We schul gete ous ther sum gode	There we will get us some help
	Thurch grace of Godes sond.	Through the grace of God's blessing.
	"Ac, leve sone," he seyd than,	But, dear son," he added then,
	"For His love, that this world wan	"For His love, who redeemed this world,
	Astow art hende and fre,	If you are noble and gracious,
	Thou be aknowe to no man	Do not let slip to any man
	Whider y schal, no whenes y cam,	Where I am going, or where I am from,
	No what mi name it be."	Or what my name is."
	He answerd and seyd, "Nay."	He answered and said, "No, I will not."
1880	To court he went in his way,	He went on his way to the court
	As ye may listen at me,	As you may listen from me.
	And bifor al other pover men	And before all the other poor men
	He crud his wain in to the fen;	He pushed his cart through the mud.
	Gret diol it was to se.	It was a great sorrow to see.
	So it bifel that selve day,	So it happened that same day,
	With tong as y you tel may,	As I may tell you with my tongue,
	It was midwinter tide,	That it was the midwinter time.[30]
	That riche douke with gamen and play	The rich duke, with festive cheer
	Fram chirche com the right way	And laughter, came that way from church
1890	As lord and prince with pride.	As lord and prince with honor.
	When he com to the castelgate,	When he came to the castle gate,
	The pover men that stode therate	The poor men who stood there
	Withdrough hem ther beside.	Withdrew themselves out of the way.
	With knightes and with serjaunce fale	With knights and many men-at-arms
	He went into that semly sale	He went into that fine hall
	With joie and blis to abide.	To dwell in joy and ease.
	In kinges court, as it is lawe,	In the king's court, as was customary,
	Trumpes in halle to mete gan blawe,	Trumpets in the hall announced dinner.
	To benche went tho bold.	The bold men went to their benches.
1900	When thai were semly set on rowe,	When they were fittingly seated in place,
	Served thai were upon a throwe,	They were served in a moment,
	As men miriest on mold.	As the merriest men on earth.
	That riche douke, withouten les,	That elegant duke, without a lie,
	As a prince served he wes	Was served as a prince
	With riche coupes of gold,	With rich cups of gold.
	And he that brought him to that state	And he who brought him to that state
	Stode bischet withouten the gate,	Stood shut outside the gate,
	Wel sore ofhungred and cold.	Sore with hunger and cold.
	Out at the gate com a knight	Out of the gate came a knight
1910	And a serjaunt wise and wight,	And a servant, strong and able,
	To plain hem bothe yfere,	To amuse themselves together.

[30] *Midwinter*: The winter solstice immediately before Christmas, and a festive time of celebration. Just as Odysseus appears as a beggar to his decadent household, the poet here also contrasts Sir Amiloun's extreme hardship against the drunken revelry of midwinter in the court.

	And thurch the grace of God Almight	And through the grace of God Almighty
	On Sir Amiloun he cast a sight,	They cast their eyes on Sir Amiloun,
	Hou laith he was of chere.	Seeing how hideous he was to look on.
	And seththen biheld on Amoraunt,	And then they looked at Amoraunt and saw
	Hou gentil he was and of fair semblaunt,	How noble he was and fair in appearance,
	In gest as ye may here.	In the story as you may hear.
	Than seyd thai bothe, bi Seyn Jon,	Then they both said, by Saint John,
	In al the court was ther non	In all the court there was no one
1920	Of fairehed half his pere.	Half his equal in handsomeness!
	The gode man gan to him go,	The good man went to him then
	And hendeliche he asked him tho,	And courteously asked him,
	As ye may understond,	As you might expect,
	Fram wat lond that he com fro,	What land he had come from
	And whi that he stode ther tho,	And why he stood there then,
	And whom he served in lond.	And who he served in the land.
	"Sir," he seyd, "so God me save,	"Sir," he said, "so God help me,
	Icham here mi lordes knave,	I am the servant of my lord here,
	That lith in Godes bond;	Who endures in God's bonds.
1930	And thou art gentil knight of blode,	If you are a gracious knight in blood,
	Bere our erand of sum gode	Bring some good out of our efforts,
	Thurch grace of Godes sond."	Through the grace of God's plenty."
	The gode man asked him anon,	The good man asked him at once
	Yif he wald fro that lazer gon	If he would leave that leper
	And trewelich to him take;	And stay with him faithfully;
	And he seyd he schuld, bi Seyn Jon,	And he said, by Saint John, that he should
	Serve that riche douke in that won,	Serve the rich duke in that residence
	And richeman he wald him make;	And he would make him a prosperous man.
	And he answerd with mild mode	The youth answered with a gentle manner
1940	And swore bi Him that dyed on Rode	And swore by Him who died on the Cross
	Whiles he might walk and wake,	That while he could live and breathe,
	For to winne al this warldes gode,	For all this world's goods
	His hende lord, that bi him stode,	He would never forsake
	Schuld he never forsake.	His beloved lord, who stood nearby him.
	The gode man wende he hadde ben rage,	The good man believed he was mad,
	Or he hadde ben a folesage	Or that he had been a court fool
	That hadde his witt forlorn,	Who had lost his wits.
	Other he thought that his lord with the foule visage	Or else, he thought, that foul-looking lord
	Hadde ben a man of heighe parage	Might have been a man of noble heritage
1950	And of heighe kinde ycorn.	And born from an aristocratic lineage.
	Therfore he nold no more sain,	Therefore he said no more,
	Bot went him in to the halle ogain	And only went into the hall again
	The riche douke biforn,	Before the regal duke.
	"Mi lord," he seyd, "listen to me	"My lord," he said, "listen to me
	The best bourd, bi mi leueté,	About the best joke, by my word,
	Thou herdest seththen thou were born."	You ever heard since you were born."
	The riche douke badde him anon	The rich duke asked him immediately
	To telle biforn hem everichon	To describe it before every one of them
	Withouten more duelling.	Without more delay.
1960	"Now sir," he seyd, "bi Seyn Jon,	"Now sir," he said, "by Saint John,
	Ich was out atte gate ygon	I was just outside the gate
	Right now on mi playing;	Right now to have some fun.
	Pover men y seighe mani thare,	I saw many poor men there,
	Litel and michel, lasse and mare,	Small and great, low and high,
	Bothe old and ying,	Both young and old,

	And a lazer ther y fond;	And I found a leper there.
	Herdestow never in no lond	You will never have heard of
	Telle of so foule a thing.	Such a foul thing in any land!
	"The lazer lith up in a wain,	The leper sits up in a cart
1970	And is so pover of might and main	And is so poor in strength and vigor
	O fot no may he gon;	That he cannot go on foot.
	And over him stode a naked swain,	And over him stood a half-dressed servant,
	A gentiler child, for sothe to sain,	A nobler youth, to tell the truth,
	In world no wot y non.	Than any I know in the world.
	He is the fairest gome	He is the fairest creature
	That ever Crist yaf Cristendome	That Christ ever gave to Christendom
	Or layd liif opon,	Or endowed with life,
	And on of the most fole he is	And one of the biggest fools
	That ever thou herdest speke, ywis,	That you ever heard speak, in truth,
1980	In this worldes won."	In all this world's lands."
	Than seyd the riche douke ogain,	Then the rich duke said again,
	"What foly," he seyd, "can he sain?	"What silliness," he asked, "does he say?
	Is he madde of mode?"	Is he mad in his behavior?"
	"Sir," he seyd, "y bad him fain	"Sir," he answered, "I gladly invited him
	Forsake the lazer in the wain,	To leave behind the leper in the cart
	That he so over stode,	That he took care of so,
	And in thi servise he schuld be,	And said he would be in your service.
	Y bihete hem bothe lond and fe,	I offered him both land and a living,
	Anough of warldes gode;	And enough of worldly goods.
1990	And he answerd and seyd tho	And he answered and said then
	He nold never gon him fro;	That he would never go from him.
	Therfore ich hold him wode."	For this I believe he is mad."
	Than seyd the douke, "Thei his lord be lorn,	Then the duke said, "Though his lord
	Par aventour, the gode man hath biforn	Is wretched, by chance the good man
	Holpen him at his nede,	Helped him in his need before,
	Other the child is of his blod yborn,	Or the youth is born from his blood;
	Other he hath him othes sworn	Or he has sworn him oaths
	His liif with him to lede.	To lead his life with him.
	Whether he be fremd or of his blod,	Whether he is a stranger or his kin,
2000	The child," he seyd, "is trewe and gode,	The youngster," he added, "is loyal and good,
	Also God me spede.	So help me God!
	Yif ichim speke er he wende,	If I can speak to him before he goes on,
	For that he is so trewe and kende,	He is so loyal and good-natured
	Y schal quite him his mede!"	That I will give him his reward."
	That douke astite, as y you told,	Just as quick, as I tell you,
	Cleped to him a squier bold	The duke called a bold squire
	And hendelich gan hem sain:	And said to him graciously,
	"Take," he sayd, "mi coupe of gold,	"Take," he said, "my gold cup,
	As ful of wine astow might hold	With as much wine as it can hold,
2010	In thine hondes tuain,	In your two hands,
	And bere it to the castelgate,	And carry it to the castle gate.
	A lazer thou schalt finde therate	You will find a leper there,
	Liggeand in a wain.	Lying in a cart.
	Bid him, for the love of Seyn Martin,	Invite him, for the love of St. Martin,[31]

[31] *Seyn Martin*: Martin of Tours (316-397), a Christian saint who tore his soldier's cloak to split it with a beggar, leading to his conversion. Here the choice of saint is likely thoughtful.

	He and his page drink this win,	To drink this wine with his page
	And bring me the coupe ogain."	And bring me the cup back again."
	The squier tho the coupe hent,	The squire then took the cup
	And to the castel gat he went,	And went to the castle gate,
	And ful of win he it bare.	Bearing the cup, full of wine.
2020	To the lazer he seyd, verrament,	He said to the leper, in truth,
	"This coupe ful of win mi lord the sent,	"My lord sends you this cup of wine.
	Drink it, yife thou dare."	Drink it, if you dare."
	The lazer tok forth his coupe of gold,	The leper took out his gold cup.
	Bothe were goten in o mold,	Both were made from one mold,
	Right as that selve it ware,	Right as if they were the same.
	Therin he pourd that win so riche;	He poured in the rich wine.
	Than were thai bothe ful yliche	Then they were both exactly alike,
	And noither lesse no mare.	And neither more nor less.
	The squier biheld the coupes tho,	The squire looked at the cups,
2030	First his and his lordes also,	First the leper's and his lord's as well,
	Whiles he stode hem biforn,	While he stood before them.
	Ac he no couthe never mo	But he could no longer
	Chese the better of hem to,	Choose the right one of them,
	So liche bothe thai worn.	They were both so alike.
	Into halle he ran ogain,	He ran back into the hall.
	"Certes, sir," he gan to sain,	"For certain, sir," he cried,
	"Mani gode dede thou hast lorn,	"You have wasted many good deeds,
	And so thou hast lorn this dede now;	And so you have wasted this one now!
	He is a richer man than thou,	He is a richer man than you are,
2040	Bi the time that God was born."	By the time that God was born!"
	The riche douke answerd, "Nay.	The rich duke answered, "No!
	That worth never bi night no day;	That could never happen, by night or day;
	It were ogaines the lawe!"	It would be against the law!"
	"Yis, sir," he gan to say,	"Yes, sir," he answered,
	"He is a traitour, bi mi fay,	"He is a thief, by my faith,
	And were wele worth to drawe.	And fully deserves to be pulled apart!
	For when y brought him the win,	For when I brought him the wine,
	He drough forth a gold coupe fin,	He drew out a fine golden cup,
	Right as it ware thi nawe;	Right as if it were your own.
2050	In this world, bi Seyn Jon,	In all this world, by Saint John,
	So wise a man is ther non	There is no man so wise
	Asundri schuld hem knawe."	That he could tell them apart."
	"Now, certes," seyd Sir Amis tho,	"Now, for sure," Sir Amis then said,
	"In al this world were coupes nomo	"In all this world there are no cups
	So liche in al thing,	So alike in every way,
	Save min and mi brothers also,	Except for mine and my brother's as well,
	That was sett bituix ous to,	Which were given between us two
	Token of our parting;	As a token of our parting.
	And yif it be so, with tresoun	And if it is so, my gracious friend,
2060	Mine hende brother, Sir Amiloun,	Sir Amiloun, was killed with treason,
	Is slain, withouten lesing.	Without a lie.
	And yif he have stollen his coupe oway,	And if he has stolen his cup away,
	Y schal him sle me self this day,	I will slay him myself this day,
	Bi Jhesu, heven king!"	By Jesus, Heaven's king!
	Fram the bord he resed than	He reared up from the table
	And hent his swerd as a wode man	And seized his sword as a madman
	And drough it out with wrake,	And drew it out with anger,
	And to the castel gat he ran;	And he ran to the castle gate.

	In al the court was ther no man	In all the court there was no man
2070	That him might atake.	Who might overtake him.
	To the lazer he stirt in the wain	He went to the leper in the cart
	And hent him in his honden tuain	And grabbed him by his two hands
	And sleynt him in the lake,	And slung him into the lake
	And layd on, as he were wode,	And attacked him as if he were crazed,
	And al that ever about him stode	And all who stood around there
	Gret diol gan make.	Began to make a great commotion.
	"Traitour!" seyd the douke so bold,	"Thief!" said the duke in boldness.
	"Where haddestow this coupe of gold	"Where did you get this golden cup from?
	And hou com thou ther to?	And how did you get it?
2080	For bi Him that Judas sold,	For by Him that Judas betrayed,
	Amiloun, mi brother, it hadde in wold,	My brother Amiloun used to have it
	When that he went me fro!"	When he went away from me!"
	"Ya, certes, sir," he gan to say,	"Yes, certainly, sir," the leper answered.
	"It was his in his cuntray,	"It was in his country,
	And now it is fallen so;	And now it has passed on so.
	Bot certes, now that icham here,	But as sure as I am here,
	The coupe is mine, y bought it dere,	The cup is mine, and I paid for it dearly,
	With right y com ther to."	And I came to it rightfully."
	Than was the douke ful egre of mod;	Then the duke was in a furious mood.
2090	Was noman that about him stode	There was no one would stood near him
	That durst legge on him hond;	Who dared to lay a hand on him.
	He spurned him with his fot	He kicked him with his foot
	And laid on, as he were wode,	And charged at him, as if he were mad,
	With his naked brond,	With his naked sword.
	And bi the fet the lazer he drough	And by the feet he dragged the leper
	And drad on him in the slough;	And raged over him in the mud.
	For no thing wald he wond,	He would not stop for anything,
	And seyd, "Thef, thou schalt be slawe,	And said, "Thief, you will be slain
	Bot thou wilt be the sothe aknawe,	Unless you reveal the truth
2100	Where thou the coupe fond."	About where you found that cup."
	Child Amoraunt stode the pople among	Young Amoraunt stood among the people
	And seye his lord with wough and wrong	And saw how dreadfully his lord was treated
	Hou reweliche he was dight.	With wretchedness and injustice.
	He was bothe hardi and strong,	He was both hardy and strong;
	The douke in his armes he fong	He seized the duke in his arms
	And held him stille upright.	And held him still upright.
	"Sir," he seyd, "thou art unhende	"Sir," he said, "you are ungracious
	And of thi werkes unkende,	And ignorant of what you are doing
	To sle that gentil knight.	To slay that noble knight.
2110	Wel sore may him rewe that stounde	He might well sorely regret the time
	That ever for the toke he wounde	That he ever suffered wounds for you
	To save thi liif in fight.	To save your life in battle.
	"And ys thi brother, Sir Amylioun,	For this is your brother, Sir Amiloun,
	That whilom was a noble baroun	Who once was a stately baron
	Bothe to ryde and go,	Both as he rode and as he walked,
	And now with sorwe ys dreve adoun;	And is now driven down by sorrow!
	Nowe God that suffred passioun	Now may God, who suffered anguish,
	Breng him oute of his wo!	Bring him out of his woe!
	For the of blysse he ys bare,	Because of you he is deprived of joy,
2120	And thou yeldyst him all with care	And you only burden him with trouble
	And brekest his bones a two;	And break his bones in two.
	That he halp the at thi nede,	After he helped you in your need,

	Well evell aquitest thou his mede,	You reward him so foully.
	Alas, whi farest thou so?”	Alas, why are you acting this way?”
	When Sir Amis herd him so sain,	When Sir Amis heard him say so,
	He stirt to the knight ogain,	He leaped toward the knight again
	Withouten more delay,	Without any more protest
	And biclept him in his armes tuain,	And grasped him in both his arms
	And oft, “Allas!” he gan sain;	And began to cry “Alas!”
2130	His song was “Waileway!”	His constant refrain was “Woe is me!”
	He loked opon his scholder bare	He looked upon Amiloun’s bare shoulder
	And seighe his grimly wounde thare,	And saw his savage scar there,
	As Amoraunt gan him say.	As Amorant began to explain.
	He fel aswon to the grounde	He fell faint to the ground
	And oft he seyd, “Allas that stounde!”	And repeatedly cried, “Alas the time!”
	That ever he bode that day.	That he had seen that day.
	“Allas,” he seyd, “mi joie is lorn,	“Alas!” he said, “My joys are lost;
	Unkender blod nas never born,	More shameful flesh was never born!
	Y not wat y may do;	I do not know how I can amend this!
2140	For he saved mi liif biforn,	For he saved my life before,
	Ichave him yolden with wo and sorn	And I have repaid him with pain and sorrow
	And wrought him michel wo.	And caused him great woe.
	“O brother,” he seyd, “par charité,	“My friend,” he cried, “For charity’s sake,
	This rewely ded foryif thou me,	Forgive me this lamentable deed,
	That ichave smiten the so!”	That I have struck you so!”
	And he forgave it him also a swithe	And he forgave him just as quickly
	And kist him wel mani a sithe,	And kissed him many times over,
	Wepeand with eighen tuo.	Weeping from both eyes.
	Than was Sir Amis glad and fain,	Then Sir Amis was glad and joyful.
2150	For joie he wepe with his ain	He wept from his eyes with happiness
	And hent his brother than,	And embraced his brother then,
	And tok him in his armes tuain,	And held him in his two arms
	Right til he com into the halle ogain,	Right until they came back into the hall.
	No bar him no nother man.	No other man carried him.
	The levedi tho in the halle stode	The lady stood in the hall
	And wend hir lord hadde ben wode,	And thought that her lord had gone mad.
	Ogaines him hye ran.	She ran toward him.
	“Sir,” sche seyd, “wat is thi thought?	“Sir,” she cried, “what are you thinking?
	Whi hastow him into halle ybrought	In the name of Him who saved the world,
2160	For Him that this world wan?”	Why have you brought him into the hall?”
	“O dame,” he seyd, “bi Seyn Jon,	“Oh, my lady!” he said, “by Saint John,
	Me nas never so wo bigon,	I was never so full of remorse!
	Yif thou it wost understond,	If you would only understand.
	For better knight in world is non,	For there is no better knight in the world,
	Bot almost now ichave him slon	But I have almost killed him
	And schamely driven to schond;	And have disgracefully brought him to harm.
	For it is mi brother, Sir Amiloun,	For it is my brother, Sir Amiloun,
	With sorwe and care is dreven adoun,	Who has been ruined by sorrow and hardship,
	That er was fre to fond.”	Who was once noble in times of trial.”
2170	The levedi fel aswon to grounde	The lady fell faint to the ground
	And wepe and seyd, “Allas that stounde!”	And wept and said, “Alas the moment!”
	Wel sore wrengand hir hond.	Sorely wringing her hands.
	As foule a lazer as he was,	As foul a leper as he was,
	The levedi kist him in that plas,	The lady kissed him in that place;
	For nothing wold sche spare,	She would not stop for anything,
	And oft time sche seyd, “Allas!”	And continually she cried “Alas!”

	That him was fallen so hard a cas,	That the knight had fallen on such hard fortune
	To live in sorwe and care.	To live in misery and worry.
	Into hir chaumber she gan him lede	Into her chamber she brought him
2180	And kest of al his pover wede	And threw off all of his ragged clothing
	And bathed his bodi al bare,	And bathed his naked body,
	And to a bedde swithe him brought;	And brought him quickly to a bed
	With clothes riche and wele ywrought;	With clothes that were fine and well-made.
	Ful blithe of him thai ware.	They were overjoyed to have him.
	And thus in gest as we say,	And thus in the story as we say it,
	Tuelmoneth in her chaumber he lay,	He stayed twelve months in her chamber.
	Ful trewe thai ware and kinde.	They were very dutiful and kind.
	No wold thai nick him with no nay,	They would never say no to him.
	What so ever he asked night or day,	Whatsoever he asked for, day or night,
2190	It nas never bihinde;	It was never slow in coming.
	Of everich mete and everi drink	Of every dish and every drink
	Thai had hemselve, withouten lesing,	They had themselves, without a lie,
	Thai were him bothe ful minde.	Both had him fully in mind.
	And bithan the tuelmonth was ago,	And by the time twelve months had passed,
	A ful fair grace fel hem tho,	A wondrous blessing came to them,
	In gest as we finde.	In the story as we find it.
	So it bifel opon a night,	So it happened one night
	As Sir Amis, that gentil knight,	As Sir Amis, that gracious knight,
	In slepe thought as he lay,	Lay asleep, that he dreamed
2200	An angel com fram heven bright	An angel came from Heaven's brightness
	And stode biforn his bed ful right	And stood right before his bed,
	And to him thus gan say:	And began to say to him
	Yif he wald rise on Cristes morn,	That if he would rise on Christmas morning
	Swiche time as Jhesu Crist was born,	At the same time as Jesus Christ was born,
	And slen his children tuay,	And slay his two children
	And alien his brother with the blode,	And anoint his brother with the blood,
	Thurch Godes grace, that is so gode,	Through God's grace, that is so good,
	His wo schuld wende oway.	His disease would fade away.
	Thus him thought al tho thre night	Thus he dreamed all through the night
2210	An angel out of heven bright	That an angel out of Heaven's radiance
	Warned him ever more	Warned him for evermore
	Yif he wald do as he him hight,	That if he would do as he was commanded,
	His brother schuld ben as fair a knight	His brother would be as fair a knight
	As ever he was biforn,	As he ever was before.
	Ful blithe was Sir Amis tho,	Then Sir Amis was very gladdened,
	Ac for his childer him was ful wo,	But was very sad for his children,
	For fairer ner non born.	For there were none born who were so fair.
	Wel loth him was his childer to slo,	He was greatly loath to kill his children,
	And wele lother his brother forgo,	But more unwilling to deny his friend,
2220	That is so kinde ycorn.	Who had such a noble heritage.
	Sir Amiloun met that night also	Sir Amiloun also dreamed that night
	That an angel warned him tho	That an angel warned him then
	And seyd to him ful yare,	And said to him directly
	Yif his brother wald his childer slo,	That if his brother slayed his children,
	The hert blod of hem to	The heart's blood of the two
	Might bring him out of care.	Might bring him out of sickness.
	A morwe Sir Amis was ful hende	In the morning Sir Amis was gracious
	And to his brother he gan wende	And made his way to his friend
	And asked him of his fare;	And asked him how he was.
2230	And he him answerd ogain ful stille,	And the other answered back softly,

	"Brother, ich abide her Godes wille,	"Brother, I wait here for God's will,
	For y may do na mare."	For I can do no more."
	Al so thai sete togider thare	As they sat together there,
	And speke of aventours, as it ware,	Those noble and gracious knights spoke
	Tho knightes hende and fre,	About adventures, such as they were.
	Than seyd Sir Amiloun ful yare,	Sir Amiloun then said in earnestness,
	"Brother, y nil nought spare	"Brother, I will not hesitate
	To tel the in privité.	To talk to you in secrecy.
	Me thought tonight in me sweven	I dreamed last night in my sleep
2240	That an angel com fram heven;	That an angel came from Heaven.
	For sothe, he told me	In truth, he told me
	That thurch the blod of thin children to	That with the blood of your two children
	Y might aschape out of mi wo,	I might escape from my affliction,
	Al hayl and hole to be!"	To be all healthy and whole."
	Than thought the douk, withouten lesing,	The duke thought, without a lie,
	For to slen his childer so ying,	That to kill his children, so young,
	It were a dedli sinne;	Would be a deadly sin.
	And than thought he, bi heven king,	But then he resolved, by Heaven's king,
	His brother out of sorwe bring,	To bring his brother out of hardship.
2250	For that nold he nought blinne.	From that he would not flinch.
	So it bifel on Cristes night,	So it happened on Christmas Eve,
	Swiche time as Jhesu, ful of might,	At such time as Jesus, full of might,
	Was born to save mankunne,	Was born to save mankind,
	To chirche to wende al that ther wes,	That all who were there readied themselves,
	Thai dighten hem, withouten les,	Without a lie, to go to church
	With joie and worldes winne.	With joy and all earthly pleasure.
	Than thai were redi for to fare,	When they were ready to set forth,
	The douke bad al that ther ware,	The duke requested all who were there
	To chirche thai schuld wende,	That they should go on to church,
2260	Litel and michel, lasse and mare,	Small and great, less and more,
	That non bileft in chaumber thare,	So that if they were his friends,
	As thai wald ben his frende,	None would be left in the chamber there.
	And seyd he wald himselve that night	He said he would himself that night
	Kepe his brother that gentil knight	Keep his brother, that noble knight
	That was so god and kende.	Who was so good and kind.
	Than was ther non that durst say nay;	There were none there who dared to say no.
	To chirche thai went in her way,	They went on their way to church
	At hom bileft tho hende.	And left those noble men at home.
	The douke wel fast gan aspie	The duke had swiftly located
2270	The kays of the noricerie,	The keys to the nursery
	Er than thai schuld gon,	Before they were to go,
	And priveliche he cast his eighe	And he secretly cast his eye
	And aparceived ful witterlye	And perceived clearly
	Where that thai hadde hem don.	Where they had been set.
	And when thai were to chirche went,	And when they were gone to church,
	Than Sir Amis, verrament,	Then Sir Amis, truly,
	Was bileft alon.	Was left alone.
	He tok a candel fair and bright	He took a candle, fair and bright,
	And to the kays he went ful right	And went straightaway to the keys

2280	And tok hem oway ichon.	And took each one of them away.
	Alon him self, withouten mo,	Alone himself, with no more delay,[32]
	Into the chaumber he gan to go,	He went into the chamber
	Ther that his childer were,	Where his children were,
	And biheld hem bothe to,	And beheld the both of them,
	Hou fair thai lay togider tho	How beautifully they lay together
	And slepe bothe yfere.	And slept beside each other.
	Than seyd himselve, "Bi Seyn Jon,	Then he said to himself, "By Saint John,
	It were gret rewethe you to slon,	It would be heartbreaking to slay you,
	That God hath bought so dere!"	Who God has bought so dearly!"
2290	His kniif he had drawen that tide,	He drew his knife out at that moment;
	For sorwe he sleynt oway biside	For sorrow he laid it away nearby
	And wepe with reweful chere.	And wept with a remorseful heart.
	Than he hadde wopen ther he stode,	When he had wept, he immediately
	Anon he turned ogain his mode	Regained his composure where he stood
	And sayd withouten delay,	And said without delay,
	"Mi brother was so kinde and gode,	"My brother was so kind and good.
	With grimly wounde he schad his blod	With horrible wounds he shed his blood
	For mi love opon a day;	For my love one day.
	Whi schuld y than mi childer spare,	Why should I spare my children then
2300	To bring mi brother out of care?	To bring my friend out of peril?
	O, certes," he seyd, "nay!	Oh, surely, no!" he said.
	To help mi brother now at this nede,	"To help my brother now in his need,
	God graunt me therto wele to spede,	May God grant me all success in it,
	And Mari, that best may!"	Along with Mary, that blessed maid!"
	No lenger stint he no stode,	He did not waver a moment longer,
	Bot hent his kniif with dreri mode	But gripped his knife with a heavy heart
	And tok his children tho;	And seized his children then.
	For he nold nought spille her blode,	Because he would not spill their blood,
	Over a bacine fair and gode	He cut their throats in two
2310	Her throtes he schar atuo.	Over a basin, good and strong.
	And when he hadde hem bothe slain,	And when he had slain both of them,
	He laid hem in her bed ogain -	He laid them in their bed again—
	No wonder thei him were wo -	It was no wonder he was in anguish!—
	And hilde hem, that no wight schuld se,	And covered them, so no one would see
	As noman hadde at hem be;	That anyone had been at them.
	Out of chaumber he gan go.	He made his way out of the chamber.
	And when he was out of chaumber gon,	And when he was outside the room,
	The dore he steked stille anon	He fastened the door closed at once,
	As fast as it was biforn;	As tight as it was before.
2320	The kays he hidde under a ston	He hid the keys under a stone
	And thought thai schuld wene ichon	And thought that everyone would believe
	That thai hadde ben forlorn.	That they had been murdered.
	To his brother he went him than	He then went to his brother
	And seyd to that careful man,	And said to that troubled man,
	"Swiche time as God was born,	"At the same time as God was born,
	Ich have the brought mi childer blod,	I have brought you my children's blood.
	Ich hope it schal do the gode	I hope it will do you good
	As the angel seyd biforn."	As the angel said before."

[32] *Alon him self, withouten mo*: The *withouten mo* may mean "with no more ado" or also "without anyone else." ME rhetoric is fond of piling on synonyms, as well as double or triple negatives, for added emphasis.

	"Brother," Sir Amiloun gan to say,	"Brother," Sir Amiloun cried out,
2330	"Hastow slayn thine children tuay?	"Have you killed your two children?
	Allas, whi destow so?"	Alas, why did you do it?"
	He wepe and seyd, "Waileway!	He wept and said, "Woe is us!
	Ich hat lever til domesday	I would have preferred to live
	Have lived in care and wo!"	In pain and misery until Doomsday!"
	Than seyd Sir Amis, "Be now stille;	Then Sir Amis said, "Be still now!
	Jhesu, when it is His wille,	Jesus, when it is His will,
	May send me childer mo.	May send me more children.
	For me of blis thou art al bare;	Because of me you are barren of joys.
	Ywis, mi liif wil y nought spare,	In truth, I would not spare my own life
2340	To help the now therfro."	If it would help you now."
	He tok that blode, that was so bright,	He took that blood, which was so bright,
	And alied that gentil knight,	And anointed that noble knight,
	That er was hend in hale,	Who was once strong in health,
	And seththen in bed him dight	And afterward he put him in bed
	And wreighe him wel warm, aplight,	And covered him warmly, indeed,
	With clothes riche and fale.	With blankets that were rich and plentiful.
	"Brother," he seyd, "ly now stille	"Brother," he said, "Lie still now
	And falle on slepe thurch Godes wille,	And fall asleep through God's will,
	As the angel told in tale;	As the angel told in the tale.
2350	And ich hope wele withouten lesing,	And I fully believe, without falsehood,
	Jhesu, that is heven king,	That Jesus, who is Heaven's king,
	Schal bote the of thi bale."	Will relieve you of your suffering."
	Sir Amis let him ly alon	Sir Amis let him lie alone
	And in to his chapel he went anon,	And went at once into his chapel,
	In gest as ye may here,	In the story as you may hear,
	And for his childer, that he hadde slon,	And for his children that he had slain,
	To God of heven he made him mon	He made his plea to God in Heaven
	And preyd with rewely chere	And prayed with a penitent heart
	Schuld save him fram schame that day,	That He would save him from shame that day,
2360	And Mari, his moder, that best may,	And to Mary, His Mother, that blessed maid,
	That was him leve and dere;	Who was beloved and dear to him.
	And Jhesu Crist, in that stede	And Jesus Christ, in that place,
	Ful wele He herd that knightes bede	Heard in full that knight's petition
	And graunt him his praiere.	And granted him his prayer.
	Amorwe astite as it was day,	In the morning, as soon as it was day,
	The levedi com home al with play	The lady came home in high spirits
	With knightes ten and five;	With ten knights and five more.
	Thai sought the kays ther thai lay;	They looked for the keys where they laid them.
	Thai founde hem nought, thai were oway,	They could not find them; they were gone.
2370	Wel wo was hem olive.	It was a torment to be alive!
	The douk bad al that ther wes	The duke asked of all who were there
	Thai schuld hold hem still in pes	That they would keep themselves quiet
	And stint of her strive,	And stop being anxious,
	And seyd he hadde the keys nome,	And he said he had taken the keys
	Schuld noman in the chaumber come	And that no man should go into the chamber
	Bot himself and his wive.	Except himself and his wife.
	Anon he tok his levedi than	Afterward he took his lady
	And seyd to hir, "Leve leman,	And said to her, "My dear heart,
	Be blithe and glad of mode;	Be content and glad in mood.
2380	For bi Him that this warld wan,	For in the name of Him who saved this world,
	Bothe mi childer ich have slan,	I have slain both my children,
	That were so hende and gode;	Who were so gentle and good.

	For me thought in mi sweven	For I had a vision in my sleep
	That an angel com fram heven	That an angel came from Heaven
	And seyd me thurch her blode	And instructed me that through their blood
	Mi brother schuld passe out of his wo;	My brother would pass out of his troubles.
	Therfore y slough hem bothe to,	Therefore I killed the both of them
	To hele that frely fode."	To heal that noble man."
	Than was the levedi ferly wo	Then the lady was grief-stricken
2390	And seighe hir lord was also;	And saw that her lord was also.
	Sche comfort him ful yare,	She was eager to comfort him.
	"O lef liif," sche seyd tho,	"Oh, dear one!" she said,
	"God may sende ous childer mo,	"God may send us more children.
	Of hem have thou no care.	Do not be troubled for them.
	Yif it ware at min hert rote,	If it were at the base of my heart
	For to bring thi brother bote,	To bring your brother a remedy,
	My lyf y wold not spare.	I would not spare my own life.
	Shal noman oure children see,	No one will see our children;
	Tomorow shal they beryed bee	Tomorrow they shall be buried
2400	As they faire ded ware!"	As if they died naturally!"
	Thus the lady faire and bryght	Thus the lady, fair and beautiful,
	Comfort hur lord with al hur myght,	Comforted her lord with all her might,
	As ye mow understonde;	As you may understand.
	And seth they went both ful ryght	And later they both went straight
	To Sir Amylion, that gentil knyght,	To Sir Amiloun, that gracious knight,
	That ere was free to fonde.	Who had been so generous in facing trials.
	When Sir Amylion wakyd thoo,	When Sir Amiloun woke up then,
	Al his fowlehed was agoo	All his foulness was gone
	Through grace of Goddes sonde;	Through the grace of God's command.
2410	Than was he as feire a man	He was as fair a man then
	As ever he was yet or than,	As he ever was before,
	Seth he was born in londe.	Since he was born on the earth.
	Than were they al blith,	Then they were all happy;
	Her joy couth noman kyth,	They could not express all their joy
	They thonked God that day.	And they thanked God that day.
	As ye mow listen and lyth,	As you may listen and learn,
	Into a chamber they went swyth,	They went quickly into the chamber
	Ther the children lay;	Where the children were laying.
	Without wemme and wound	They found the children safe and well,
2420	Hool and sound the children found,	Without blemish or wound,
	And layen togeder and play.	And sitting together playing!
	For joye they wept, there they stood,	They wept for joy where they stood,
	And thanked God with myld mood,	And thanked God with grateful hearts
	Her care was al away.	That their troubles were all gone.
	When Sir Amylion was hool and fere	When Sir Amiloun was healthy and whole
	And wax was strong of powere	And had grown so vigorous in strength
	Both to goo and ryde,	Both to walk and ride,
	Child Oweys was a bold squyer,	Child Owen was made a brave squire.
	Blithe and glad he was of chere,	He was glad and content at heart
2430	To serve his lord beside.	To serve beside his lord.
	Than saide the knyght uppon a day,	Then one day the knight said
	He wolde hoom to his contray,	He would travel home to his country,
	To speke with his wyf that tyde;	To have words with his wife at that time.

	And for she halp him so at nede,	For the help she had given him in his need,
	Wel he thought to quyte hur mede,	He fully intended to give her what she deserved.[33]
	No lenger wold he abyde.	He would delay no longer.
	Sir Amys sent ful hastely	Sir Amis hastily sent
	After mony knyght hardy,	For many hardy knights
	That doughty were of dede,	Who were valiant in deeds—
2440	Wel fyve hundred kene and try,	A good five hundred, tried and keen—
	And other barons by and by	And other barons by and by,
	On palfray and on steede.	On palfreys and on steeds.[34]
	He preked both nyght and day	They galloped both day and night
	Til he com to his contray,	Until he came to his country
	Ther he was lord in lede.	Where he was lord of the land.
	Than had a knyght of that contré	A knight of that country
	Spoused his lady, bryght of ble,	Had married his lady, beautiful in her face,
	In romaunce as we rede.	In the romance as we read it.
	But thus, in romaunce as y yow say,	But as it happened, in the story as I tell you,
2450	They com hoom that silf day	They came home the same day
	That the bridal was hold;	That the wedding celebration was held.
	To the gates they preked without delay,	They dashed to the gates without delay.
	Anon ther began a soory play	Soon there began a grim play
	Among the barouns bold.	Among the bold barons.
	A messengere to the hal com	A messenger came to the hall
	And seide her lord was com hom	And said that her lord had come home,
	As man meriest on molde.	As the merriest man on earth.
	Than wox the lady blew and wan;	Then the lady turned pale and ashen;
	Ther was mony a sory man,	There was many a sorry man,
2460	Both yong and olde.	Both young and old!
	Sir Amys and Sir Amylion	Sir Amis and Sir Amiloun,
	And with hem mony a stout baron	And with them many a stout baron
	With knyghtes and squyers fale,	With knights and countless squires,
	With helmes and with haberyon,	With helmets and with mailcoats,
	With swerd bryght and broun,	With swords bright and gleaming,
	They went in to the hale.	Went into the hall.
	Al that they there araught,	All who they confronted there,
	Grete strokes there they caught,	Both great and small,
	Both grete and smale.	Were caught by fierce strokes.
2470	Glad and blyth were they that day,	It was a glad and thankful man
	Who so myght skape away	Who was able to escape that day
	And fle fro that bredale.	And flee from that bridal feast.
	When thei had with wrake	When they had driven out
	Drove oute both broun and blake	Both free and bound in vengeance[35]

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[33] *Quyte hur mede*: Other than the Anglo-Saxon *litote*, a sort of humorous understatement, irony and sarcasm is rare in medieval English literature. Here the sense of Sir Amis paying his traitorous wife her *mede*, 'reward,' seems close to PDE 'just desserts.'

[34] *On palfray and on steede*: Neither term refers to a breed. *Steed* suggests a warhorse, but a *palfrey* is a small horse used for riding or hunting. They were prized as fast and comfortable horses, but unsuited for battle. Sir Thopas riding out to war in full armor on a palfrey would have been humorous. A real knight would be humiliated.

[35] *Both broun and blake*: See *Havelock*, 1009, and *Athelston*, 291. A ME idiom here likely meaning 'all different types of ordinary people,' based on the colors of their clothing.

	Out of that worthy woon,	Out of that stately hall,
	Sir Amylyon for his lady sake	Sir Amiloun, for the sake of his lady,
	And grete logge he let make	Had a large cabin made
	Both of lym and stoon.	Of both mortar-lime and stone.[36]
	Thereyn was the lady ladde	The lady was placed there in it
2480	And with bred and water was she fed,	And she was fed with bread and water
	Tyl her lyvedays were goon.	Until her life's days were over.
	Thus was the lady brought to dede,	Thus the lady was brought to death.
	Who therof rought, he was a queede,	Whoever cared about it was worthless!
	As ye have herd echoon.	As each one of you has learned.
	Then Sir Amylion sent his sond	Then Sir Amiloun sent his summons
	To erles, barouns, fre and bond,	To earls and barons, free and bound,
	Both feire and hende.	Both fair and noble.
	When they com, he sesed in hond	When they came, he placed all of his land
	Child Oweys in al his lond,	In young Owen's hand,
2490	That was trew and kynde;	Who had been faithful and kind.
	And when he had do thus, ywys,	And when he had done this, in truth,
	With his brother, Sir Amys,	Then he made his way on again
	Agen then gan he wende.	With his brother, Sir Amis.
	In muche joy without stryf	They led their lives together
	Togeder ladde they her lyf,	In great joy without conflict
	Tel God after her dide send.	Until God sent for their souls.
	Anoon the hend barons tway,	At once, they established a fair abbey
	They let reyse a faire abbay	For the two noble barons,
	And feffet it ryght wel thoo,	And endowed it generously
2500	In Lumbardy, in that contray,	In Lombardy, in that country,
	To senge for hem tyl Domesday	To sing for them until Judgment Day
	And for her eldres also.	And for their parents also.[37]
	Both on oo day were they dede	They both died on the same day
	And in oo grave were they leide,	And they were laid in one grave,
	The knyghtes both twoo;	Both of the two knights.
	And for her trewth and her godhede	And for their loyalty and their godliness,
	The blisse of hevyn they have to mede,	They have the bliss of Heaven as a reward,
	That lasteth ever moo.	Which lasts forevermore.
2509	Amen	Amen.

[36] *Lym and stoon*: The equivalent of cement and brick. Unlike Sir Amiloun's lodge made from wood, lime and stone is more expensive but can last centuries. Sir Amiloun may be being more generous with his lady, or he may be making the point that it is a true and much more permanent prison, along with the 'bread and water' diet.

[37] One employment for clerics was to sing prayers for the dead in order to shorten their time in purgatory. Abbeys could be founded for this purpose, as was All Soul's College, Oxford.

Amis and Amiloun: *Treuþe* and the Heroes' Spiritual Journey

The 1990s *Star Trek* films and television shows attempted to conform to the plot rules of the original series, occasionally exposing logical inconsistencies unforeseen in the cartoonish 1960s episodes. Similarly, the characters and imaginary settings of animated shorts often translate poorly when expanded into feature-length movies. The same analogous criticism has been attributed to the romance *Amis and Amiloun* for its supposed inability to reconcile its simpler folktale tropes and Anglo-Norman sources into a coherent structure. Attempts to create realistic and sustained narratives based on folktale characters and stories can be problematic. Reasons are needed to explain why dragons and wolves are evil. But in fairy tales such motives are tautologically assumed: the dragon is evil because dragons are evil, even if deeper psychological or symbolic themes operate underneath the narrative machinery.

Partly the values of *Amis and Amiloun* simply do not age well. The poem has a strange morality where its protagonists "quite literally get away with murder."[1] Amis slaughters his children and lies about Belisaunt's virginity. Amiloun kills the steward through a deceitful act of impersonation. All of this happens in order to uphold a rarified code of conduct without any censure from the poet. How then can the poem be homiletic, as the Auchinleck compilers seemed to feel it was?[2] If the text has no ethical answers to these questions in either Christianity or courtly *treuþe*, "we at least expect it to be logical,

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[1] Kathryn Hume, "*Amis and Amiloun* and the Aesthetics of Middle English Romance," *Studies in Philology* 70:1 (1973): 38.

[2] The poem sits between *Specuturn Guidonis* and *Marie Maudelayne*. Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 111.

and *Amis and Amiloun* seems to be neither."[3] At best, the morals perplex a modern audience. A middle position argues that the English redactor has done his best to resolve the limitations of his sources, consisting of earlier versions and various folktale tropes of evil stewards, wooing women, and trials by combat.[4] At worst, the poem is a failure. Foster throws up his hands in defeat at a text where "sleaze abounds and is respectfully rewarded,"[5] concluding that perhaps critics vainly wish to attribute artifice to the poet "rather than admit ineptitude."[6]

Amis and Amiloun share matching initial *A*s in this and earlier analogues, and the poem does conform to a certain symmetrical binary construction. In the first half, Amis faces hardship and is rescued by Amiloun, and these roles reverse in the second half.[7] At the centrepoint lies the combat between Amis-Amiloun and the steward, forming the narrative and moral nexus of the story, as it sets in motion the successive action and issues of the second portion of the poem. Yet the moral problem with the scene remains: "we know that this is all wrong. When Amiloun wins, we are relieved; after all, the steward is a scoundrel and Amis was ensnared; but we are not reconciled to the fraudulent ruse."[8] Both the poet and the narrative seem to excuse Amis and Amiloun while condemning the steward, whom even the narrator concedes "hadde the right" (908). Yet upon finer inspection, a consistent morality does function in the poem justifying its

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[3] Hume, 27-8.

[4] Edward Foster, "Simplicity, Complexity, and Morality in Four Medieval Romances," *Chaucer Review* 31:4 (1997): 411.

[5] Foster, 419.

[6] Foster, 419.

[7] Hume, 25.

[8] Foster, 414.

categorization as homiletic: duty rooted in Christian love and charity is preferable to self-righteous legalism. The steward follows only the letter of the law for personal advantage, whereas Amis and Amiloun, through the tests given them, gradually prove and temper their *treuþe* into a more Christlike fraternity informed by faith.

The steward's actions demonstrate a fundamental contrast between his and Amis and Amiloun's conception of *treuþe*. They also set the narrative conflict of the poem in motion. After witnessing Amis and Belisaunt making love, he scurries to the king to expose the two, lamenting "in thi court thou hast a thef / that hath don min hert gref/ schame it is to sain / for, certes, he is a traitour strong / when he with tresoun and with wrong / thi douhter hath forlain!" (787-92). The steward indeed tells the truth that Amis has taken Belisaunt's virginity, but salted in with the charges are some misrepresentations and lies. The steward has no evidence of premeditated long-term subterfuge, that "ever he hath ben traitour" (800), and the claim that Amis has "don min hert gref" is either an outright falsehood—the steward clearly delights in incriminating his enemy—or else refers to the *gref* of Amis' refusal of his proffering of brotherhood, a dishonest attribution of his feelings of outrage to an unrelated situation.

The steward displays his own calculated self-interest in his actions. Plainly he does not care about the king or Belisaunt as people, for he has full warning of Amis and Belisaunt, "that gret love was bituix hem to" (704) for "wele four days other five" (711), but waits until after the damage is done for his own benefit. As a fellow steward in the household, he has equal responsibility for Belisaunt but glosses over the ticklish question of why he failed to intervene if he had foreknowledge of her seduction, distracting the king with lurid details of the *tresoun*. The steward delays naming Amis until the dramatic

climax of his deliberation, progressively building the king's emotions through his frustrated suspense into a primal rage. The steward concludes his histrionics by subtly inserting the imperative that Amis should be "hong this day" (798) while the king is thinking less than lucidly, hoping that he will spend his energies in summary justice without coming to any uncomfortable questions.

Delaney sees sexual jealousy toward Amis in the steward, who "responds like the proverbial scorned woman"[9] after Amis's rejection of his offer to replace Amiloun in his affections exclusively. Equally, the steward really has no need to spy on Amis and Belisaunt the entire duration they are together (769), but perhaps his voyeurism has another purpose: "he likes to watch."[10] Delaney points to historical same-sex unions such as that of the young Edward II and Piers Gaveston as possible influences, and finds the A-A (same) / B (Belisaunt, different) figuration suggestive. Romances were certainly capable of pursuing multiple levels of meaning through contemporary allusions or word-devices, but asserting that Amis and Amiloun "form the *real* couple"[11] of the poem attempts to read in a homoerotic submeaning which does not easily fit the hagiographic tone of the English text. After hearing praise of Amiloun's saintly tribulations and Amoraunt's *caritas*, an audience would have found deeply offensive a sexual reading of

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[9] Sheila Delaney, "A, A, and B: Coding Same-Sex Union in *Amis and Amiloun*," in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester: University Press, 2004), 68.

[10] Delaney, 69.

[11] Delaney, 65.

"at his rigge he dight him yare" (1832), referring to Amoraunt's carrying of his leprous maternal uncle on his back through the winter.[12]

The steward seems less a jilted lover and more a Malvolio figure, driven by pride. Early in the poem he resents Amis and Amiloun, but for their intimacy with the duke and not with each other: "for the douke was so wele her frende, / he hadde therof gret envie" (212-3). The steward also shares Malvolio's self-serving legalism. Baldwin notes that "Amis and Amiloun embody a genuine (if flawed) treuþe—fidelity in motive and spirit. The steward represents a false treuþe, technically correct but malicious in motive."[13] This Christian distinction between obeying the intent and the letter of the law (Mark 3:1-6) also plays out in Amiloun's harridan wife, who sides with the steward and condemns Amiloun's leprosy as divine revenge: "the is bitid this hard chaunce / dathet who the bimene!" ("This hard luck is fated for you! Damn whoever feels sorry for you!" 1568-9). Although Amiloun's wife has a legal pretext in banishing him, she "lacks any redeeming spiritual virtue, such as mercy and compassion, which would have prompted her at least to alleviate her husband's distress,"[14] just as the steward insists under law that Belisaunt and her mother be burned. If *Amis and Amiloun* does consist of binary pairs, the wife's Pharisaic legalism makes her the structural correlative to the steward.

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[12] Delaney (69) asserts that this can be a sexual pun: "he dight him yare" might also mean "at his back he serviced him." While *dight* is recorded with a sexual meaning in MED, it seems about as strong as "I did her" in vulgar PDE. Benson notes that the prudish editors of MSS Harley 7333 *Canterbury Tales* were intent on bowdlerizing the text and censored most examples of *swyven*, *ers*, and even *fart*, but left in *dight*. Larry D. Benson, "The 'Queynte' Punnings of Chaucer's Critics," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 1 (1984): 32-3.

[13] Dean R. Baldwin, "*Amis and Amiloun*: The Testing of Treuthe," *Papers on Language and Literature* 16 (1980): 361.

[14] Ojars Kratins, "The Middle English Amis and Amiloun: Chivalric Romance or Secular Hagiography?" *PMLA* 81:5 (1966): 352.

The theme of virtue through fidelity to *treuþe* is carried by a series of tests, "arranged roughly in ascending order of difficulty,"[15] from the heroes' separation, through the blandishments of the steward and Belisaunt, up to Belisaunt's deflowering. Her impulsive passion forces Amis into a test of his knightly integrity, which he fails, only to be rescued by Amiloun's ruse. The trick is worthy of "wily Odysseus," and the audience cheers the result. Yet a nagging sense remains of a moral and logical violation in a world where *treuþe* also means telling the truth. Here the central dilemma of the pledge emerges: Amiloun is bound to never fail Amis "for wele no wo" (155, 296) in a situation where his brother faces shame and possible death (1281), but must be an accessory to Amis' perjury against his lord (304) to save him. The strict terms of *treuþe* are breached in either case. Amiloun may with courtly justification condemn Amis as first violator and avoid such an impasse outright,[16] but he selflessly impugns his own personal honor instead in fidelity to the spirit of his vows.

The poem's judgment of Amiloun's actions seems inconsistent here. An angel intones that "Jhesu sent the bode bi me / to warn the anon" (1262-3) against impersonating Amis in battle. If so, Amiloun should certainly not *win*, "since the trial by combat is predicated upon the belief that the right will be shown by God's fighting on its side."[17] Nor does the poet imply any divine anger, twice stating that the folk "bisought God" (1301) to help Amis and then having Amiloun decapitate the steward and thank

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[15] Baldwin, 358.

[16] Trounce notes that in the French *chansons*, "any breach on the part of one brother entitled the other to abrogate the bond." A. Mcintyre Trounce, ed., *Athelston: A Middle English Romance*, Early English Text Society O.S. 224 (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 13.

[17] Kratins, 350.

God (1368) without any hint of irony or censure. Upon parting, Amis thanks him repeatedly for "his cost and his gode dede" (1443). What then to make of Amiloun's consequent tribulations? After defeating the steward, he is scourged by leprosy as the voice warns, is betrayed and banished by his wife, and wanders the countryside in poverty and hardship. For those who would prefer not to spend an English winter half-starved, leprous, and homeless in a wheelbarrow, Amiloun does not seem well-rewarded by God for his sacrifice.

Numerous critics have asserted that the angel does not threaten Amiloun with punishment, but rather he "puts Amiloun's trewþe to the test by placing before him a choice."[18] The statement "thou schalt have an eventour strong" (1256) conspicuously omits any suggestion of sin or wrongdoing. The angel warns "if thou this bataile underfong" (1255) without mentioning the steward at all. Rather, the vision functions as "a visitation of divine grace"[19] intended to intensify Amiloun's virtue by increasing his sacrifice. The poet either has trouble reconciling his sources or perhaps intends some ambiguity here, for Amiloun is no Gawain who can escape with the technical penalty of a nick[20] as he has taken a life. Hume proposes that the leprosy *suggests* punishment without actually being so in order to drive home the point that Amiloun owes God penitence for his lesser act of deceit.[21]

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[18] Kratins, 351.

[19] Kratins, 351.

[20] Baldwin, 361.

[21] Hume, 29.

Another path out of this ethical quagmire consists of interpreting Amiloun's troubles as a divine test but also as a progression of his *treuþe* toward a more saintly perfection. Amiloun does not have the steward's or his wife's cold legalism, but his fidelity does have a whiff of proud self-sufficiency. The poet makes considerable use of binary structure and prefiguration, and here Amiloun's role in court as chief steward (191), with possible policing duties (in the Anglo-Norman *Amis e Amilun* he is a military chief[22]) becomes significant. Amiloun's victory also comes with martial glory befitting his court honors, and he accepts the laurels of the procession "as prince proude in pride" (1380). Langland writes of his lepers, "for love of here low hertes / oure lord hath hem graunted / here penaunce and here purgatorie."[23] Similarly, Amiloun's trials and indignities humble him toward a *treuþe* more closely resembling what the poet would call 'the pattern of Christ.' The narrator consequently pulls every stop in portraying Amiloun's abasement with maximum sentimental pathos as they go "sore wepeand fro dore to dore" (1702). If any heavenly punishment is intended, it is ameliorative, 'medicinal' chastisement rather than condemnation, in contradistinction to Amiloun's faithless wife, who cannot see the difference.

Amiloun accepts his condition passively without complaint as a model of saintly patience. The genre outlines of medieval romance are vaguely limited, and *Amis and Amiloun* has been marked out as a "homiletic romance," as "secular hagiography," or as not even a romance. Childress feels that Amis, in his patient suffering of ridicule and

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[22] Dannenbaum, 613.

[23] William Langland, *Piers Plowman*, ed. W.W. Skeats (London: Early English Text Society, 1873), Passus X, 184-5, quoted in Susan Dannenbaum, "Insular Tradition in the Story of Amis and Amiloun," *Neophilologus* 67:4 (1983): 620.

hardship, does not behave as a romance hero at all.[24] Yet while Amis and Amiloun do not slay real monsters and Saracens, as in the stanzaic *Guy of Warwick*, the heroic quest here is internal, one of growing spiritual progress. Leprosy was commonly seen as divine punishment, but for saints medieval tradition also saw aspects of blessing and sacrifice in the ailment: St. Hugh preached that such sufferers were "beloved of God as was Lazarus."[25] Additionally, like Redcrosse, Amiloun has his own Una here in the form of Amoraunt, who demonstrates "a selfless and uncomplicated loyalty that is seen nowhere else in the poem."[26] Amoraunt, who shares yet another *Ami-* prefix, has been explained as "a personification of the love between Amis and Amiloun,"[27] both guiding Amiloun as a model of selfless *caritas* and literally carrying him toward Amis.

Thus far, a self-serving application of *treuþe* has brought destruction to the steward and foreshadowed it for Amiloun's wife, in distinction to Amiloun's journey toward a fidelity grounded in Christlike sacrifice. The angel implicitly patterns Amiloun after Christ, who "suffred passioun" (1253). Amis, however, does not seem to undergo any particularly Dantean cleansing by fire in being a *riche douke*, happily married to Belisaunt, who "with gamen and play / fram chirche com the right way" (1888-9). His carefree exuberance seems designed to highlight Amiloun's ragged saintliness. Yet a parallel test of Amis' loyalty also awaits in another heavenly intervention by Christ, "the

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[24] Diana T. Childress, "Between Romance and Legend: 'Secular Hagiography' in Middle English Literature," *Philological Quarterly* 57 (1978): 319. Childress cites "homiletic romance" and "secular hagiography" as Dieter Mehl's and Ojars Kratin's terms, respectively (312).

[25] In Rotha Mary Clay, *The Mediaeval Hospitals of England* (London, 1909), 66, quoted in Kratins 353.

[26] Foster, 415.

[27] John C. Ford, "Merry Married Brothers: Wedded Friendship, Lovers' Language and Male Matrimonials in Two Middle English Romances," *Medieval Forum* 3 (2003) [8], accessed 12 July 2010 at http://www.sfsu.edu/~medieval/Volume3/Brothers.html.

perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:2), designed to assay and purify Amis' trust and sense of duty. The trial is also designated for Christmas Eve, a symbolically matching occasion of Christ's sacrifice.

Amis receives an order to slaughter his two children from an angel, for "yif he wald do as he him hight" (2210-2), their blood will save Amiloun's life. The *bode* portends not only a test straining Amis' fidelity to *treuþe* to its limits but also the ultimate abasement of his former role as protector of the household. Where God's test of Amiloun sought to humble his knightly pride, Amis' test now structurally matches his earlier self-regard in his station as chief butler. The poet again perhaps suggests that a hint of hubris in Amis' acquiescence to Belisaunt's passions needs to be burned away:

> Amis gave his sons to help his friend, but his anguish at giving up the most valued 'fruits' of his former sinful adventure serves as atonement for those sins. We are meant to feel that his debt to God, like that to Amiloun, is finally paid, though in strict logic, this could not be.[28]

The scene obviously recalls Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 22), with God's orders to Abraham a similar test of his trust and humility. Although modern critics find the violence of Amis' actions and the poet's moral approval distasteful, Amis has an additional complication Abraham lacks: the latter has no promise of reward, whereas the children's death will save Amiloun "thurch Godes grace, that is so gode (2208). Nor does the poet present the decision as easy for Amis, depicting their murder in a considerably lengthy treatment with realistic touches of candles and nursery keys and their father's tormented heart: "for sorwe he sleynt oway biside / and wepe with reweful chere" (2291-2). Lastly, the

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[28] Hume, 29.

harshness of the scene needs to be read in light of the genre. The audience knows they are hearing a romance and not a Greek tragedy, and that according to its rules the children are unlikely to remain dead for long. As Hume notes sympathetically, few romanciers "had to deal with problems as complex as this."[29]

Belisaunt is perhaps easier to parse. In her first appearances, she is impetuous and perhaps a touch imperious, telling Amis, "thou nast no croun" ("you have no tonsure," 614), mocking his ethics by comparing him to a monk. Similar to Lady Bertilak's testing of Gawain, Belisaunt aggressively pursues Amis while the master is hunting, in both poems a Venusian allusion. To underscore Belisaunt's passionate desire, the poet has nightingales singing (536), birds associated with carnality.[30] The final stroke is for her to threaten Amis like Potiphar's wife, to which he capitulates. Yet at the end of the poem she has evidently also developed a more Christlike nature, obediently accepting a contagious leper into her household as she "kist him in that plas" (2174), kindly taking care of the man who saved her from a "strong fer" (1216) when she was in danger of execution. The strongest indication of her changed temper, which the poet emphasizes, and which modern audiences have the most difficulty with, is her dutiful endurance of having her children slain by her husband. In an answer Chaucer's Griselde would have trouble sputtering, she replies that "God may sende ous childer mo / of hem have thou no care" (2393-4). As indigestible as the scene seems, like the other heroes, Belisaunt has undergone a saintly evolution.

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[29] Hume, 30.

[30] Hume, 35.

In the final denouement both Amiloun and the children become healed and reanimated. Aquinas writes that God "knows how to make orderly use of evil by ordering it to good,"[31] and a Christian audience would have been expected to see such an outcome as providential grace. Perhaps objections to the protagonists deserving such mercy in the "moral confusion"[32] of the story in fact miss the point in demanding that characters must merit forgiveness, as the emphasis of the scene lies in God freely endowing both Amis and Amiloun with the purest form of grace, unmerited, which they are now meant to emulate themselves. Gawain receives the same deliverance when he is spared by being gently laughed at by the Green Knight for his "devotion to an ideal he cannot achieve."[33] The action underscores God's generous mercy in the poem just as Aurelius' grace toward Dorigen distinguishes him as *fre*.

Blood-brotherhood was not always viewed as ennobling or benign. James tells his followers, "do not swear, not by heaven or by earth or by anything else" (James 5:12). The ceremony seemingly originates in Norse rites where blood was actually exchanged, and the English descendants of the Danelaw may have had "cherished memories"[34] of such bonds. By the fourteenth century such ideals were apparently viewed as debased in practice. Strohm notes that such oaths "held for the medieval sensibility a possible implication of connivance and dubious alliance, of self-advancement that neglects the

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[31] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London, 1959), Quaestio 114, Art. 1, Obj. 3, quoted in John Finlayson, "The Marvellous in Middle English Romance," *Chaucer Review* 33:4 (1999): 381.

[32] Foster, 416.

[33] Baldwin, 365.

[34] Trounce, 14.

total Christian community."[35] Chaucer's most hellish characters exemplify this pursuit of opportunistic confederacies, with the despicable revelers of the *Pardoner's Tale*, the summoner and devil of the *Friar's Tale*, and the merchant and John of the *Shipman's Tale* all betraying each other through calculated and insincere vows. Even Chaucer's Palamon and Arcite are divided through *treuþe* when Palamon invokes their earlier pledge in order to claim Emily for his own, and Arcite summarily brushes off such agreements, stating "who shal yeve a lover any lawe?" (*CT* I.1164). In the *Early South English Legendary*'s life of St. James, a pilgrim conspicuous for not being bound by oaths of *treuþe* turns out to be the most loyal, and the moral lesson is clear: "betere is trewe dede þane fals word."[36]

Much of the ethos of the poem now seems implausible to a modern audience which doubts that St. Edmund's severed head really called "here, here, here!" Other analogues of the poem, such as *Ami & Amilice*, depict both a more secular mindset and less interest in loyalty as a moral or religious theme.[37] The English redactor, however, has a considerably more pious tone, possibly modeled on the ostensibly earliest version of the poem written by a French monk named Raoul le Tourtier around 1090. Loomis asserts that this text, thoroughly pietistic in form, has its own source in church legends surrounding Charlemagne.[38] *Athelston*, with its similar plot vehicle of the violation of brotherhood oaths among four men, also seems to have been altered by the English

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[35] Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 96.

[36] *The Early South-English Legendary*, ed. Carl Horstmann (London: EETS, 1887), line 223, quoted in P.J. Heather, "Sworn-Brotherhood," *Folklore* 63:3 (1952): 171.

[37] Baldwin, 358.

[38] Laura A. Hibbard Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1963), 65, 68.

redactor to have a newly devout tone.[39] Kratins objects that Amis and Amiloun are not saintly because their bond is to men and not God.[40] The clergy apparently remained wary of romance, as the stories borrowed hagiographic themes but still looked to temporal baronial ends such as honor, land and family rather than purely heavenly ones.[41] Yet the poet praises "her trewth and her godhede" (2506), arguing that the purest bonds of fraternity concomitantly serve both earthly and spiritual goals, even if the lay knight does not wholly conduct himself as an *imitatio Christi*.

A homiletic reading of *Amis and Amiloun* demonstrates that the imperatives of chivalric *treuþe* and Christian morality do not necessarily conflict. Rather, in the protagonists the latter surpasses the former. Amis and Amiloun pass through a series of ascending tests which not only prove their fidelity to each other but also display a spiritual progression toward a purer form of selfless love, contrasted against the steward's and wife's mania for legal self-justification. Just as God tells the Israelites that He is tired of burnt offerings perfunctorily given (Isaiah 1:11), the *Amis and Amiloun* poet reveals the shallowness of contractual duty. The moral theme begins with Amiloun's acceptance of a duty that transcends the letter of their 'rash promise,'[42] continues with his sacrifice to fulfill the imperative to protect Amis, and finally echoes in Amis' surrender of his children, an act dovetailing perfect obedience to God with a higher love of one's brother.

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[39] Trounce, 4.

[40] Kratins, 354.

[41] Susan Dannenbaum, "*Guy of Warwick* and the Question of Exemplary Romance," *Genre* 17:4 (1984): 356.

[42] Baldwin, 357.

A hero's "process of education" was a fitting didactic theme for romance writers,[43] and Amis and Amiloun demonstrate heroism not by blind adherence to vows but through growing toward a superior maturity of spirit.

[43] C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939-1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 242, quoted in Elaine M. Treharne, "Romanticizing the Past in the Middle English *Athelston*," *Review of English Studies* 50:197 (1999): 11.

CHAPTER 2

Athelston

Athelston survives in one manuscript: Caius College Library, MS 175 (c. 1500). I take as my text source Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds. *Athelston*. *Four Romances of England.* Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999. http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/athelfrm.htm. Other editions include Walter Hoyt French and Charles Brockway Hale, eds., *Middle English Metrical Romances* (1930), and A. Mcintyre Trounce, ed., *Athelston: A Middle English Romance* (1951).

Main characters:
Athelstone, king of England
The queen
Egelond, earl of Stone
Edith, countess to Egelond and sister to Athelstone
Alaric, bishop of Canterbury
Wickmond, earl of Dover
Athelstone the messenger

1	Lord that is off myghtys most, Fadyr and Sone and Holy Gost, Bryng us out of synne And lene us grace so for to wyrke To love bothe God and Holy Kyrke That we may hevene wynne. Lystnes, lordyngys, that ben hende, Of falsnesse, hou it wil ende	Our Lord, who is of the highest might, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Deliver us from sin And grant us the grace to bring ourselves To love both God and holy church So that we may win Heaven. Hear, lordings, in your graciousness, About disloyalty and how it will end

	A man that ledes hym therin.	A man who leads himself into it.
10	Of foure weddyd bretheryn I wole yow tell	I will tell you about four sworn brothers[1]
	That wolden yn Yngelond go dwel,	Who wished to dwell in England,
	That sybbe were nought of kyn.	Who were related, but not by family.
	And all foure messangeres they were,	All four of them were messengers
	That wolden yn Yngelond lettrys bere,	Who would carry letters in England,
	As it wes here kynde.	As it was their trade.
	By a forest gan they mete	They met in a forest
	With a cros, stood in a strete	Near a cross standing on a road
	Be leff undyr a lynde,	By the leaves under a linden tree.
	And, as the story telles me,	And, as the story tells me,
20	Ylke man was of dyvers cuntré,	Each man was from a different country,
	In book iwreten we fynde —	As we find it written in the book.
	For love of here metyng thare,	For the fellowship of their meeting,
	They swoor hem weddyd bretheryn for evermare,	They swore themselves brothers forever,
	In trewthe trewely dede hem bynde.	Binding themselves earnestly in oaths.
	The eldeste of hem ylkon,	The oldest one of them
	He was hyght Athelston,	Was called Athelstone,
	The kyngys cosyn dere;	The king's dear cousin.[2]
	He was of the kyngys blood,	He was of the king's blood,
	Hys eemes sone, I undyrstood;	His uncle's son, as I understand.
30	Therefore he neyghyd hym nere.	Therefore he stayed near to him.
	And at the laste, weel and fayr,	And at the end, fair and clear,[3]

[1] *Of foure weddyd bretheryn:* The four men are not married, but like Sir Amis and Amiloun, they have taken an oath of brotherhood to be loyal to each other until death. In pagan Nordic culture men cut themselves and literally intermingled blood to become 'blood brothers.' This pledge was seen as nobler than marriage vows: in 306-7 the queen realizes that the bishop will honor the king before he does her (TEAMS). A. Mcintyre Trounce, ed., *Athelston: A Middle English Romance*, Early English Text Society O.S. 224 (London: Oxford University Press, 1951).

[2] *Cosyn:* ME is not very exact on family titles and the term can indicate various familial relationships. There were several ruling Athelstans before the Norman conquest and the poet may not mean any of them, but see Treharne, who believes that King Athelstan (c. 894-939) is clearly meant. Athelstan also had a sister named Edith. Elaine M. Treharne, "Romanticizing the Past in the Middle English *Athelston*," *Review of English Studies* 50:197 (1999): 1-21. There was no bishop Alaric of Canterbury and Wymonde was apparently a stock villain's name.

[3] *Weel and fayr*: This may simply be a formula saying that the king had a graceful passing, but it may also be emphasizing that there was no foul play in the king's death and thus a peaceful succession took place, which was certainly not always the case for an English king.

	The kyng him dyyd withouten ayr.	The king died without an heir.
	Thenne was ther non hys pere	There was at the time no one his peer
	But Athelstone, hys eemes sone;	Except Athelstone, his uncle's son.
	To make hym kyng wolde they nought schone,	They did not refuse to make him king,
	To corowne hym with gold so clere.	To crown him with shining gold.
	Now was he kyng semely to se:	Now he was king, a fitting sight.
	He sendes afftyr his bretheryn thre	He sent for his three friends
	And gaff hem here warysoun.	And gave them their reward.
40	The eldest brothir he made Eerl of Dovere —	He made the oldest brother Earl of Dover,
	And thus the pore man gan covere —	And thus the poor man was elevated,
	Lord of tour and toun.	A lord of town and tower.
	That other brother he made Eerl of Stane —	The other brother he made Earl of Stone[4]—
	Egeland was hys name,	Egelond was his name,
	A man of gret renoun —	A man of great renown—
	And gaff him tyl hys weddyd wyff	And he gave him as his wedded wife
	Hys owne sustyr, Dame Edyff,	His own sister, Dame Edith,
	With gret devocyoun.	With great solicitude.
	The ferthe brothir was a clerk,	The fourth brother was a cleric
50	Mekyl he cowde of Goddys werk.	Who knew much about God's work.
	Hys name it was Alryke.	His name was Alaric.
	Cauntyrbury was vacant	Canterbury was vacant,
	And fel into that kyngys hand;	And fell into that king's hand.
	He gaff it hym that wyke,	He gave him that posting
	And made hym bysschop of that stede,	And made him bishop of that place,
	That noble clerk, on book cowde rede —	That noble cleric, who could read a book;
	In the world was non hym lyche.	There were none like him in the world.
	Thus avaunsyd he hys brother thorwgh Goddys gras,	Thus through God's grace he advanced his friends,
	And Athelstone hymselven was	And Athelstone himself was
60	A good kyng and a ryche.	A good and prosperous king.
	And he that was Eerl of Stane —	And he who became Earl of Stone,
	Sere Egeland was hys name —	Sir Egelond was his name,
	Was trewe, as ye schal here.	Was faithful, as you will hear.

[4] *Stane*: There are many English Stones. Perhaps this is the Stone near Dartford or the one near Faversham, both on the road between London and Canterbury. It seems odd that Athelston would give a close friend an unimportant earldom, but this is not likely Maidstone, which is called as such in the Domesday Book.

	Thorwgh the myght off Goddys gras,	Through the might of God's blessings,
	He gat upon the countas	With the countess the earl fathered
	Twoo knave-chyldren dere.	Two dear boys.
	That on was fyfftene wyntyr old,	One of them was fifteen years old,
	That other thryttene, as men me told:	The other thirteen, as men have told me.
	In the world was non here pere —	In the world they had no peer.
70	Also whyt so lylye-flour,	They were as white as a lily,
	Red as rose off here colour,	Red as a rose in color,
	As bryght as blosme on brere.	As bright as a blossom on a briar.
	Bothe the Eerl and hys wyff,	The king loved both the earl and his wife
	The kyng hem lovede as hys lyff,	As much as his own life,
	And here sones twoo;	Along with their two sons.
	And offtensythe he gan hem calle	And often he would call them
	Bothe to boure and to halle,	Both to his chamber and to the hall,
	To counsayl whenne they scholde goo.	For counsel when they were there.
	Therat Sere Wymound hadde gret envye,	For that, the Earl of Dover,
80	That Eerle of Dovere, wyttyrlye.	Sir Wickmond, had great envy for certain.
	In herte he was ful woo.	He was aggrieved at heart.
	He thoughte al for here sake	He wished on their account
	False lesyngys on hem to make,	To impugn false lies on them,
	To don hem brenne and sloo.	To have them burned and slain.
	And thanne Sere Wymound hym bethoughte:	And then Sir Wickmond resolved to himself,
	"Here love thus endure may noughte;	"Their love will not endure as it is!
	Thorwgh wurd oure werk may sprynge."	The job might be done through words."
	He bad hys men maken hem yare;	He ordered his men to get themselves ready;
	Unto Londone wolde he fare	He would go to London
90	To speke with the kynge.	To speak with the king.
	Whenne that he to Londone come,	When he arrived in London,
	He mette with the kyng ful sone.	He met with the king immediately,
	He sayde, "Welcome, my derelyng."	Saying, "Welcome, dear friend!"
	The kyng hym fraynyd seone anon,	The king asked him soon after
	By what way he hadde igon,	By what way he had come,
	Withouten ony dwellyng.	Without any stopover.
	"Come thou ought by Cauntyrbury,	"Did you pass near Canterbury,
	There the clerkys syngen mery	Where the monks sing merrily,
	Bothe erly and late?	Both early and late?
100	Hou faryth that noble clerk,	How does that noble cleric fare,

	That mekyl can on Goddys werk?	Who knows so much of God's work?
	Knowest thou ought hys state?	Do you know anything about his condition?
	And come thou ought be the Eerl of Stane,	And did you pass nearby the Earl of Stone,
	That wurthy lord in hys wane?	To the residence of that admirable lord?
	Wente thou ought that gate?	Were you anywhere near their gate?
	Hou fares that noble knyght,	How does that noble knight fare,
	And hys sones fayr and bryght	And his sons, fair and bright,
	My sustyr, yiff that thou wate?"	Or my sister, if you know?"
	"Sere," thanne he sayde, "withouten les,	"Sire," he said, "without a lie,
110	Be Cauntyrbery my way I ches;	I chose to go by Canterbury.
	There spak I with that dere.	There I spoke with that dear person.
	Ryght weel gretes thee that noble clerk,	That noble priest greeted you courteously,
	That mykyl can of Goddys werk;	Who knows so much about God's work.
	In the world is non hys pere.	There are none his peer in the world.
	And also be Stane my way I drowgh;	And I also took my way past Stone.
	With Egelond I spak inowgh,	I talked enough with Egelond,
	And with the countesse so clere.	And with the beautiful countess.
	They fare weel, is nought to layne,	They are doing well—there is nothing to hide—
	And bothe here sones." The king was fayne	Along with both their sons." The king was
120	And in his herte made glad chere.	Pleased and was cheered in his heart.
	"Sere kyng," he saide, "yiff it be thi wille	"Sire king," he said, "If it is your will
	To chaumbyr that thou woldest wenden tylle,	That you would go to your chamber
	Consayl for to here,	To hear private counsel,
	I schal thee telle a swete tydande,	I will give you an interesting report.
	There comen nevere non swyche in this lande	Nothing like it has come to this land
	Of all this hundryd yere."	In a hundred years."
	The kyngys herte than was ful woo	The king's heart was distraught
	With that traytour for to goo;	In going forth with that traitor.
	They wente bothe forth in fere;	Both of them went in together.
130	And whenne that they were the chaumbyr withinne,	And when they were within the chamber,
	False lesyngys he gan begynne	He began to ply falsehoods
	On hys weddyd brother dere.	On his dear sworn brother.
	"Sere kyng," he saide, "woo were me,	"Sire king," he said, "it would be horrible
	Ded that I scholde see thee,	If I were to see you dead,
	So moot I have my lyff!	So long as I am alive!
	For by Hym that al this worl wan,	For by Him who redeemed all this world,
	Thou has makyd me a man,	You have made me a man

	And iholpe me for to thryff.	And helped me to prosper.
	For in thy land, sere, is a fals traytour.	But in this land, sir, there is a false traitor.
140	He wole doo thee mykyl dyshonour	He will do you great dishonor
	And brynge thee of lyve.	And will take away your life.
	He wole deposen thee slyly,	He will depose you slyly,
	Sodaynly than schalt thou dy	And then you will suddenly die,
	By Chrystys woundys fyve!"	By Christ's five wounds!"[5]
	Thenne sayde the kyng, "So moot thou the,	Then the king said, "As you live and breathe,
	Knowe I that man, and I hym see?	Would I know the man if I see him?
	His name thou me telle."	Tell me his name."
	"Nay," says that traytour, "that wole I nought	"No," said the traitor, "I will not do that
	For al the gold that evere was wrought —	For all the gold that was ever made,
150	Be masse-book and belle —	By mass-book or bell,[6]
	But yiff thou me thy trowthe will plyght	Unless you pledge your vow
	That thou schalt nevere bewreye the knyght	That you will never betray the knight
	That thee the tale schal telle."	Who has told you the story."
	Thanne the kyng his hand up raughte,	Then the king raised up his hand,
	That false man his trowthe betaughte,	Giving his promise to that false man.
	He was a devyl of helle!	He was a devil from Hell!
	"Sere kyng," he sayde, "thou madyst me knyght,	"Sire King," he said, "you made me a knight,
	And now thou hast thy trowthe me plyght	And now you have pledged your word
	Oure counsayl for to layne:	To conceal our conversation.
160	Sertaynly, it is non othir	Certainly, it is no other
	But Egelane, thy weddyd brothir —	Than Egelond, your brother.
	He wolde that thou were slayne;	He wishes that you were dead.
	He dos thy sustyr to undyrstand	He has your sister under the impression
	He wole be kyng of thy lande,	That he will be king of this land,
	And thus he begynnes here trayne.	And so he leads her astray.
	He wole thee poysoun ryght slyly;	He intends to poison you cunningly.
	Sodaynly thanne schalt thou dy,	You will then suddenly die,

[5] *By Chrystys woundys fyve*: Like lines 135 and 146, simply an oath for emphasis. Scripture reports that Christ received five wounds during crucifixion, four by nails through his limbs and one by a spear in his side.

[6] *Masse-book and belle*: Similarly, church hymnals, bibles, and bells and all of the implements of service were also used for oaths, whether in seriousness or in profanity. Here their use emphasizes Sir Wickmond's hypocrisy.

	By Him that suffryd payne."	By Him who suffered pain!"
	Thanne swoor the kyng be Cros and Roode:	Then the king swore, by the wooden Cross,
170	"Meete ne drynk schal do me goode	"Neither food or drink will do me good
	Tyl that he be dede;	Until he is dead,
	Bothe he and hys wyf, hys soones twoo,	Both he and his wife, and his two sons!
	Schole they nevere be no moo	They will no longer be in England
	In Yngelond on that stede."	In that place."
	"Nay," says the traytour, "so moot I the,	"No," said the traitor, "so help me God,
	Ded wole I nought my brother se;	I will not see my brother dead.
	But do thy beste rede."	But follow your best advice."
	No lengere there then wolde he lende;	Then he would not stay any longer.
	He takes hys leve, to Dovere gan wende.	He said his goodbyes and left for Dover.
180	God geve hym schame and dede!	May God give him shame and death!
	Now is that traytour hom iwent.	When the traitor had gone home,
	A messanger was afftyr sent	A messenger was afterwards summoned
	To speke with the kyng.	To speak with the king.
	I wene he bar his owne name:	I believe he had his own name;
	He was hoten Athelstane;	He was also called Athelstone.[7]
	He was foundelyng.	He was an orphaned child.
	The lettrys were imaad fullyche thare,	The letters were made out in full there,
	Unto Stane for to fare	For him to go to Stone
	Withouten ony dwellyng,	Without any delay
190	To fette the eerl and his sones twoo,	To fetch the earl and his two sons
	And the countasse alsoo,	And the countess also,
	Dame Edyve, that swete thyng.	Dame Edith, that sweet lady.
	And in the lettre yit was it tolde,	It was also stated in the letter
	That the kyng the eerlys sones wolde	That the king would make
	Make hem bothe knyght;	Both of the earl's sons knights,
	And therto his seel he sette.	And to this he set his seal.
	The messanger wolde nought lette;	The messenger did not delay;
	The way he rydes ful ryght.	He rode the way swiftly.

[7] *Athelstane*: This is a different Athelston. There may be a poetic significance or it may simply reflect the popularity of the name. Dickerson argues that the youth is "the alter ego of the arrogant King Athelston, who was once a messenger." A. Inskip Dickerson, "The Subplot of the Messenger in *Athelston*," *Papers on Language & Literature* 12 (1976): 124.

	The messanger, the noble man,	The noble man, this messenger,
200	Takes hys hors and forth he wan,	Took his horse and went forth
	And hyes a ful good spede.	And hastened at top speed.
	The eerl in hys halle he fande;	He found the earl in his hall.
	He took hym the lettre in his hande	He gave him the letter into his hand
	Anon he bad hym rede:	And asked him to read it straightaway.
	“Sere,” he sayde also swythe,	“Sir,” he said as quickly,
	“This lettre oughte to make thee blythe:	“This letter ought to make you glad.
	Thertoo thou take good hede.	Therefore take heed of it.
	The kyng wole for the cuntas sake	The king will, for the countess’ sake,
	Bothe thy sones knyghtes make —	Make both your sons knights.
210	To London I rede thee spede.	I advise you to hurry to London.
	The kyng wole for the cuntas sake	The king will, for the countess’ sake,
	Bothe thy sones knyghtes make,	Make both your sons knights,
	The blythere thou may be.	To make you all the happier.
	Thy fayre wyff with thee thou bryng —	Bring your fair wife with you,
	And ther be ryght no lettyng —	And let there be no delay,
	That syghte that sche may see.”	So that she may see that sight.”
	Thenne sayde that eerl with herte mylde,	Then the earl said with a tender heart,
	“My wyff goth ryght gret with chylde,	“My wife is very much with child,
	And forthynkes me,	And so I regret that
220	Sche may nought out of chaumbyr wyn,	She cannot go from her chamber
	To speke with non ende of here kyn	To speak with anyone of her kin
	Tyl sche delyveryd be.”	Until she has given birth.”
	But into chaumbyr they gunne wende,	But they made their way to the chamber
	To rede the lettrys before that hende	To read the letter before that gracious lady
	And tydingys tolde here soone.	And soon told her the news.
	Thanne sayde the cuntasse, “So moot I the,	Then the countess said, “As I live and breathe,
	I wil nought lette tyl I there be,	I will not rest until I am there
	Tomorwen or it be noone.	Tomorrow, before it is noon.
	To see hem knyghtes, my sones fre,	To see my noble sons knighted,
230	I wole nought lette tyl I there be;	I will not delay until I am there.
	I schal no lengere dwelle.	I will not linger any longer.
	Cryst foryelde my lord the kyng,	May Christ reward my lord the king
	That has grauntyd hem here dubbyng.	Who has granted them their dubbing!
	Myn herte is gladyd welle.”	My heart is very glad.”
	The eerl hys men bad make hem yare;	The earl had his men ready themselves.

	He and hys wyff forth gunne they fare,	He and his wife set out,
	To London faste they wente.	Traveling quickly to London.
	At Westemynstyr was the kyngys wone;	The king's home was at Westminster.
	There they mette with Athelstone,	There they met with Athelstone,
240	That afftyr hem hadde sente.	Who had sent for them.
	The goode eerl soone was hent	The good earl was at once seized
	And feteryd faste, verrayment,	And chained fast, in truth,
	And hys sones twoo.	And his two sons as well.
	Ful lowde the countasse gan to crye,	The countess began to cry loudly,
	And sayde, "Goode brothir, mercy!	And said, "Good brother, have mercy!
	Why wole ye us sloo?	Why do you want to execute us?
	What have we ayens yow done,	What have we done against you,
	That ye wole have us ded so soone?	That you will have us dead so soon?
	Me thynkith ye arn ourn foo."	I feel like I am your enemy!"
250	The kyng as wood ferde in that stede;	The king behaved at that moment like a madman.
	He garte hys sustyr to presoun lede —	He ordered his sister sent to prison;
	In herte he was ful woo.	He was distressed at heart.
	Thenne a squyer, was the countasses frende,	Then a squire who was the countess' friend
	To the qwene he gan wende,	Made his way to the queen
	And tydyngys tolde here soone.	And soon gave her the news.
	Gerlondes of chyryes off sche caste,	She threw off her garlands of cherries,[8]
	Into the halle sche come at the laste,	Finally coming into the hall,
	Longe or it were noone.	Well before it was noon.
	"Sere kyng, I am before thee come	"Sire king, I have come before you
260	With a child, doughtyr or a sone.	With a child, a daughter or a son.
	Graunte me my bone,	Grant me my plea, that I might
	My brothir and sustyr that I may borwe	Act as guarantor to my brother and sister
	Tyl the nexte day at morwe,	Until tomorrow morning when they
	Out of here paynys stronge;	Can be released from their strong pains,
	That we mowe wete by comoun sent	So that we may decide this by common assent
	In the playne parlement."	In the open parliament."[9]

[8] *Gerlondes of chyryes off sche caste*: A mysterious line, perhaps only meaning that the queen is snacking on cherries to emphasize her innocence of what is happening. Wright notes that cherries were very popular in medieval England (TEAMS). T. Wright and J. O. Halliwell, *Reliquiae Antiquae*, Vol. 2 (London: J. R. Smith, 1845), 85-103.

	"Dame," he saide, "goo fro me!	"My lady," he replied, "get away from me!
	Thy bone shall nought igraunted be,	Your request will not be granted,
	I doo thee to undyrstande.	I will have you understand!
270	For, be Hym that weres the corowne of thorn,	For, by Him who wore the crown of thorns,
	They schole be drawen and hangyd tomorn,	They will be drawn and hanged tomorrow,
	Yyff I be kyng of lande!"	If I am the king of this land!"
	And whenne the qwene these wurdes herde,	And when the queen heard these words,
	As sche hadde be beten with yerde,	She let the tears fall down
	The teeres sche leet doun falle.	As if she had been beaten with a stick.
	Sertaynly, as I yow telle,	For certain, as I tell you,
	On here bare knees doun she felle,	She fell down on her bare knees
	And prayde yit for hem alle.	And begged for them all.
	"A, dame," he sayde, "verrayment	"Well, madam," he said, "Truly you have
280	Hast thou broke my comaundement	Defied my commandments!
	Abyyd ful dere thou schalle."	You will pay for it dearly."
	With hys foot — he wolde nought wonde —	With his foot—he would not hold back—
	He slowgh the chyld ryght in here wombe;	He killed the child right in her womb.[10]
	She swownyd amonges hem alle.	She fainted before them all.
	Ladyys and maydenys that there were,	The ladies and maidens who were there
	The qwene to here chaumbyr bere,	Bore the queen to her chamber,
	And there was dool inowgh.	And there was commotion enough.
	Soone withinne a lytyl spase	Soon, within a short time
	A knave-chyld iborn ther wase,	A baby boy was delivered,
290	As bryght as blosme on bowgh.	As bright as a blossom on the bough.
	He was bothe whyt and red;	He was both white and red;[11]

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[9] As with *Amis and Amiloun*, the queen asks if she can be a guarantor to her brother and sister so that they can be freed. The queen, who is also heavily pregnant, is evidently worried about her sister's condition in prison, making the king's response even more callous.

[10] *He slowgh the chyld ryght in here wombe*: TEAMS notes a little dryly that "many critics have commented on the cruelty in this passage." Although the poet's tone clearly disapproves strongly, Rowe notes that this act would not have been seen as a crime in the time period. Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, "The Female Body Politic and the Miscarriage of Justice in *Athelston*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 17 (1995), 87. Alternatively, Loomis states that ballad-form stories still conventionally retained scenes of violence that were no longer usual in romance. Laura A. Hibbard Loomis, "Athelston, a Westminster Legend," *PMLA* 36:2 (1921): 232.

	Of that dynt was he ded —	From that blow he was dead.
	His owne fadyr hym slowgh!	His own father had killed him!
	Thus may a traytour baret rayse	Thus may a traitor raise havoc
	And make manye men ful evele at ayse,	And make many men ill at ease.
	Hymselff nought afftyr it lowgh.	He would have nothing to laugh about later!
	But yit the qwene, as ye schole here,	But still the queen, as you will hear,
	Sche callyd upon a messangere,	Called for a messenger,[12]
	Bad hym a lettre fonge.	Asking him to deliver a letter,
300	And bad hym wende to Cauntyrbery,	And had him go to Canterbury,
	There the clerkys syngen mery	Where the priests sing merrily,
	Bothe masse and evensonge.	Both for mass and evensong.
	"This lettre thou the bysschop take,	"Take this letter to the bishop,
	And praye hym for Goddys sake,	And petition him for God's sake,
	Come borewe hem out off here bande.	To come rescue them out of their bonds.
	He wole doo more for hym, I wene,	He will do more for his brother, I think,
	Thanne for me, though I be qwene —	Than for me, even though I am queen,
	I doo thee to undyrstande.	I will have you understand
	An eerldom in Spayne I have of land;	That I have as land an earldom in Spain;
310	Al I sese into thyn hand,	I give it all into your hand,
	Trewely, as I thee hyght,	Truly, as I promise you,
	And hundryd besauntys of gold red.	And a hundred coins of red gold.
	Thou may save hem from the ded,	You may save them from death
	Yyff that thyn hors be wyght."	If your horse is valiant."
	"Madame, brouke weel thy moregeve,	"Madam, enjoy your wedding gifts yourself,
	Also longe as thou may leve.	As long as you may live.
	Therto have I no ryght.	I have no right to it,
	But of thy gold and of thy fee,	To your gold or to your property.
	Cryst in hevene foryelde it thee;	Christ in Heaven has given it to you.

[11] *Whyt and red*: This is not a macabre description of the stillborn boy's bruises but the colors of aristocratic breeding, used approvingly by romance poets. French & Hale argue that the "brown and black" of *Amis & Amiloun* and of *Havelock* alternatively suggest the common people, although the idiom is disputed (TEAMS). Walter Hoyt French and Charles Brockway Hale, ed., *Middle English Metrical Romances* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1930).

[12] *A messangere*: The poet uses the indefinite article *a*, but this is evidently the same Athelston (not the king) who rides to Stone to fetch Egelond and his wife. The messenger complains that he has ridden thirty miles (321). London to Stone near Faversham is forty-six miles, but to Stone near Dartford is fifteen—a return journey? For further discussion see Dickerson, 115-16.

320	I wole be there tonyght.	I will be there tonight.
	Madame, thrytty myles of hard way	Madam, I have ridden thirty miles
	I have reden syth it was day.	Of rough road since it was sundown.
	Ful sore I gan me swynke;	I have done hard work.
	And for to ryde now fyve and twenti thertoo	And to ride now another twenty-five
	An hard thyng it were to doo,	Would be a difficult thing to do,
	Forsothe, ryght as me thynke.	In truth, so far as I can see.
	Madame, it is nerhande passyd prime,	My lady, it is nearly six in the morning,[13]
	And me behoves al for to dyne,	And it is right for me to eat,
	Bothe wyn and ale to drynke.	And to drink both wine and ale.
330	Whenne I have dynyd, thenne wole I fare.	When I have eaten, then I will set out.
	God may covere hem of here care,	May God relieve them from their cares
	Or that I slepe a wynke."	Before I sleep a wink."
	Whenne he hadde dynyd, he wente his way,	When he had finished, he went his way,
	Also faste as that he may,	As fast as he could.
	He rod be Charynge-cross	He rode by Charing Cross
	And entryd into Flete-strete	And entered into Fleet Street
	And sithen thorwgh Londone, I yow hete,	And then through London, I assure you,
	Upon a noble hors.	Upon a splendid horse.
	The messanger, that noble man,	The messenger, that noble man,
340	On Loundone-brygge sone he wan —	Soon reached London Bridge.
	For his travayle he hadde no los —	For his labors he had no praise.[14]
	From Stone into Steppyngebourne,	From Stone into Sittingbourne,
	Forsothe, his way nolde he nought tourne;	In truth, he did not alter his course.
	Sparyd he nought for myre ne mos.	He did not stop for mud or bog.
	And thus hys way wendes he	And in this way he traveled
	Fro Osprynge to the Blee.	From Ospringe to the Blean forest.
	Thenne myghte he see the toun	Then he could see the town

[13] *Prime* is about 6 AM, according to the monastic prayer divisions of the day: matins, prime, terce, sext, nones, vespers, and compline. Medieval time was much less clock-bound and was often reckoned by the canonical hours or by movements of the tides (such as *undertide*). *Nona hora*, the ninth hour of the day, was originally 3 PM, only shifting to 12 and becoming modern *noon* in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. *Bevis of Hampton* seems to have the modern meaning when the barons believe that Miles has slept through mid-morning until noon (3237).

[14] *He hadde no los*: Some commentators read this as 'loss,' as in "he lost no time." I agree with TEAMS that the sense is that the poet is extolling the the unsung messengers throughout the story, describing their labors in detail and complaining that it is thankless work, without *los*, praise.

	Of Cauntyrbery, that noble wyke,	Of Canterbury, that noble work,
	Therin lay that bysschop ryke,	Where that powerful bishop lived,
350	That lord of gret renoun.	That lord of great renown.
	And whenne they runggen undernbelle,	When they had rung the morning bell,
	He rod in Londone, as I yow telle:	He was still riding in London, I tell you.
	He was non er redy;	He was not ready earlier.
	And yit to Cauntyrbery he wan,	And yet he reached Canterbury
	Longe or evensong began;	Long before the six o'clock songs;
	He rod mylys fyffty.	He rode fifty miles.
	The messanger nothing abod;	The messenger did not linger.
	Into the palays forth he rod,	He rode forth into the palace
	There that the bysschop was inne.	Where the bishop was inside.
360	Ryght welcome was the messanger,	There was a warm welcome for the messenger,
	That was come from the qwene so cleer,	Who had come from the radiant queen,
	Was of so noble kynne.	Who was of such a regal family.
	He took hym a lettre ful good speed	He gave him a letter with urgency
	And saide, "Sere bysschop, have this and reed,"	And said, "Sir Bishop, take this and read,"
	And bad hym come with hym.	And asked that he come with him.
	Or he the lettre hadde halff iredde,	Before he had read half the letter,
	For dool, hym thoughte hys herte bledde;	He thought his heart had been pierced for sorrow.
	The teeres fyl ovyr hys chyn.	The tears fell from his chin.
	The bysschop bad sadele hys palfray:	The bishop ordered his palfrey saddled.
370	"Also faste as thay may,	"As fast as they can,
	Bydde my men make hem yare;	Have my men make themselves ready.
	And wendes before," the bysschop dede say,	And go on ahead," the bishop stressed,
	"To my maneres in the way;	"To my manors along the way.
	For nothyng that ye spare,	Spare no difficulty.
	And loke at ylke fyve mylys ende	And see that at every five miles' space
	A fresch hors that I fynde,	I will find a fresh horse,
	Schod and nothing bare;	Shod and never barehooved.
	Blythe schal I nevere be,	I will never be at peace
	Tyl I my weddyd brother see,	Until I see my blood brother,
380	To kevere hym out of care."	To deliver him from trouble."

	On nyne palfrays the bysschop sprong,	The bishop rode nine palfreys
	Ar it was day, from evensong —	Before it was day, from evensong,[15]
	In romaunce as we rede.	In the romance as we read.
	Sertaynly, as I yow telle,	For certain, as I tell you,
	On Londone-brygge ded doun felle	The messenger's horse fell down dead
	The messangeres stede.	On London Bridge.
	"Allas," he sayde, "that I was born!	"Alas!" he cried, "that I was ever born!
	Now is my goode hors forlorn,	Now I have lost my good horse,
	Was good at ylke a nede;	Who was ready in every need!
390	Yistyrday upon the grounde,	Yesterday on the ground
	He was wurth an hundryd pounde,	He was worth a hundred pounds,
	Ony kyng to lede."	Fit for any king to ride!"
	Thenne bespak the erchebysschop.	Then the archbishop,
	Oure gostly fadyr undyr God,	Our spiritual father under God,
	Unto the messangere:	Spoke to the messenger.
	"Lat be thy menyng of thy stede,	"Let go your moaning for your horse,
	And thynk upon oure mykyl nede,	And concentrate on our great need,
	The whylys that we ben here;	The reason that we are here.
	For yiff that I may my brother borwe	For if I can rescue my brother
400	And bryngen hym out off mekyl sorwe,	And bring him out of his great sorrow,
	Thou may make glad chere;	You will be of good cheer.
	And thy warysoun I schal thee geve,	And I will reward you with an income,
	And God have grauntyd thee to leve	Even if God grants you to live
	Unto an hundryd yere."	For a hundred years."
	The bysschop thenne nought ne bod:	The bishop did not stay any longer.
	He took hys hors, and forth he rod	He took his horse, and rode
	Into Westemynstyr so lyght;	Into the morning sun of Westminster,
	The messanger on his foot alsoo:	With the messenger on foot as well.
	With the bysschop come no moo,	No more came with the bishop,
410	Nether squyer ne knyght.	Neither squire nor knight.
	Upon the morwen the kyng aros,	In the morning the king arose
	And takes the way, to the kyrke he gos,	And made his way to the chapel,
	As man of mekyl myght.	As a man of great authority.

[15] *Evensong*: Early evening and the sixth of the seven canonical hours, also known as vespers. The poem betrays a rather working-class concern with time.

	With hym wente bothe preest and clerk,	With him went both priest and cleric,
	That mykyl cowde of Goddys werk,	Who knew much about God's work,
	To praye God for the ryght.	To pray to God for the right direction.
	Whenne that he to the kyrke com;	When he arrived in the chapel,
	Tofore the Rode he knelyd anon,	He kneeled at once before the Cross
	And on hys knees he felle:	And fell on his knees.
420	"God, that syt in Trynyté	"God, who sits in Trinity,
	A bone that thou graunte me,	Grant me a plea, Lord,
	Lord, as Thou harewyd helle —	Just as you conquered Hell.
	Gyltless men yiff thay be,	If they are guiltless men
	That are in my presoun free,	Who are in my strong prison,
	Forcursyd there to yelle,	Condemned there to yell,
	Of the gylt and thay be clene,	If they are innocent of their guilt,
	Leve it moot on hem be sene,	Grant that it may be seen by them
	That garte hem there to dwelle."	Who caused them to be there."
	And whenne he hadde maad his prayer,	And when he had made his prayer,
430	He lokyd up into the qweer;	He looked up into the choir loft
	The erchebysschop sawgh he stande.	And saw the archbishop standing.
	He was forwondryd of that caas,	He was astonished by the sight
	And to hym he wente apas,	And went to him quickly,
	And took hym be the hande.	And took him by the hand.
	"Welcome," he sayde, "thou erchebysschop,	"Welcome," he said, "Archbishop,
	Oure gostly fadyr undyr God."	Our saintly father under God."
	He swoor be God levande,	The archbishop swore by the living God,
	"Weddyd brother, weel moot thou spede,	"My sworn brother, may you prosper long,
	For I hadde nevere so mekyl nede,	For I never had such an urgent need
440	Sith I took cros on hande.	Since I took the cross in my hand.
	Goode weddyd brother, now turne thy rede;	Good brother, now change your mind.
	Doo nought thyn owne blood to dede	Do not put your own blood to death
	But yiff it wurthy were.	Unless it were justified.
	For Hym that weres the corowne of thorn,	For Him that wore the crown of thorns,
	Lat me borwe hem tyl tomorn,	Let me be surety for them until tomorrow,
	That we mowe enquere,	So that we may have an inquiry
	And weten alle be comoun asent	And decide by common assent
	In the playne parlement	In the full parliament
	Who is wurthy be schent.	Who is worthy to be punished.
450	And, but yiff ye wole graunte my bone,	And if you will not grant my plea,

	It schal us rewe bothe or none,	We will both regret it before noon,
	Be God that alle thyng lent.”	By God, who gave all things.”
	Thanne the kyng wax wrothe as wynde,	Then the king grew as furious as the winds.
	A wodere man myghte no man fynde	No one might find a man more enraged
	Than he began to bee:	Than he became.
	He swoor othis be sunne and mone:	He swore oaths by the sun and moon:
	“They scholen be drawen and hongyd or none —	“They will be hanged and drawn before noon!
	With eyen thou schalt see!	You will see it with your own eyes.
	Lay doun thy cros and thy staff,	Lay down your cross and your staff,
460	Thy mytyr and thy ryng that I thee gaff;	Your miter and your ring that I gave you.
	Out of my land thou flee!	Flee out of my land!
	Hyghe thee faste out of my syght!	Get yourself quickly out of my sight!
	Wher I thee mete, thy deth is dyght;	Wherever I meet you, your death is decided.
	Non othir then schal it bee!”	It will not be any other way!”
	Thenne bespak that erchebysschop,	Then the archbishop,
	Oure gostly fadyr undyr God,	Our devout father under God,
	Smertly to the kyng:	Spoke sharply to the king:
	“Weel I wot that thou me gaff	“I know very well that you gave me
	Bothe the cros and the staff,	Both the cross and the staff,
470	The mytyr and eke the ryng;	The miter and the ring as well.
	My bysschopryche thou reves me,	You rob me of my bishop’s office,
	And Crystyndom forbede I thee!	And in turn I excommunicate you!
	Preest schal ther non syngge;	No priest shall sing.
	Neyther maydynchyld ne knave	No one shall have church or sacrament,
	Crystyndom schal ther non have;	Neither maiden-child nor boy.
	To care I schal thee brynge.	I will bring you to grief!
	I schal gare crye thorwgh ylke a toun	I will go proclaiming through each town
	That kyrkys schole be broken doun	That churches shall be broken down
	And stoken agayn with thorn.	And struck at with thorns.
480	And thou shalt lygge in an old dyke,	And your body will lie in an old ditch,
	As it were an heretyke,	As if you were a heretic.[16]
	Allas that thou were born!	Alas that you were born!

[16] *As it were an heretyke*: This is a very serious matter. The archbishop is not only excommunicating the king and his realm but denying him a Christian burial, which was also refused to heretics, criminals, and suicides. King John was forced to submit to Innocent III in 1213 after interdiction had threatened his rule.

	Yiff thou be ded, that I may see,	If you are dead, I will see to it
	Assoylyd schalt thou nevere bee;	That you will never be absolved.
	Thanne is thy soule in sorwe.	Then your soul will be in torment.
	And I schal wende in uncouthe lond,	And I will travel to faraway lands
	And gete me stronge men of hond;	And gather strong men of might.
	My brothir yit schal I borwe.	I will save my brother yet.
	I schal brynge upon thy lond	I will bring upon your land
490	Hungyr and thyrst ful strong,	Fierce hunger and thirst,
	Cold, drougthe, and sorwe;	Cold, drought, and misery.
	I schal nought leve on thy lond	I will leave nothing on your land
	Wurth the gloves on thy hond	Worth the gloves on your hand,
	To begge ne to borwe."	To beg or to borrow."
	The bysschop has his leve tan.	The bishop took his leave.
	By that his men were comen ylkan:	By then all of his men had arrived.
	They sayden, "Sere, have good day."	They said, "Sire, good day."
	He entryd into Flete-strete;	He entered into Fleet Street;
	With lordys of Yngelond gan he mete	He proceeded to meet with the lords of England
500	Upon a noble aray.	In a noble array.
	On here knees they kneleden adoun,	They stooped down on their knees
	And prayden hym of hys benysoun,	And beseeched him for his blessing.
	He nykkyd hem with nay.	He refused them with 'no.'
	Neyther of cros neyther of ryng	They had no idea at all where
	Hadde they non kyns wetyng;	Either his cross or his ring were.
	And thanne a knyght gan say.	And then a knight spoke up.
	A knyght thanne spak with mylde voys:	The knight said in a low voice,
	"Sere, where is thy ryng? Where is thy croys?	"Sir, where is your ring? Where is your cross?
	Is it fro thee tan?"	Have they been taken from you?"
510	Thanne he sayde, "Youre cursyd kyng	The bishop replied, "Your accursed king
	Hath me refft of al my thyng,	Has left me without all of my things
	And of al my worldly wan;	And all of my worldly goods,
	And I have entyrdytyd Yngelond:	And I have excommunicated England.
	Ther schal no preest synge Masse with hond,	There will be no priests singing mass with hands
	Chyld schal be crystenyd non,	And no child will be christened,
	But yiff he graunte me that knyght,	Unless he releases to me that knight,
	His wyff and chyldryn fayr and bryght:	And his wife and children, fair and innocent.
	He wolde with wrong hem slon."	He wrongly wishes to slay them."
	The knyght sayde, "Bysschop, turne agayn;	The knight answered, "Bishop, change your mind!

520	Of thy body we are ful fayn;	We are very glad of your presence.
	Thy brothir yit schole we borwe.	We will secure your brother yet.
	And, but he graunte us oure bone,	And unless he grants us our demand,
	Hys presoun schal be broken soone,	His prison will soon be broken into,
	Hymselff to mekyl sorwe.	And himself driven to great sorrow.
	We schole drawe doun both halle and boures,	We will pull down both halls and rooms,
	Bothe hys castelles and hys toures,	Both his castles and his towers.
	They schole lygge lowe and holewe.	They will lay low and razed.
	Though he be kyng and were the corown,	Even if he is king and wears a crown,
	We scholen hym sette in a deep dunjoun:	We will throw him in a deep dungeon.
530	Oure Crystyndom we wole folewe."	We will follow our Christian faith."
	Thanne, as they spoken of this thyng,	Then, as they spoke about this matter
	Ther comen twoo knyghtes from the kyng,	Two knights came from the king
	And sayden, "Bysschop, abyde,	And said, "Bishop, please wait,
	And have thy cros and thy ryng,	And have your cross and your ring,
	And welcome whyl that thou wylt lyng,	And be welcome while you wish to stay.
	It is nought for to hyde.	There is no need to hide.
	Here he grauntys thee the knyght,	The king grants you here the knight
	Hys wyff and chyldryn fayr and bryght;	And his wife and children, fair and innocent.
	Again I rede thou ryde.	Again I advise you to come back.
540	He prayes thee pur charyté	He petitions you for charity's sake
	That he myghte asoylyd be,	That he might be forgiven,
	And Yngelond long and wyde."	Along with England near and far."
	Hereof the bysschop was ful fayn,	For this the bishop was gladdened
	And turnys hys brydyl and wendes agayn —	And turned his bridle and went back,
	Barouns gunne with hym ryde —	With the barons riding alongside him,
	Unto the Brokene-cros of ston;	To the Chester Cross of stone.[17]
	Thedyr com the kyng ful soone anon,	The king came there immediately after
	And there he gan abyde.	And there he waited.
	Upon hys knees he knelyd adoun,	He kneeled down upon his knees

[17] *The Broken-cros of stone*: Zupitza identifies this as the Chester Cross in the Strand in Westminster, near present-day Charing Cross. Among other functions, the cross marked the limits of Westminster. J. Zupitza, "Die Romanze von Athelston," *Englische Studien* 13 (1883): 331-414. Trounce (123) and other scholars believe the line refers to the Broken Cross near St. Paul's Cathedral, which existed by 1379 and until 1390, supplying a possible dating for the poem. See also the discussion in Rowe, 94.

550	And prayde the bysschop of benysoun,	And implored the bishop for his blessing.
	And he gaff hym that tyde.	This time he gave it to him
	With holy watyr and orysoun,	With holy water and prayer.
	He asoylyd the kyng that weryd the coroun,	He absolved the king who wore the crown,
	And Yngelond long and wyde.	And England far and wide.
	Than sayde the kyng anon ryght:	Then the king at once said,
	"Here I graunte thee that knyght,	"Here I grant you that knight,
	And hys sones free,	And his noble sons,
	And my sustyr hende in halle.	And my sister, so gracious in the hall.
	Thou hast savyd here lyvys alle:	You have saved all of their lives.
560	Iblessyd moot thou bee."	May you be blessed."
	Thenne sayde the bysschop also soone:	The bishop replied just as promptly,
	"And I schal geven swylke a dome —	"And I will render such a judgment
	With eyen that thou schalt see!	That you will see it with your eyes.
	Yiff thay be gylty off that dede,	If they are guilty of that deed,
	Sorrere the doome thay may drede,	They will dread an even sorrier doom.
	Thanne schewe here schame to me."	Present their crimes to me."[18]
	Whanne the bysschop hadde sayd soo,	When the bishop had spoken so,
	A gret fyr was maad ryght thoo,	At once a great fire was made,
	In romaunce as we rede —	In the romance as we read it.
570	It was set, that men myghte knawe,	It was raised, as men might know,
	Nyne plowgh-lengthe on rawe,	As long as nine plow lengths in a row,
	As red as ony glede.	As red as any glowing coal.
	Thanne sayde the kyng: "What may this mene?"	Then the king said, "What is this for?"
	"Sere, of gylt and thay be clene,	"Sire, if they are innocent of guilt,
	This doom hem thar nought drede."	They need not fear this ordeal."
	Thanne sayde the good Kyng Athelstone:	Then the good king Athelstone said,
	"An hard doome now is this on:	"This judgment is a hard one.
	God graunte us alle weel to spede."	God grant that we all fare well."

[18] The bishop is invoking trial by ordeal, a legal process by which innocence or guilt would be determined by healing from (or surviving) a painful or dangerous test. Priests were forbidden to participate by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) but trial by ordeal took centuries to be fully replaced by the modern trial system. American economist Peter Leeson asserts that what appears to be a highly questionable legal method could actually be psychologically effective, as innocent parties tended to consent to ordeal, expecting divine protection, and the guilty would confess, fearing mortal punishment. Peter T. Leeson, "Ordeals," accessed 21 May 2010 at http://www.peterleeson.com/Ordeals.pdf.

580	They fetten forth Sere Egelan —	They brought forth Sir Egelond—
	A trewere eerl was ther nan —	There was no truer earl—
	Before the fyr so bryght.	Before the fire so bright.
	From hym they token the rede scarlet,	From him they took the red scarlet,
	Bothe hosyn and schoon that weren hym met,	Both the hose and shoes fitting for him
	That fel al for a knyght.	Which were permitted for a knight.
	Nyne sythe the bysschop halewid the way	The bishop sanctified the path nine times
	That his weddyd brother scholde goo that day,	That his brother would go that day,
	To praye God for the ryght.	To beseech God for justice.
	He was unblemeschyd foot and hand;	He was unharmed in hand and foot.
590	That sawgh the lordes of the land,	This was seen by the lords of the land,
	And thankyd God of Hys myght.	Who thanked God for His might.
	They offeryd him with mylde chere	They offered him with gentle hands
	Unto Saint Powlys heyghe awtere,	Unto Saint Paul's high altar,
	That mekyl was of myght.	Which was of great authority.
	Doun upon hys knees he felle,	He fell down on his knees
	And thankyd God that harewede helle	And thanked God, who conquered Hell,
	And Hys modyr so bryght.	And His mother so fair.
	And yit the bysschop tho gan say:	But still the bishop continued on,
	"Now schal the chyldryn gon the way	"Now the children shall go the way[19]
600	That the fadyr yede."	That the father went."
	Fro hem they tooke the rede scarlete,	From them they took the red scarlet,
	The hosen and schoon that weren hem mete,	And the hose and shoes fit for them,
	And al here worldly wede.	And all their worldly clothes.
	The fyr was bothe hydous and rede,	The fire was both hideous and red,
	The chyldryn swownyd as they were ded;	And the children fainted as if they were dead.
	The bysschop tyl hem yede;	The bishop went to them
	With careful herte on hem gan look;	And looked on them with attentive heart.
	Be hys hand he hem up took:	He took them up by his hand and said,

[19] Why do the children and the countess need to undergo the ordeal? The three tests form a narrative triplet, but Bellamy also argues that in Anglo-Saxon law "the crime of treason was so horrible that the traitor's offspring were contaminated by his misdeed and ought to be destroyed with him." The bishop evidently wishes to clear the entire family from any such stain and believes the children will be unharmed. J. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1970), 4, quoted in Treharne, 15. The punishment of family members also serves as a chilling disincentive to treason and is still done in absolutist regimes such as North Korea.

	"Chyldryn, have ye no drede."	"Children, have no fear."
610	Thanne the chyldryn stood and lowgh:	Then the children stood and laughed,
	"Sere, the fyr is cold inowgh."	"Sir, the fire is cold enough!"
	Thorwghout they wente apase.	They passed through it quickly
	They weren unblemeschyd foot and hand:	And were unharmed in hand and foot.
	That sawgh the lordys of the land,	That was seen by the lords of the land,
	And thankyd God of His grace.	Who thanked God for His grace.
	They offeryd hem with mylde chere	They offered them with kind hands
	To Seynt Poulys hyghe awtere	To Saint Paul's high altar
	This myracle schewyd was there.	Where this miracle was displayed.
	And yit the bysschop efft gan say:	And yet the bishop again continued,
620	"Now schal the countasse goo the way	"Now the countess will go the way
	There that the chyldryn were."	That the children went there."
	They fetten forth the lady mylde;	They brought forth the gentle lady.
	Sche was ful gret igon with chylde	She was very much with child,
	In romaunce as we rede —	As we read in the romance.
	Before the fyr whan that sche come,	When she came before the fire,
	To Jesu Cryst he prayde a bone,	She prayed a plea to Jesus Christ,
	That leet His woundys blede:	Who let His wounds bleed:
	"Now, God lat nevere the kyngys foo	"Now, may God never let the king's enemy
	Quyk out of the fyr goo."	Walk out of the fire alive."
630	Therof hadde sche no drede.	Because of that she had no dread.
	Whenne sche hadde maad here prayer,	When she had made her prayer,
	Sche was brought before the feer,	She was brought before the fire,
	That brennyd bothe fayr and lyght.	Which burned both strong and bright.
	Sche wente fro the lengthe into the thrydde;	She went from the start into the third part.[20]
	Stylle sche stood the fyr amydde,	She stood still in the middle of the fire
	And callyd it merye and bryght.	And called it merry and bright.
	Hard schourys thenne took here stronge	Then she was taken by the pains of labor,
	Bothe in bak and eke in wombe;	Both in her back as well as in womb,

[20] *Into the thrydde*: Trounce posits that the countess walks over the third of nine burning plowhares, explaining why the bishop sanctifies the path nine times (586). A. Mcintyre Trounce, ed., *Athelston: A Middle English Romance*, Early English Text Society O.S. 224 (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 17. The scene would also remind the audience of the popular legend of Emma (c. 985-1052), mother of Edward the Confessor, who also walks across nine plowshares to vindicate herself from false charges of adultery.

	And sithen it fell at syght.	Which came to everyone's notice.[21]
640	Whenne that here paynys slakyd was,	When her pains had lessened,
	And sche hadde passyd that hydous pas,	And she had passed that hideous stage,
	Here nose barst on bloode.	Her nose began to bleed.
	Sche was unblemeschyd foot and hand:	She was unharmed in hand and foot.
	That sawgh the lordys of the land,	That was seen by the lords of the land,
	And thankyd God on Rode.	Who thanked God on the Cross.
	They comaundyd men here away to drawe,	They ordered men to move away
	As it was the landys lawe;	As it was the custom of the land,
	And ladyys thanne tyl here yode.	And then ladies went to her.
	She knelyd doun upon the ground	She kneeled down on the ground
650	And there was born Seynt Edemound:	And there was born Saint Edmund.[22]
	Iblessed be that foode!	Blessed be that child!
	And whanne this chyld iborn was,	And when the boy was born,
	It was brought into the plas;	It was brought into the open.
	It was bothe hool and sound	It was both whole and sound.
	Bothe the kyng and bysschop free	Both the king and the noble bishop
	They crystnyd the chyld, that men myght see,	Christened the child, so that men might see it,
	And callyd it Edemound.	And named it Edmund.
	"Halff my land," he sayde, "I thee geve,	"Half my land," he said, "I give you,
	Also longe as I may leve,	As long as I may live,
660	With markys and with pounde;	With pennies and with pounds,
	And al afftyr my dede —	And all else after my death,
	Yngelond to wysse and rede."	To guide and rule England.
	Now iblessyd be that stounde!	Now blessed be that moment!"
	Thanne sayde the bysschop to the Kyng:	Then the bishop said to the king,
	"Sere, who made this grete lesyng,	"Sire, who made this great lie,
	And who wroughte al this bale?"	And who brought about all this evil?"

[21] *And sithen it fell at syght*: No one seems to have come up with a clear idea of what this line means. Some suggest a scribal error, that the lady *sighed* in pain. TEAMS posits that "the baby has dropped into the birthing position." I am suggesting simply that 'it' is the onset of labor which the crowd notices. Another possibility is that this is a period euphemism for a woman's water breaking.

[22] Likely this is St. Edmund of East Anglia, king of the East Angles (c. 840-869) and famously martyred by the Vikings. However, the historical Edmund had different parents and was born in Nuremburg. Some of the poem's place names do not exist in the ninth century. Either a different Edmund is meant, or else these are anachronisms which would not have troubled the poet or audience, which did not have Wikipedia.

	Thanne sayde the kyng, “So moot I thee,	The king answered, “So help me God,
	That schalt thou nevere wete for me,	You will never learn that from me,
	In burgh neyther in sale;	Neither in town nor in the hall.
670	For I have sworn be Seynt Anne	For I have sworn by Saint Anne[23]
	That I schal nevere bewreye that manne,	That I will never betray that man
	That me gan telle that tale.	Who told me that tale.
	They arn savyd thorwgh thy red;	They are saved through your counsel;
	Now lat al this be ded,	Now let all this be finished,
	And kepe this counseyl hale.”	And keep such matters private.”
	Thenne swoor the bysschop, “So moot I the,	The bishop then swore, “As I live and breathe,
	Now I have power and dignyté	I have the power and dignity
	For to asoyle thee as clene	To absolve you as clean
	As thou were hoven off the fount-ston.	As if you were lifted from the baptismal font!
680	Trustly trowe thou therupon,	Believe in it truly,
	And holde it for no wene:	And do not think of it as a guess.
	I swere bothe be book and belle,	But I swear both by the book and bell,[24]
	But yiff thou me his name telle,	That unless you tell me his name,
	The ryght doom schal I deme:	I will pronounce justice!
	Thyselff schalt goo the ryghte way	You yourself will walk the same way
	That thy brother wente today,	That your brother went today,
	Though it thee evele beseme.”	Even if it ill suits you.”[25]
	Thenne sayde the kyng, “So moot I the,	Then the king answered, “For better or worse,
	Be schryffte of mouthe telle I it thee;	I will tell you by confession of mouth,
690	Therto I am unblyve.	Though I am reluctant to do it.
	Sertaynly, it is non othir	For sure, it is no other
	But Wymound, oure weddyd brother;	But Wickmond, our sworn brother.
	He wole nevere thryve.”	He will never prosper.”

[23] *Seynt Anne*: Believed to be the mother of the Virgin Mary, and the patron saint of childbirth (TEAMS).

[24] *Book and belle*: Swearing by a book in medieval romance means, of course, the Bible. Here the oath may refer to the Catholic rite of excommunication, where a Bible is closed, bells are rung, and a candle is snuffed. See also *Guy of Warwick*, 735.

[25] There is some speculation on what exactly the king needs absolution for. At worst, he has caused the entire debacle by betraying his brother and has killed his son. At minimum, the bishop is irritated by the king’s flippant speech to let sleeping dogs lie and is offering a face-saving way for him to reveal Wickmond and receive forgiveness for breaking his promise.

	"Allas," sayde the bysschop than,	"Alas," said the bishop in return,
	I wende he were the treweste man,	"I thought he was the truest man
	That evere yit levyd on lyve.	Who has ever yet lived his life.
	And he with this ateynt may bee,	If he is guilty of this,
	He schal be hongyd on trees three,	He will be hanged on three beams
	And drawen with hors fyve."	And dragged with five horses!"
700	And whenne that the bysschop the sothe hade	And when the bishop had discovered the truth
	That that traytour that lesyng made,	That the traitor had made such lies,
	He callyd a messangere,	He called a messenger,
	Bad hym to Dovere that he scholde founde,	Ordering him to hasten to Dover
	For to fette that Eerl Wymounde:	To seize Earl Wickmond.
	(That traytour has no pere!)	That scoundrel had no equal!
	Sey Egelane and hys sones be slawe,	"Tell him Egelond and his sons are dead,
	Bothe ihangyd and to-drawe.	Both hanged and drawn.
	(Doo as I thee lere!)	Do as I direct you!
	The countasse is in presoun done;	The countess is clapped in prison.
710	Schal sche nevere out of presoun come,	She will never come out of jail
	But yiff it be on bere."	Unless it is on a funeral bier."
	Now with the messanger was no badde;	Now there was no delay for the messenger.
	He took his hors, as the bysschop radde,	He rode his horse, as the bishop ordered,
	To Dovere tyl that he come.	Until he had come to Dover.
	The eerl in hys halle he fand:	He found the earl in his hall.
	He took hym the lettre in his hand	He gave him the letter into his hand,
	On hygh, wolde he nought wone:	And swiftly; he did not dally.
	"Sere Egelane and his sones be slawe,	"Sir Egelond and his sons are slain,
	Bothe ihangyd and to-drawe:	Both hanged and drawn.
720	Thou getyst that eerldome.	You have received that earldom.
	The countasse is in presoun done;	The countess is shut into prison.
	Schal sche nevere more out come,	She will never again come out,
	Ne see neyther sunne ne mone."	Nor see either the moon or sun."
	Thanne that eerl made hym glade,	Then the earl was very pleased
	And thankyd God that lesyng was made:	And thanked God that the lie had worked.
	"It hath gete me this eerldome."	"It has gotten me the earldom!"
	He sayde, "Felawe, ryght weel thou bee!	He said, "Fellow, may all be well with you!
	Have here besauntys good plenté	Take a good plenty of coins
	For thyn hedyr-come."	For your travel here."
730	Thanne the messanger made his mon:	Then the messenger made his request:

	"Sere, of youre goode hors lende me on:	"Sire, from your good horses give me one.
	Now graunte me my bone;	Now grant me my reward!
	For yystyrday deyde my nobyl stede,	For yesterday my noble steed died,
	On youre arende as I yede,	On your errand as I went,
	Be the way as I come."	On the way as I came."
	"Myn hors be fatte and cornfed,	"My own horse is fat and corn-fed,
	And of thy lyff I am adred."	And I am anxious for your safety."[26]
	That eerl sayde to him than,	The earl then continued,
	"Thanne yiff min hors sholde thee sloo,	"Then, if my horse should throw you,
740	My lord the kyng wolde be ful woo	My lord the king would be well saddened
	To lese swylk a man."	To lose such a man."
	The messanger yit he broughte a stede,	He brought to the messenger a steed,
	On of the beste at ylke a nede	One of the best in such a need
	That evere on grounde dede gange,	That ever went on the ground,
	Sadelyd and brydelyd at the beste.	Saddled and bridled in the finest way.
	The messanger was ful preste,	The messenger was ready in full,
	Wyghtly on hym he sprange.	And sprang on him nimbly.
	"Sere," he sayde, "have good day;	"Sir," he said, "good day to you.
	Thou schalt come whan thou may;	You may come when you will.
750	I schal make the kyng at hande."	I will make the king aware."
	With sporys faste he strook the stede;	With firm spurs he struck the steed.
	To Gravysende he come good spede,	He reached Gravesend with good speed,
	Is fourty myle to fande.	A journey of forty miles.
	There the messanger the traytour abood,	There the messenger awaited the traitor,
	And sethyn bothe insame they rod	And after they both rode together
	To Westemynstyr wone.	To the town of Westminster.
	In the palays there thay lyght;	They dismounted there in the palace.
	Into the halle they come ful ryght,	They came right away into the hall
	And mette with Athelstone.	And met with Athelstone.
760	He wolde have kyssyd his lord swete.	Wickmond wished to kiss his sweet lord.
	He sayde: "Traytour, nought yit! lete!	The king shouted, "Traitor, not so fast! Stop!
	Be God and be Seynt Jhon!	By God and by Saint John!

[26] These are presumably Wymonde's words, who feels that his own horse is too spoiled for hard riding and might throw the messenger, and thus he gives him a steed. The act is inexplicably kind for Wymonde, although the fat, useless horse may echo his own moral slackness and dissolution.

	For thy falsnesse and thy lesyng	For your falseness and your lying
	I slowgh myn heyr, scholde have ben kyng,	I killed my heir who should have been king
	When my lyf hadde ben gon.”	After my life was finished.”
	There he denyyd faste the kyng,	He strongly denied to the king
	That he made nevere that lesyng,	That he ever made such a deception,
	Among hys peres alle.	In front of all his peers.
	The bysschop has hym be the hand tan;	The bishop seized him by the hand;
770	Forth insame they are gan	They went forth together
	Into the wyde halle.	Into the wide hall.
	Myghte he nevere with crafft ne gynne,	He would never, with any trick or excuse,
	Gare hym shryven of hys synne,	Have himself absolved of his sin,
	For nought that myghte befalle.	For anything that might happen.
	Thenne sayde the goode Kyng Athelstone:	Then the good king Athelstone pronounced,
	“Lat hym to the fyr gon,	“Let him go to the fire
	To preve the trewthe with alle.”	To prove the truth before all.”
	Whenne the kyng hadde sayd soo,	When the king had spoken so,
	A gret fyr was maad thoo,	A great fire was then raised,
780	In romaunce as we rede.	In the romance as we read it.
	It was set, that men myghten knawe,	It was set, as men might know,
	Nyne plowgh-lenge on rawe,	As long as nine plow-lengths in a row,
	As red as ony glede.	As red as any glowing coal.
	Nyne sythis the bysschop halewes the way	The bishop blessed the path nine times
	That that traytour schole goo that day:	Where the traitor would walk that day.
	The wers him gan to spede.	For him his fortunes would turn for the worse.
	He wente fro the lengthe into the thrydde,	He went from the start into the third part,
	And doun he fell the fyr amydde:	And down he fell in the middle of the fire.
	Hys eyen wolde hym nought lede.	His eyes could not guide him.
790	Than the eerlys chyldryn were war ful smerte,	Then the earl’s children were fully aware,
	And wyghtly to the traytour sterte,	And quickly ran to the traitor,
	And out of the fyr him hade;	And pulled him out of the fire.
	And sworen bothe be book and belle:	They swore both by the book and bell,
	“Or that thou deye, thou schalt telle	“Before you die, you will confess
	Why thou that lesyng made.”	Why you told that lie.”
	“Certayn, I can non other red,	“For sure, I have no other course.
	Now I wot I am but ded:	Now I know I am almost dead.
	I telle yow nothyng gladde —	I tell you no good news—
	Certayn, ther was non other wyte:	For certain, there was no other cause:

800	He lovyd him to mekyl and me to lyte;	He loved Egelond too much and me too little,
	Therfore envye I hadde.”	And because of that I had jealousy.”
	Whenne that traytour so hadde sayde,	When the criminal had spoken so,
	Fyve good hors to hym were tayde,	Five strong horses were tied to him,[27]
	Alle men myghten see with yghe —	Which all men could see with their eyes.
	They drowen him thorwgh ylke a strete,	They dragged him through each street
	And sethyn to the Elmes, I yow hete,	And after to the Elms, I assure you,
	And hongyd him ful hyghe.	And hanged him very high.
	Was ther nevere man so hardy,	There was no man so bold
	That durste felle hys false body:	Who dared take down his sinful body.
810	This hadde he for hys lye.	This was what he got for his lies!
	Now Jesu, that is Hevene-kyng,	Now may Jesus, who is Heaven’s king,
	Leve nevere traytour have betere endyng,	Allow no traitor to have a better ending,
	But swych dome for to dye.	But such a sentence to die.
814	*Explicit*	The End.

[27] As in *Amis and Amiloun*, Wickmond’s sentence is to be hanged and drawn, i.e. dragged through unpaved streets behind horses. Here the hanging follows. Bodies might be left hanging for weeks as a public example, and thus the lines that no man dared take him down (808-9).

The Malleable King in *Athelston*

Athelston, like *Amis and Amiloun*, begins with a sworn oath of brotherhood. There the similarities end. Loomis believes that *Athelston* has a ballad-based origin and points to the formulaic preference for threes in the story. She notes the three trials by ordeal of Egelond, his children, and the countess, noting that the first two "appear to prove nothing"[1] besides structurally fulfilling the pattern. Similarly, although *Athelston* may have been thematically influenced by the earlier *Amis and Amiloun*, the latter is a didactic tale of the heroes' progress from a personal and contractual oath to a more spiritually mature Christian brotherhood, whereas *Athelston* concerns itself with "falsnesse, hou it wil ende" (8). The tale is more explicitly about the betrayal of bonds and its tragic consequences rather than about loyalty to them, and it ends not with praise for the heroes but an ominous request that Christ "leve nevere traytour have betere endyng / but swych dome for to dye" (812-3). *Athelston* comprises a rather unorthodox romance, having none of the usual markings of heroic deeds, monsters, Saracens, or a love story. While not as dull as *Sir Thopas*' Popering, the setting is a rather prosaic Westminster.[2]

Yet *Athelston* achieves a considerable sophistication for its brief 814 lines. Wymonde, despite his stock villain's name, has a fairly well-shaded characterization surpassing the usual 'jealous steward' trope. The poet includes such realistic domestic touches as the queen munching cherries (256) and the messenger protesting that he needs to eat breakfast (328). Mehl complains that King Athelston is "completely unreasonable

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[1] Laura A. Hibbard Loomis, "Athelston, a Westminster Legend," *PMLA* 36:2 (1921): 230.

[2] Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 150.

and has the simple credulity of some fairy-tale character."[3] The hero of the story may be Alyric, and critics have asserted that the king and bishop allude to Henry II and Thomas à Becket.[4] The story exalts clergy over royalty generally, and Pound notes that Westminster was one of many monasteries which kept paid minstrels.[5] Yet Wymonde and Alyric are static characters, and Egelond barely figures in the story. While he does not function as the final hero, King Athelston does act as structural protagonist, the first character of the story and the person who undergoes the most change. The poem may be a warning against treason, but it has as its didactic subtheme good kingship generally.[6] Wymonde, the messenger, and Alyric ultimately represent negative, ameliorative, and positive moral examples for the impressionable king.

The poem seemingly leaves little doubt as to what the audience ought to feel about Wymonde, consistently labeling him a traitor and firmly intoning that he deserves his punishment: "this hadde he for hys lye" (810). Nevertheless, the text does allow some subtlety in making Wymonde less than a monster. He has an honest motive in being jealous of Athelston's affections for Egelond and confesses that "he lovyd him to mekyl and me to lyte" (800). Although the poet does not leave much of a fine moral shading in calling him "a devyl of helle" (156), perhaps Wymonde even has a hint of justification in

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[3] Mehl, 148.

[4] For an example see Gordon Hall Gerould, "Social and Historical Reminiscences in the Middle English *Athelston*," *Englische Studien* 36 (1906): 193-208.

[5] Louise Pound, "The English Ballads and the Church," *PMLA* 35:2 (1920): 183. Pound relates an account of a minstrel entertaining at Westminster in 1338 with songs of Colbrand (*Guy of Warwick*) and Queen Emma. In Laura A. Hibbard Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1963), 146. See also Edmund Bolton Thomas Warton, *History of English Poetry* (1774-81) 1840 ed., 81-2.

[6] Elaine M. Treharne, "Romanticizing the Past in the Middle English *Athelston*," *Review of English Studies* 50:197 (1999): 19.

being a sworn-brother who receives not the king's sister nor the archbishopric of Canterbury as reward, but little Dover, geographically and emotionally the farthest from Athelston's court. Upon his arrival for a visit, the king seems more interested in knowing "hou faryth that noble clerk" (100) than about Wymonde's welfare.

Moreover, Wymonde does not compass usurping the king but merely the removal of his competitors. Thus he functions as the king's antagonist solely by essentially threatening to corrupt the king into emulating him. The danger is that the king may become like Wymonde, as he does for a period. Upon being lured by Wymonde's offer of inside information, the king "his hand up raughte" (154) as he enters into a more limited oath of confidence contradicting his wider obligation to his brothers. Upon taking the oath, the king echoes Wymonde's lie by undertaking a lie of his own, promising to Egelond's family "that the kyng the eerlys sones wolde / make hem bothe knyght" (194-5). The poison spreads as the king becomes increasingly inclined to arbitrary violence, at first rejecting the queen's rightful petition for a judicial hearing and then perhaps exemplifying some jealousy over the queen's love for Egelond himself as he kicks her (283), seemingly to batter her into emotional obedience. Her miscarriage also symbolizes the miscarriage of justice being committed.[7] Structurally, Wymonde symbolizes what Athelstone potentially could and nearly does become, making the king's rejection of his proffered kiss (760) additionally poignant.

The messenger also occupies an interesting position. Dickerson argues that he serves as a minor hero in the poem in the same category as earthy, hard-working

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[7] Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, "The Female Body Politic and the Miscarriage of Justice in *Athelston*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 17 (1995): 98, quoted in TEAMS' Introduction to *Athelston*.

protagonists such as Gamelyn and Havelock.[8] In displaying the middle-class virtues of self-reliance and strength, the messenger earns considerable respect and attention from the poet, who lavishes some thirty lines on his horse journey to the bishop, ending with the encomium that "for his travayle he hadde no los" ("for all his efforts he got no praise," 341). Dickerson then asserts that the poetic decision to name the messenger Athelston as well was not random but significant in that he represents "the alter ego of the arrogant King Athelston, who was once a messenger."[9] Whereas King Athelston purely serves his own interests, the messenger serves others: the king, the queen, and the bishop in turn. Crane believes that the messenger "displays an amoral readiness to transmit false as well as true messages,"[10] but in relaying the ruse that Egelond is dead he obeys the explicit orders of the bishop, who warns "doo as I thee lere!" (708). The poet does not censure him for presumably fulfilling his duties.

As an occupation, the medieval messenger pursued a trade acceptable to both gentry and commoner,[11] as demonstrated by the king's youthful employment. The messenger is called noble by the poet twice (199, 339) even though he was a foundling (186). Treharne asserts that the fictional Athelston was modeled on the historical King Athelstan (c. 894-939), whom contemporary chroniclers claimed to be illegitimate.[12] The

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[8] A. Inskip Dickerson, "The Subplot of the Messenger in *Athelston*," *Papers on Language & Literature* 12 (1976): 121.

[9] Dickerson, 124.

[10] Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 72.

[11] Dickerson, 117.

[12] Treharne (14) cites William of Malmesbury's *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*. I follow her lead in calling the historical king Athelstan and the fictional king Athelston.

poet more likely includes this odd detail to emphasize that the messenger is not noble but demonstrates the sort of natural *gentilesse* the Wife of Bath praises. The messenger has a sort of selfless ethic of duty that has died in the king, accompanying Alyric back to Westminster even though his job is technically complete.[13] His grousing about his horse and his insistence on breakfast are comic but also call attention to his normal limitations as a human being. Yet chiefly he serves to show what the king has lost both by his example and by literally and symbolically bringing the bishop back to him.

As the king prays in a moment of hesitation over his actions, "he lokyd up into the qweer / the erchebysschop sawgh he stande" (430-1). The vision of the archbishop shining from on high is not terribly subtle but effectively denotes a narrative shift toward the king's redemption through Alyric's holy offices. The poet then intensifies Athelston's moral dissolution into proud absolutism in order to accentuate Alyric's virtue. The bishop first appeals to their shared brotherhood pledge: "goode weddyd brother, now turne thy rede / doo nought thyn owne blood to dede" (441-2), only resorting to righteous anger when the king wrathfully compounds the injustice of his summary execution of Egelond by promising the same to the bishop for merely petitioning him (462-3), both an extrajudicial act of royal violence and an outright breach of the vows agreed on by the four brothers long before.

The blood-brotherhood oaths of the four men has a community aspect that the more intimate pledges of Amis and Amiloun lack. The king's pact with Wymonde

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[13] Dickerson 119. Dickerson feels that the messenger compromises his altruism somewhat by accepting money from the queen (308-19), but I do not see such any such meaning in the lines. He seems to refuse it all, saying "Cryst in hevene foryelde it thee" (319).

equally relies on secret confederation and violates this openness. When Alyric is stripped of his office by the king, the bishop's men readily agree that they will help to secure "thy brothir" (521).[14] The poet immediately follows the private scene of Alyric and the increasingly isolated king with the public spectacle of the bishop and the "lordys of Yngelond" (499) as he announces the interdiction of the nation. Here the king is at his moral nadir, having broken his *treuþe*, threatened the life of an archbishop, and brought about the excommunication of England. The barons reflect this upsetting of the natural order by threatening open rebellion (522-9). Yet the intercession of the bishop wins over Athelston, who repents and "prayde the bysschop of benysoun" (550).

The trial by ordeal of burning ploughshares forms a problematic scene. Trounce asserts that historically it was not done in England, but a romance audience would have known the popular legend of Emma, mother of Edward the Confessor, who walks across nine burning ploughshares to exonerate herself from false charges of adultery.[15] Yet here the questionable legal means paints the bishop in a poor light. The countess is innocent, just as the Emma chroniclers sympathize with her plight against the vindictive Norman archbishop.[16] Crane objects that Alyric fails justice in ordering a non-parliamentary

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[14] John C. Ford, "Merry Married Brothers: Wedded Friendship, Lovers' Language and Male Matrimonials in Two Middle English Romances," *Medieval Forum* 3 (2003) [4], accessed 12 July 2010 at http://www.sfsu.edu/~medieval/Volume3/Brothers.html

[15] A. Mcintyre Trounce, ed., *Athelston: A Middle English Romance*, Early English Text Society O.S. 224 (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 15. The Emma legend may be partly apocryphal as it is not well attested and includes miraculous visitations from St. Swythun, but was well-known enough to possibly form the basis of the scene. Both the countess and Emma walk across nine ploughshares (571).

[16] Robert of Jumièges, Archbishop of London in 1043 (though named as Archbishop of Canterbury by Hall) apparently headed a political conspiracy to discredit the dowager queen. When the still influential Emma appealed to other bishops from her confinement in Wherwell Priory, Robert excoriated them for defending "a vile beast and not a woman." Mrs. Matthew Hall, *The Queens Before the Conquest*, Vol. II (London: Henry Colburn, 1854), 327. See also Robert of Gloucer's *Chronicle*, lines 6880-99.

judgment for Egelond and his family,[17] and Rowe similarly argues that the ordeals vindicate Athelston by showing that a formal appeal to counsel was unnecessary.[18] Yet Alyric submits the defendants to an acceptable ecclesiastical process for the time period, and Athelston, most importantly, is shown to be completely wrong in his accusation. Moreover, for the bishop the ordeal is less a trial than a public proof of the family's innocence. The poet does not impute any condemnatory or purgative attribute to the fire. The faithless king and not the bishop calls the ordeal a "hard doome" (578). Alyric instructs Egelond's children, "have ye no drede" (609), and as they walk through unharmed they joke that "the fyr is cold inowgh" (611).[19]

Such miracles are otherwise simply part of the furniture of romance. The ordeal also permits the indelible (or indelicate) image of the countess going into labor in the flames and giving birth to Saint Edmund. Ford suggests that, as Amoraunt embodies Amis and Amiloun's pledge, here Edmund's birth symbolizes the renewed love of the brothers.[20] The king's murder of his son for selfish motives threatens public stability by leaving him heirless, and in pledging his kingdom to Edmund he newly emulates Alyric's sense of responsibility for his people. The root source of the king's evil must still be purged, however, and the bishop must also threaten the king with the fires until he fully renounces his secret alliance with Wymonde. Where Athelston previously requires the

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[17] Crane, 73.

[18] Rowe, 83.

[19] In an actual purgatorial fire, Virgil also tells Dante to "put down your every fear" (*Purg.* XXVII.31) but Dante reports that "I'd have thrown myself in molten glass to find coolness" (49-51). Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, *Electronic Literature Foundation*, accessed 24 October 2010 at http://www.divinecomedy.org/divine_comedy.html.

[20] Ford [8].

threat of baronial revolt to submit, the bishop's spiritual authority now suffices. The disclosure is in more ways than one a confession, and the king himself refers to it as a "schryffte of mouthe" (689). Only then has the bishop fully redeemed Athelston. Wymonde's actual death is perfunctory, with the difference that he does receive some form of public trial to underscore the king's repudiation of his arbitrary ways in favor of following God's will.

Although the bishop guides and reproves him, the king has displayed the least steadiness of any character in the poem. Both Alyric and the messenger function with more prudence and reason, and even the wives have more common sense. Critics have noticed the unusual agency of the women compared to those of other period romances. The countess' patient endurance of the fire ordeal forms the highlight of the trial scene. In comparison to the countess' prominence her husband Egelond appears "curiously passive"[21] in the narrative and seems to take no role in his family's defense. Similarly, the queen knows her legal procedures, asking to act as security for her brother until a parliament can deliberate.[22] Despite her violent beating and miscarriage, the king is ultimately forced to see that refusing the queen's advice has proven destructive to his own kingship.[23] Loomis notes the strong ameliorative influence of the church and the

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[21] Nancy Mason Bradbury, "Beyond the Kick: Women's Agency in *Athelston*," in *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, ed. Corinne Sanders (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 151.

[22] Treharne, 12.

[23] Mary Ellzey, "The Advice of Wives in Three Middle English Romances: *The King of Tars*, *Sir Cleges*, and *Athelston*," *Medieval Perspectives* 7 (1992): 50.

women of Athelston,[24] and in the countess' miraculous walk through the flames the two forces merge.

Is the king thus good or bad in the poet's depiction? Treharne argues that the poem is an exemplum of how a good king should *not* act:

> The *Athelston*-poet… demonstrates through his protagonist the human fallibility of the divinely appointed ruler. We see a depiction of an imaginary, hierarchic Anglo-Saxon society in which Church and king are made to co-operate in the provision of temporal and spiritual harmony.[25]

The king is not evil but is too easily swayed and requires strong guidance to avoid the temptations of tyranny. Does the poet mean a particular king? The historical Athelstan was considered deeply religious and a promulgator of law codes and order, and he was for some poets an English Charlemagne, representing a former Golden Age.[26] Yet in later depictions his image deteriorates into one of despotism. In Layamon and William of Malmesbury he progressively becomes an illegitimate and aggressive usurper,[27] though in the stanzaic *Guy of Warwick* he is merely weak and vacillating against the Danes and Colbrand's threat. Edward the Confessor might also have served as a model. Edward had opposed Emma before and in light of their animosity Hall suggests he was "too easily imposed upon"[28] in hastily believing the charges against her.

Another possibility is a young Richard II, who did slide into absolutism in his last years before his deposition. Richard was equally criticized as mercurial and overly

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[24] Loomis, 226.

[25] Treharne, 2.

[26] Trounce, 29.

[27] Treharne, 9.

[28] Hall, 324.

influenced by favorites. His unpopular tutor, Simon Burley, was made constable of Dover in 1384, just as Wymonde is created as its earl. Both were men of lower birth (41). Gower complains that "the king, an ignorant boy, ignores the moral accomplishments by which he would grow from a child to a man."[29] Rowe also relates an actual incident from 1384 where a friar falsely told Richard of a plot against him by John of Gaunt and the king violently ordered a summary execution. In the next year the archbishop of Canterbury complained to Richard about this abrogation of law and custom, and the king had to be restrained from killing him with his sword.[30] The extant *Athelston* manuscript of Gonville and Caius No. 175 dates to the late 1300s and line 546 has "the Brokene-cros of ston," which Trounce located near St. Paul's Cathedral.[31] The cross was known to exist only between 1370-90. A suggestible and capricious Richard might have been one of the poet's indirect themes, and Rowe even posits a propagandistic aim of legitimizing Henry IV's claims to the throne.[32]

An additionally interesting connection is the unusual lack of respect the characters of *Athelston* use in their pronouns of address for the king. The countess is the only character in the poem to use formal *you* for Athelston (246), and only out of fear. Works such as *King Horn* (c. 1200) use *thou* prevalently, but *Horn* is early, at a time when OE

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[29] "Rex, puer indoctus, morales negligit actus / in quibus a puero crescere possit homo." (*Vox Clamantis* VI.vii.555-6). G.C. Macaulay, ed., *The Complete Works of John Gower, vol.* 4, *The Latin Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 246, quoted in Rowe 88. I use partly Rowe's translation and mine.

[30] Ranulph Hidgen, *Polychronium Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis*, ed. Joseph Lumby, Rolls Series, vol. 41 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1886), 9:33-34, quoted in Rowe, 90.

[31] Trounce, 123. But see the footnote to line 546. Zupitza claimed that the cross was the Chester Cross delimiting Westminster, about which dates are unknown. J. Zupitza, "Die Romanze von Athelston," *Englische Studien* 13 (1883): 331-414.

[32] Rowe, 80.

þu has not fully divided into ME *you* and informal *thou*. *Athelston* is much later, and the poet addresses the audience as *you* (352). As a social inferior the messenger also uses *you*, albeit inconsistently, for Wymonde (731, 734). In other English romances it is unusual for a king to be addressed with *thou*. Sir Bevis says *you* to King Edgar (3501), and even Bevis' mother says *you* to the German usurper she marries (3313). Children generally use *thou* or *ye*, as does Floris (85), but Sir Degare says *you* to the king (1072). The identification of Athelston with Richard is supposition, but the pronoun address of the poem does subtly imply a young and unseasoned monarch who has yet to command firm respect from subordinates.

The *Athelston* poet capably operates on numerous possible levels. Athelston's signification remains opaque, and the poem may refer abstractly to models of kingship. His failings could be applied to many English kings as well as to Richard. Nevertheless, as Crane asserts, the poem lacks the natural and implicit faith in good governance that the Auchinleck romances tend to assume.[33] Structurally and thematically, the poem has a clear and sturdy mechanism. The main characters of the poem, Wymonde, the messenger, and the bishop, grouped with the wives, function respectively as corrupting, guiding, and ideal examples for Athelston to emulate. If Amis and Amiloun do have a typographical meaning in their initial letters as Delaney asserts—A-A-B for their names and Belisaunt's[34]—Alyric (A) similarly redeems Athelston (A) back from the moral and alphabetic opposite of Wymonde (W). The poet displays a dexterous ability and would

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[33] Crane, 73.

[34] Sheila Delaney, "A, A, and B: Coding Same-Sex Union in *Amis and Amiloun*," in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester: University Press, 2004), 63-4.

not be beyond such linguistic touches, as evinced by his subtlest use of narrative symbolism: the messenger, the bishop, and the wives all play a role in attempting to warn and inform Athelston about the ruinous path he follows, a fitting occupation for a poem about messengers.

CHAPTER 3

Bevis of Hampton

Bevis of Hampton survives in numerous manuscripts: Auchinleck (c. 1330), University Library, Cambridge Ff. 2.38 (c. 1450), Caius College, Cambridge, Gonville and Caius 175 (c. 1375), Royal Library, Naples XIII, B 29 (c. 1450), Egerton 2862 (c. 1400), Chetham Library No. 8009 (c. 1500), Douce Fragments No. 19, and in an early printed text by Wynkyn de Worde (c. 1500). I take as my text source Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds. *Bevis of Hampton*. *Four Romances of England.* Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999. http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/bevisfrm.htm. Herzman *et al*. use mainly Auchinleck with some lines from Egerton. Other editions include Eugen Kölbing, ed., *The Romance of Sir Beues of Hamtoun* (1885).

Main Characters

Bevis
Guy, Bevis' father
Saber, Bevis' uncle
Saber Florentine, bishop of Cologne
King Ermine
Josanne, Ermine's daughter
Brademonde, Josanne's suitor
King Yvor, Josanne's suitor
Miles, Josanne's suitor
Boniface, Josanne's servant
Ascopard, Bevis' servant

1	Lordinges, herkneth to me tale! Is merier than the nightingale, That I schel singe; Of a knight ich wile yow roune, Beves a highte of Hamtoune,	Lords and ladies, listen to my tale! What I will rhyme about Is merrier than a nightingale.[1] I will tell you about a knight: Bevis was his name, of Southampton,

[1] The first two lines are duplicated almost word for word in *Sir Thopas* (VII.833-4): "yet listeth, lordes, to my tale / murier than the nightingale."

	Withouten lesing.	Without any lie.
	Ich wile yow tellen al togadre	I will tell you all together
	Of that knight and of is fadre,	About that knight and his father,
	Sire Gii.	Sir Guy.
10	Of Hamtoun he was sire	Guy was lord of Southampton
	And of al that ilche schire,	And of all that county
	To wardi.	He was guard.
	Lordinges, this, of whan I telle,	Gentlemen, about this person I tell you of
	Never man of flesch ne felle	There was never a man of flesh and blood
	Nas so strong.	Who was so mighty,
	And so he was in ech strive.	And so he prevailed in every battle.
	And ever he levede withouten wive,	But he lived his days without a wife
	Al to late and long.	For too long and until too late.
	Whan he was fallen in to elde,	When he saw he was falling into old age,
20	That he ne mighte himself welde,	When he might no longer govern himself,
	He wolde a wif take;	He decided to take a wife
	Sone thar after, ich understonde,	Soon after, as I understand.
	Him hadde be lever than al this londe	It would have been better had he rejected her
	Hadde he hire forsake.	Rather than losing all his land.
	An elde a wif he tok an honde,	As an elderly man he took a wife in hand,
	The kinges doughter of Scotlonde,	The king of Scotland's daughter,
	So faire and bright.	So fair and bright.
	Allas, that he hire ever ches!	Alas, that he ever chose her!
	For hire love his lif a les	For her love he lost his life
30	With mechel unright.	With great injustice.
	This maide ichave of ytold,	This maid I have mentioned
	Faire maide she was and bold	Was a beautiful and strong-willed woman,
	And fre yboren;	And nobly born.
	Of Almayne that emperur	She had been the lover
	Hire hadde loved paramur	Of the Emperor of Germany
	Wel thar beforen.	A long time before then.
	Ofte to hire fader a sente	The emperor often sent word to her father,
	And he him selve theder wente	And he himself went to him
	For hire sake;	For her sake.
40	Ofte gernede hire to wive;	He often asked for her hand,
	The king for no thing alive	But the king would not let him take her
	Nolde hire him take.	For anything alive.
	Sithe a yaf hire to sire Gii,	And then he gave her to Sir Guy,
	A stalword erl and hardi	A sturdy and hardy earl
	Of Southhamtoun.	From Southampton.
	Man, whan he falleth in to elde.	But man, when he falls into old age,
	Feble a wexeth and unbelde	Grows feeble and timid
	Thourgh right resoun.	In his right reasoning.
	So longe thai yede togedres to bedde,	They laid in bed together
50	A knave child betwene hem thai hedde,	Until they had a child between them,
	Beves a het.	Who was called Bevis.
	Faire child he was and bolde,	He was a fair and bold child,
	He nas boute seve winter olde,	And he was not yet seven years old
	Whan his fader was ded.	When his father was dead.
	The levedi hire misbethoughte	The lady had malicious thoughts
	And meche aghen the right she wroughte	And she schemed against goodness
	In hire tour:	In her tower:
	"Me lord is olde and may nought werche,	"My lord is old and can't work,
	Al dai him is lever at cherche,	And he would rather spend all day

60	Than in me bour.	In church than in our bed.[2]
	Hadde ich itaken a yong knight,	If I had married a young knight
	That ner nought brused in werre and fight,	Who was never scarred from wars and fighting
	Also he is,	As this man is,
	A wolde me loven dai and night,	He would love me day and night,
	Cleppen and kissen with al is might	And hold me and kiss me with all his might,
	And make me blis.	And bring me joy.
	I nel hit lete for no thinge,	I won't stop at anything
	That ich nel him to dethe bringe	Until I can bring him to death
	With sum braide!"	With some trick!"
70	Anon right that levedi fer	Right away that fierce woman
	To consaile clepede hir masager	Called her messenger to consult with her
	And to him saide:	And said to him:
	"Maseger, do me surté,	"Messenger, give me your word
	That thow nelt nought discure me	That you won't give me away
	To no wight!	To anyone!
	And yif thow wilt, that it so be,	And if you agree that it will be so
	I schel thee yeve gold and fe	I will give you gold and property
	And make the knight."	And make you a knight."
	Thanne answerde the masager -	Then the messenger answered—
80	False a was, that pautener,	He was dishonest, a troublemaker,
	And wel prut -	And full of pride—
	"Dame, boute ich do thee nede,	"My lady, if I don't do your bidding
	Ich graunte, thow me forbede	I vow, may you banish me
	The londe thourgh out."	From throughout the land."[3]
	The levedi thanne was wel fain:	The lady was well pleased.
	"Go," she seide, "in to Almaine	"Go," she said, "to Germany
	Out of me bour!	And out of my bower!
	Maseger, be yep and snel,	Messenger, be prompt and quick
	And on min helf thow grete wel	And plead strongly on my behalf
90	That emperur,	To that emperor,
	And bid, in the ferste dai,	And ask that on the first day
	That cometh in the moneth of May,	Which comes in the month of May,
	For love of me,	For the sake of my love,
	That he be to fighte prest	That he be ready to fight
	With is ferde in hare forest	With his army in our forest
	Beside the se.	Beside the sea.
	Me lord ich wile theder sende	I will send my lord there
	For his love, for to schende	For him to prove his love, to destroy
	And for to sle;	And to kill.
100	Bid him, that hit be nought beleved,	Tell him that I won't believe a word he says
	That he ne smite of his heved	Until he chops off his head
	And sende hit me!	And sends it to me![4]

[2] The lustful wife who betrays her husband is a romance standard. Like the seductive Salome, here the wife also receives Guy's head. An interesting variation is Bertilak's wife in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, who only tempts Gawain as a test. Another example is Amiloun's spouse, who banishes Amiloun and then remarries.

[3] TEAMS renders the line as a conditional: "I believe that you would banish me."

[4] The lady's manipulation is to question the both the emperor's bravery and honesty: the emperor is to kill her husband to prove his intentions, and until then she will not believe his professions of love.

	And whan he haveth so ydo,	And when he has done so,
	Me love he schel underfo,	He will receive my love
	Withouten delai!	Without delay.”
	Thanne seide that masager:	The messenger then answered,
	“Madame, ich wile sone be ther!	“Madam, I will soon be there.
	Now have gode dai!”	Now goodbye!”
	Now that masager him goth.	Then that messenger was gone.[5]
110	That ilche lord him worthe wroth,	He became wicked to the same lord
	That him wroughte!	Who had provided for him!
	To schip that masager him wode.	The messenger took to his ship;
	Allas! The wind was al to gode,	Alas, the wind was all too good
	That him over broughte.	Which brought him over.
	Tho he com in to Almayne,	When he arrived in Germany,
	Thar a mette with a swain	He met a servant there
	And grette him wel.	And greeted him well.
	“Felawe,” a seide, “par amur:	“Fellow,” he said, “for kindness’ sake,
	Whar mai ich finde th’emperur?	Where can I find the emperor?
120	Thow me tel!”	Let me know!”
	“Ich wile thee telle anon right:	“I will tell you right away.
	At Rifoun a lai tonight,	He’s spending the night at Erfurt,[6]
	Be me swere!”	By the neck on my head.”[7]
	The masager him thankede anon	The messenger thanked him at once
	And thederwardes he gan gon	And went in that direction
	Withouten demere.	Without delay.
	Th’empereur thar a fonde;	He found the emperor there
	Adoun a knevlede on the grounde,	And knelt down to the ground,
	Ase hit was right,	As it was fitting,
130	And seide: “The levedi of South Hamtone	And said, “The lady of Southampton
	Thee grette wel be Godes sone,	Greets you courteously by God’s son,
	That is so bright,	Who is so bright,
	And bad thee, in the ferste day	And asks of you that on the first day
	That cometh in the moneth o May,	Which comes in the month of May,
	How so hit be,	However it may be,
	That ye be to fighte prest	That you be ready to fight
	With your ferde in hare forest	With your army in her forest
	Beside the se.	Beside the sea.
	Hire lord she wile theder sende	She will entice on her lord,
140	For the love, for to schende,	For the sake of your love, to fight
	With lite meini;	With only a few retainers.
	Thar aboute thow schost be fouse,	In that place you should be as resolute
	And thow schelt after her wedde to spouse,	As you are in your love,
	To thin amy.”	In your efforts to wed her.”

[5] *Now that masager him goth*: The poet often switches from past tense to present to lend immediacy to the action, but in translation it sounds slightly confusing and so I have avoided it.

[6] *Rifoun*: I cannot find this place name. There is a Ripon in Yorkshire (but this would not require a ship), a Rifön in Sweden, and a Riphahnstraβe in Cologne. Other MSS give *Repayn* and *Refon*. The French analogue has *Retefor*, and a French book on Roman literature from 1921 claims this is Erfurt. Paul Meyer and Gaston Paris, *Romania: Recueil Trimestriel* (Paris: Mario Roques, 1921), 142, accessed 28 May 2010 at http://www.archive.org/stream/romania4748pariuoft#page/n149/mode/2up/search/retefor.

[7] *Be me swere*: ME *swere* does not mean *swear* or *oath*, but *neck*.

	"Sai," a seide, "Icham at hire heste:	"Tell her," he exclaimed, "I am at her command!
	Yif me lif hit wile leste,	So long as my life will last,
	Hit schel be do!	It shall be done.
	Gladder icham for that sawe,	I am more pleased with that news
	Than be fouel, whan hit ginneth dawe,	Than the birds are when it begins to dawn,
150	And sai hire so!	And say that to her!
	And for thow woldes hire erande bede,	And for you who has performed her errand,
	An hors icharged with golde rede	I will give to you
	Ich schel thee yeve,	A horse loaded with red gold,
	And withinne this fourtene night	And within these fourteen nights
	Me self schel dobbe thee to knight,	I will dub you a knight myself,[8]
	Yif that ich live."	If I live to do it."
	The mesager him thankede yerne;	The messenger thanked him earnestly
	Hom ayen he gan him terne	And turned back home again
	To Hamtoun;	To Southampton.
160	The levedi a fond in hire bour,	He found the lady in her bower
	And he hire clepede doceamur	And he called her sweetly
	And gan to roun:	And began to whisper:
	"Dame," a seide, "I thee tel:	"My lady," he said, "I tell you,
	That emperur thee grette wel	The emperor greets you fondly
	With love mest:	With ardent love.
	Glad he is for that tiding,	He is very pleased with the news.
	A wile be prest at that fighting	He will be ready to fight
	In that forest.	In that forest.
	Yif thow ert glad the lord to sle,	If you are glad for the lord to be slain,
170	Gladder a is for love of thee	He is gladder many times more
	Fele sithe!"	For love for you!"
	The mesager hath thus isaid,	When the messenger had spoken so,
	The levedi was right wel apaid	The lady was very satisfied
	And maked hire blithe.	And made herself cheerful.
	In Mai, in the formeste dai,	In May, on the first day
	The levedi in hire bedde lai,	The lady lay in her bed
	Ase hit wer nede;	As though out of necessity.
	Hire lord she clepede out of halle	She called her lord from the hall
	And seide, that evel was on hire falle,	And said that bad fortune had come to her.
180	She wende be ded.	She expected to die.
	That erl for hire hath sorwe ikaught	The earl was distraught over her
	And askede, yif she disired aught,	And asked if she wanted anything
	That mighte hire frevre.	That might give her comfort.
	"Ye," she seide, "of a wilde bor	"Yes," she said, "from a wild boar,
	I wene, me mineth, boute for	I think, if I remember, there will be
	Al of the fevre!"	A remedy for all of my fever!"
	"Madame," a seide, "for love myn,	"My lady," he answered, "for my love,
	Whar mai ich finde that wilde swin?	Where would I find a wild boar?
	I wolde, thow it hadde!"	I wish you could have one!"
190	And she answerde with tresoun mest,	And she answered with calculated treason,
	Be the se in hare forest,	"By the sea in our forest,
	Thar a bradde.	There they breed."
	That erl swor, be Godes grace,	The earl swore, by God's grace,

[8] *Fourtene night*: The medieval English reckoned time in nights and not days, and being a warrior, the German emperor seems to operate in fortnights.

	In that forest he wolde chace,	To chase and capture a boar
	That bor to take;	In that forest.
	And she answerde with tresoun than;	And then she answered with treachery,
	“Blessed be thow of alle man	“May you be blessed of all men
	For mine sake!”	For my sake!”
	That erl is hors began to stride,	The earl prepared to mount his horse.
200	His scheld he heng upon is side,	He hung his shield upon his side,
	Gert with swerd;	Armed with a sword.
	Moste non armur on him come,	He wore almost no armor
	Himself was boute the ferthe some	And was himself only the fourth
	Toward that ferd.	To make up that group.
	Allas, that he nadde be war	Alas, that he was unwary
	Of is fomen, that weren thar,	Of his enemies, who were there
	Him forte schende:	To slaughter him!
	With tresoun worth he ther islawe	With treason he would be slain there
	And ibrought of is lif-dawe,	And separated from his life
210	Er he hom wende!	Before he returned home.
	Whan he com in to the forest,	When he came to the forest,
	Th’emperur a fond al prest;	He found the emperor all ready.
	For envi	In arrogance,
	A prikede out before is ost,	He spurred on before his host,
	For pride and for make bost,	In pride and to make a boast,
	And gan to crie:	And began to cry out:
	“Aghilt thee, treitour! thow olde dote!	“Surrender, villain! You old fool!
	Thow shelt ben hanged be the throte,	You will be hanged by the throat,
	Thin heved thow schelt lese;	And you will lose your head!
220	The sone schel anhanged be	Your son will also be hanged,
	And the wif, that is so fre,	And your lady, who is so beautiful,
	To me lemman I chese!”	I will choose as my mate!”
	Th’erl answerde at that sawe:	The earl answered that speech:
	“Me thenketh, thow seist ayen the lawe,	“I believe you speak in defiance of the law,
	So God me amende!	So help me God!
	Me wif and child, that was so fre,	For my wife and child, who are so royal,
	Yif thow thenkest beneme hem me,	If you think you will take them from me
	Ich schel hem defende!”	I will defend them!”
	Tho prikede is stede Sire Gii,	Then Sir Guy spurred his horse.
230	A stalword man and hardi,	He was a sturdy and hardy man
	While he was sounde;	While he was healthy.
	Th’emperur he smot with is spere,	He struck the emperor with his spear,
	Out of is sadel he gan him bere	Flung him out of his saddle,
	And threw him to grounde.	And threw him to the ground.
	“Treitour,” a seide, “thow ert to bolde!	“Traitor!” he said. “You are too rash!
	Wenestow, thegh ich bo olde,	Did you think that because I am old
	To ben afered?	I would be afraid?
	That thow havest no right to me wif,	I will show you, by my life,
	I schel thee kithe be me lif!”	That you have no right to my wife!”
240	And drough is swerd.	And he drew out his sword.
	That erl held is swerd adrawe,	The earl held his blade out
	Th’emperur with he hadde slawe,	And would have slain the emperor
	Nadde be sokour:	If there had not been help.
	Thar come knightes mani and fale,	Knights came out in vast number,
	Wel ten thosent told be tale,	Well ten thousand in total,

	To th'emperur.	To the emperor's aid.
	Tho Sire Gii him gan defende,	Sir Guy began to defend himself.[9]
	Thre hondred hevedes of a slende	He struck off three hundred heads
	With is brond;	With his broadsword.
250	Hadde he ben armed wel, ywis,	Had he been well-armed, in fact,
	Al the meistré hadde ben his,	The victory would have all been his,
	Ich understonde.	I understand.
	Thre men were slawe, that he ther hadde,	Three men were slain that he had there,
	That he with him out ladde	Whom he had led out with him,
	And moste nede;	And who he now needed the most.
	To have merci, that was is hope;	To have mercy was his hope,
	Th'emperur after him is lope	As the emperor rode toward him
	Upon a stede.	Upon a steed.
	Th'erl knewlede to th'emperur,	The earl knelt before the emperor
260	Merci a bad him and sokour	And asked him for mercy and grace
	And is lif:	And his life:
	"Merci, sire, ase thow art fre,	"Sir, if you are noble, have mercy.
	Al that ichave, I graunte thee,	All that I have I grant you,
	Boute me wif!	Except for my wife!
	For thine men, that ichave slawe,	For your men that I have slain,
	Have her me swerd idrawe	Take my drawn sword here
	And al me fe:	And all my property.
	Boute me yonge sone Bef	But for my young son Bevis,
	And me wif, that is me lef,	And my wife, who is dear to me,
270	That let thow me!"	Leave them to me!"
	"For Gode," queth he, "that ich do nelle!"	"By God," he said, "I will do none of it!"
	Th'emperur to him gan telle,	The emperor looked on him
	And was agreved,	And was enraged.
	Anon right is swerd out drough	At once he pulled out his sword
	And the gode knight a slough	And killed the good knight,
	And nam is heved.	And took off his head.
	A knight a tok the heved an honde:	Another knight took the head in his hand.
	"Have," a seide, "ber this sonde	"Take it!" the emperor said. "Carry this token
	Me leve swet!"	To my sweet love!"
280	The knight to Hamtoun tho gan gon,	The knight took off for Hampton.
	The levedi thar a fond anon	He soon found the lady
	And gan hire grete:	And greeted her.
	"Dame," a seide, "to me atende:	My lady," he said, "listen to me.
	Th'emperur me hider sende	The emperor has sent me here
	With is pray!"	With his prey."
	And she seide: "Blessed mot he be!	And she replied, "May he be blessed!
	To wif a schel wedde me	He will wed me as his wife
	To morwe in the dai.	Tomorrow in the daytime.
	Sai him, me swete wight,	Tell him, my dear thing,
290	That he come yet to night	To come tonight already,
	In to me bour!"	Into my bedchamber!"
	The mesager is wei hath holde,	The messenger took his way

[9] *Sire Gii him gan defende*: Sometimes the *gan* suggests *began*, but grammatically in ME it normally simply formed an auxiliary to the simple past: *he gan riden* (he rode). A sense of beginning was indicated by *for*: *he gan for to riden*. I am attempting to take the sense from the context. "Chaucer's Grammar," Harvard University, accessed 22 May 2010 at http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/pronunciation/.

	Al a seide, ase she him tolde,	And repeated everything as she told him
	To th'emperur.	To the emperor.
	Now scholle we of him mone,	Now we shall speak
	Of Beves, that was Guis sone,	Of Bevis, who was Guy's son,
	How wo him was:	And how sorrowful he was.
	Yerne a wep, is hondes wrong,	He wept earnestly; he wrung his hands.
	For his fader a seide among:	For his father he continually cried,
300	"Allas! Allas!"	"Alas, alas!"
	He cleped is moder and seide is sawe:	He called to his mother and spoke his mind:
	"Vile houre! Thee worst to-drawe	"Vile whore! You deserve to be
	And al to-twight!	Drawn and quartered!
	Me thenketh, ich were ther-of ful fawe,	In my opinion, I would be very glad to see it!
	For thow havest me fader slawe	You have slain my father
	With mechel unright!	With great injustice!
	Allas, moder, thee faire ble!	Alas, mother, your innocent looks!
	Evel becometh thee, houre to be,	Evil suits you, to someday be a madam
	To holde bordel,	And to run a brothel,
310	And alle wif houren for thee sake,	And to whore out all wives for your sake!
	The devel of helle ich hii betake,	I would send them all to Hell,
	Flesch and fel!	Flesh and bones!
	Ac o thing, moder, I schel thee swere:	And one more thing, mother, I swear to you—
	Yif ich ever armes bere	If I ever bear arms
	And be of elde,	And be of a proper age,
	Al that hath me fader islawe	For everyone who attacked my father
	And ibrought of is lif dawe,	And finished the days of his life,
	Ich shel hem yilden!"	I will pay them back!"
	The moder hire hath understonde,	The mother understood him in full,
320	That child she smot with hire honde	And she struck the child with her hand
	Under is ere.	Under his ear.
	The child fel doun and that was scathe,	The child fell down, and that was a pity!
	His meister tok him wel rathe,	He was taken away quickly by his master,[10]
	That highte Saber.	Who was called Saber.
	The knight was trewe and of kinde,	The knight was loyal and his kin.
	Strenger man ne scholde men finde	No one might find a stronger man
	To ride ne go.	To ride or to walk.
	A was ibrought in tene and wrake	He would often face pain and hardship
	Ofte for that childes sake	For that child's sake,
330	Ase wel ase tho.	As he did at the moment.
	That childe he nam up be the arm,	He took the child up by the arm.
	Wel wo him was for that harm,	He would have sadness for the punishment
	That he thar hadde.	Which he had for that.
	Toward is kourt he him kende;	He escorted him toward the court.
	The levedi after Saber sende	The lady followed Saber
	And to him radde.	And called to him:
	"Saber," she seide, "thow ert me lef,	"Saber," she coaxed, "you are dear to me.
	Let sle me yonge sone Bef,	Have my young son Bevis executed,
	That is so bold!	Who is so insolent!

[10] *Meister*: Bevis' uncle, teacher, and guardian, and to judge from his mother's parenting skills, his authority figure. This is not the same Saber as the one introduced in 2926, the bishop of Cologne, Saber Florentine. In Germanic culture and literature there is often a special relationship between nephews and maternal uncles. In *Beowulf* the hero is also raised by his uncle Hygelac.

340	Let him anhange swithe highe,	Let him hang very high.
	I ne reche, what deth he dighe,	I don't care what death he faces,
	Sithe he be cold!"	So long as his body is cold!"
	Saber stod stille and was ful wo;	Saber stood still and was afraid.
	Natheles a seide, a wolde do	Nevertheless, he said he would do
	After hire sawe;	What she commanded.
	The child with him hom he nam,	He took the child home with him.
	A swin he tok, whan he hom cam,	He took a swine when he arrived home
	And dede hit of dawe.	And slaughtered it.
	The childes clothes, that were gode,	The child's clothes, which were costly,
350	Al a bisprengde with that blode	Were all spattered with the blood
	In many stede,	In many places,
	Ase yif the child were to-hewe,	As if the child were hacked apart.
	A thoughte to his moder hem schewe,	He decided to show them to the mother,
	And so a dede.	And so he did.
	At the laste him gan adrede,	At length the boy began to be afraid.
	He let clothen in pouer wede	Saber dressed him in tattered clothing,
	That hende wight,	That gentle fellow,
	And seide: "Sone, thow most kepe	And said, "Son, you will watch
	Upon the felde mine schepe	Over my sheep on the field
360	This fourte night!	For the next fortnight.
	And whan the feste is come to th'ende,	And when the celebrating has come to its end,
	In to another londe I schel thee sende	I will send you to another land
	Fer be southe,	Far to the south,
	To a riche erl, that schel thee gie	To a rich earl who will guide you
	And teche thee of corteisie	And teach you court manners
	In the youthe.	In your youth.
	And whan thow ert of swich elde,	And when you are old enough
	That thow might the self wilde,	That you might take care of yourself,
	And ert of age,	And are of age,
370	Thanne scheltow come in te Ingelonde,	Then you will return to England
	With werre winne in to thin honde	And win back your heritage
	Thin eritage.	Into your hand by war.
	I schel thee helpe with alle me might,	I will help you with all my might,
	With dent of swerd to gete thee right,	With the edge of a sword, to hold your rights
	Be thow of elde!"	Until you are old enough!"
	The child him thankede and sore wep,	The child thanked him and wept bitterly,
	And forth a wente with the schep	And went forth with the sheep
	Upon the velde.	Upon the green.
	Beves was herde upon the doun	Bevis was a shepherd on the hillside.
380	He lokede homward to the toun,	He looked homeward to the town
	That scholde ben his;	That should have been his.
	He beheld toward the tour,	He beheld the tower,
	Trompes he herde and tabour	Hearing trumpets and drums
	And meche blis.	And great joy!
	"Lord," a seide, "on me thow mone!	"Lord!" he said, "remember me!
	Ne was ich ones an erles sone	Was I once an earl's son
	And now am herde?	And now I am a shepherd?
	Mighte ich with that emperur speke,	If I could face that emperor,
	Wel ich wolde me fader awreke	I would avenge my father well,
390	For al is ferde!"	For all his army!
	He nemeth is bat and forth a goth,	He took a club and went forth,
	Swithe sori and wel wroth,	Deeply agitated and full of rage,
	Toward the tour;	Toward the tower.

	"Porter!" a sede, "Let me in reke!	"Porter!" he said, "let me in quickly!
	A lite thing ich ave to speke	I have a small matter to talk about
	With th'emperur."	With the emperor!"
	"Go hom, truant!" the porter sede,	"Go home, you little thug!" the porter said.
	"Scherewe houre sone, I thee rede,	"Good-for-nothing son of a whore!
	Fro the gate:	I would advise you to get away from the gate!
400	Boute thow go hennes also swithe,	If you do not move out of here fast,
	Hit schel thee rewe fele sithe,	You will regret it as many times
	Thow come ther-ate!	As you set foot in here!"
	Sixte the scherewe, "Ho be itte,	The lout continued, "See there
	A loketh, as a wolde smite	How he looks, how he would attack
	With is bat:	With his bat!
	Speke he ought meche more,	If he says much more,
	I schel him smite swithe sore	I will thump him sorely
	Upon is hat."	On his hat!"
	"For Gode," queth Beves, "natheles,	"By God," Bevis said, "even if
410	An houre sone for soth ich wes,	I truly am a whore's son,
	Wel ich it wot!	And I know it well—
	I nam no truant, be Godes grace!"	I am no beggar, by God's grace!"
	With that a lefte up is mace	With that he lifted up his club
	Anon fot hot.	Advancing straight away.
	Beves withoute the gate stod.	Bevis stood outside the gate
	And smot the porter on the hod,	And struck the porter on the hood
	That he gan falle;	So that he fell down
	His heved he gan al to cleve	And broke his own head apart.
	And forth a wente with that leve	With that answer Bevis went forth
420	In to the halle.	Into the hall.
	Al aboute he gan beholde,	He looked all about him.
	To th'emperur he spak wordes bolde	To the emperor, he spoke audacious words
	With meche grame:	With grim anger:
	"Sire," a sede, "what dostow here?	"Sir," he said, "what are you doing here?
	Whi colles thow aboute the swire	Why is that woman there
	That ilche dame?	Embracing you about the neck?
	Me moder is that thow havest an honde:	The one you have in hand is my mother.
	What dostow her upon me londe	What is she doing in my realm
	Withouten leve?	Without permission?
430	Tak me me moder and mi fe,	Take away my mother and my goods,
	Boute thow the rather hennes te,	But if you'd rather not leave,
	I schel thee greve!	I will bring you grief!
	Nastow, sire, me fader slawe?	Did you not, sir, murder my father?
	Thow schelt ben hanged and to-drawe,	You will be hanged and drawn,
	Be Godes wille!	By God's will!
	Aris! Fle hennes, I thee rede!"	Get up! Fly away from here, I advise you!"
	Th'emperur to him sede:	The emperor shushed him,
	"Foul, be stille!"	"Fool! Be quiet!"
	Beves was nigh wod for grame,	Bevis was nearly mad with anger,
440	For a clepede him "foul" be name,	For being called a fool by name,
	And to him a wond;	And he turned to him.
	For al that weren in the place,	In spite of all that were there,
	Thries a smot him with is mace	He struck him three times with his mace
	And with is honde.	And with his hand.
	Thries a smot him on the kroun;	Three times he cracked him on the head
	That emperur fel swowe adoun,	And the emperor fell down unconscious
	Thar a sat.	Where he sat.

	The levedi, is moder, gan to grede:	The lady, his mother, began to shout:
	"Nemeth that treitour!" she sede,	"Seize that traitor!" she cried.
450	"Anon with that!"	"Be quick about it!"
	Tho dorste Beves no leng abide;	Bevis could not linger any longer.
	The knightes up in ech a side,	The knights on each side,
	More and lasse,	High and low,
	Wo hem was for the childes sake,	Felt sympathy for the child's sake.
	Boute non of hem nolde him take	As none of them would grab him,
	Hii lete him pase.	They let him pass.
	Beves goth faste ase he mai,	Bevis ran as fast as he could.
	His meister a mette in the wai,	He met his master on the way,
	That highte Saber,	Who was called Saber,
460	And he him askede with blithe mod:	And he asked him with a cheerful air,
	"Beves!" a seide, "for the Rode,	"Bevis," he said, "for the sake of the Cross,
	What dostow her?"	What are you doing here?"
	"I schel thee telle al togadre:	"I will tell you at once.
	Beten ichave me stifadre	I have beaten my stepfather
	With me mace;	With my mace.
	Thries I smot him in the heved,	Three times I struck him in the head
	Al for ded ich him leved	And have left him for dead
	In the place!"	In the palace!"
	"Beves," queth Saber, "thow ert to blame:	"Bevis," replied Saber, "you are to blame!
470	The levedi wile now do me schame	The lady will now do me harm
	For thine sake!	For your sake!
	Boute thow be me consaile do,	Unless you do as I advise you,
	Thow might now sone bringe us bo	You might quickly bring us both
	In meche wrake!"	Into great peril!"
	Saber Beves to his hous ladde,	Saber took Bevis to his house,[11]
	Meche of that levedi him dradde.	Greatly dreading that lady.
	The levedi out of the tour cam,	The woman came from the tower
	To Saber the wei she nam.	And she made her way to Saber.
	"Saber," she seide, "whar is Bef,	"Saber" she said, "where is Bevis,
480	That wike treitour, that fule thef?"	That wicked traitor, that foul thief?"
	"Dame," a seide, "ich dede him of dawe	"Madam," he said, "I put him to death
	Be thee red and be thee sawe:	By your counsel and your orders.
	This beth his clothe, thow her sixt."	Here are his clothes, as you can see."
	The levedi seide: "Saber thow lixt!	The lady answered, "Saber, you lie!
	Boute thow me to him take,	Unless you bring me to him,
	Thow schelt abegge for is sake."	You will pay for his sake!"
	Beves herde his meister threte;	Bevis heard his master threatened.
	To hire a spak with hertte grete	He spoke to her with a fierce heart
	And seide: "Lo, me her be name!	And said, "Here I am, by name!
490	Do me meister for me no schame!	Do not harm my master on my account!
	Yif thow me sext, lo, whar ich am here!"	If you are looking for me, then here I am!"
	His moder tok him be the ere;	His mother took him by the ear,
	Fain she wolde a were of live.	Wishing eagerly for him to be dead.
	Foure knightes she clepede blive:	She called four knights at once:
	"Wendeth," she seide, "to the stronde:	"Go," she said, "to the shore.
	Yif ye seth schipes of painim londe,	If you see ships from pagan lands,
	Selleth to hem this ilche hyne,	Sell them this boy here.

[11] For unexplained reasons the meter shifts here into couplets for the remainder of the poem.

	That ye for no gode ne fine,	If there's no goods or finery,
	Whather ye have for him mor and lesse,	Whether you're offered, more or less,
500	Selleth him right in to hethenesse!"	Sell him straightaway to the heathens!"[12]
	Forth the knightes gonne te,	The knights marched forth
	Til that hii come to the se,	Until they came to the sea.
	Schipes hii fonde ther stonde	They found ships standing there
	Of hethenesse and of fele londe;	From heathen lands and many others.
	The child hii chepeden to sale,	They bargained the child for sale,
	Marchaundes thai fonde ferli fale	Meeting with many merchants.
	And solde that child for mechel aughte	They sold the child for a good price
	And to the Sarasins him betaughte.	And handed him over to the Saracens.[13]
	Forth thai wente with that child,	They sailed off with that boy.
510	Crist of hevene be him mild!	May Christ of Heaven be mild to him!
	The childes hertte was wel colde,	The child's heart was cold with fear
	For that he was so fer isolde;	For he had been sold so far away.
	Natheles, though him thoughte eile,	Nevertheless, whatever grief he felt,
	Toward painim a moste saile.	He had to sail to Armenian lands
	Whan hii rivede out of that strond,	When they had passed from those shores.[14]
	The king highte Ermin of that londe;	The king of that land was called Ermine.
	His wif was ded, that highte Morage,	His wife was deceased, who was called Marah.
	A doughter a hadde of yong age,	He had one daughter of young age
	Josiane that maide het,	Who was called Josanne.
520	Hire schon wer gold upon hire fet;	Her shoes were gold upon her feet.
	So faire she was and bright of mod,	She was as beautiful and bright in spirit
	Ase snow upon the rede blod -	As snow upon red blood.
	Wharto scholde that may discrive?	To what could she be compared?
	Men wiste no fairer thing alive,	Men knew no fairer thing alive,
	So hende ne wel itaught;	So graceful or so well brought up.
	Boute of Cristene lawe she kouthe naught.	But she knew nothing of Christian belief.
	The marchauns wente an highing	The traders moved in haste
	And presente Beves to Ermyn King.	And presented Bevis to King Ermine.
	The king thar of was glad and blithe	The king was glad and pleased
530	And thankede hem mani a sithe:	And thanked them many times.
	"Mahoun!" a seide, "thee might be proute,	"Mohammed!" he said. "You would be proud
	And this child wolde to thee aloute;	If this child were to incline to you
	Yif a wolde a Sarasin be,	If he would be a Saracen,
	Yit ich wolde hope, a scholde the!	As I hope he will prosper to!
	Be Mahoun, that sit an high,	By Mohammed, who sits on high,
	A fairer child never I ne sigh,	I never saw a fairer child,
	Neither a lingthe ne on brade,	Neither in length or in breadth.

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[12] *Hethenesse*: Muslims tend to be lumped in with all non-Christians in romance literature such as heathens or pagans. As with the giant in *Sir Thopas*, Muslims are incorrectly depicted praying to non-Muslim deities such as Termagaunt and Apollo (659, 1380, 1510) or even Mohammad as a god in order to stress their alienness to Christian belief. Saracen pirates also provide a convenient plot device for dispatching heroes, as they do in *Floris and Blancheflour* and *King Horn* as well.

[13] *Sarasin*: The ancient Saracens lived near Syria and were non-Arabic, but by the time of the Crusades the term had come to mean any "Turk, Arab, or Muslim" (MED). Occasionally *Saracen* ambiguously applies to Vikings and Saxons as well. See also Diane Speed, "The Saracens of *King Horn*," *Speculum* 65:3 (1990): 564-595.

[14] TEAMS notes that other MSS indicate that they land in *Ermony*, Armenia. See also line 701.

	Ne non, so faire limes hade!	None had such fair limbs!
	Child," a seide, "whar wer thee bore?	Child," he said, "where were you born?
540	What is thee name? telle me fore!	What is your name? Speak forth.
	Yif ich it wiste, hit were me lef."	I would be pleased if I knew."
	"For Gode," a seide, "ich hatte Bef;	"By God," he said, "my name is Bevis.
	Iborne ich was in Ingelonde,	I was born in England,
	At Hamtoun, be the se stronde.	At Southampton, by the sea shore.
	Me fader was erl thar a while,	My father was earl there a while.
	Me moder him let sle with gile,	My mother had him treacherously murdered,
	And me she solde in to hethenlonde;	And she sold me to heathen lands.
	Wikked beth fele wimmen to fonde!	Many a woman turns out to be wicked!
	Ac, sire, yif it ever so betide,	But, sire, if it ever so happens
550	That ich mowe an horse ride	That I might ride a horse
	And armes bere and scheft tobreke,	And bear arms and shatter a lance,
	Me fader deth ich schel wel wreke!"	I will avenge my father's death in full!"
	The kinges hertte wex wel cold,	The king's heart grew cold
	Whan Beves hadde thus itolde,	When Bevis had spoken so,
	And seide: "I nave non eir after me dai,	And he said, "I have no heir after my death
	Boute Josian, this faire mai;	Except Josanne, this fair maid.
	And thow wile thee god forsake	If you will forsake your god
	And to Apolyn, me lord, take,	And worship my lord Apollyon,[15]
	Hire I schel thee yeve to wive	I will give her to you to marry
560	And al me lond after me live!"	Along with all my land after my life!"
	"For Gode!" queth Beves, "that I nolde	"By God," said Bevis, "That I can never do
	For al the selver ne al the golde,	For all the silver or all the gold
	That is under hevene light,	That is under Heaven's light,
	Ne for thee doughter, that is so bright.	Or for your daughter, who is so bright.
	I nolde forsake in none manere	I would not forsake in any way
	Jesu, that boughte me so dere.	Jesus, who bought me so dearly.
	Al mote thai be doum and deve,	All those must be deaf and dumb
	That on the false godes beleve!"	Who believe in the false gods!"[16]
	The king him lovede wel the more,	The king loved him all the more,
570	For him ne stod of no man sore,	For he stood in fear of no man,[17]
	And seide: "Beves, while thow ert swain,	And he said, "Bevis, while you are a servant,
	Thow schelt be me chaumberlain,	You will be my chamberlain.
	And thow schelt, whan thow ert dobbed knight,	And you will, when you are dubbed a knight,
	Me baner bere in to everi fight!"	Bear my banner in every fight!"
	Beves answerde al with skil:	Bevis answered agilely,

[15] *Apolyn*: Ermine does not mean the Greek god *Apollo*, youthful god of music and poetry, but *Apollyon*, the angel of the bottomless pit of hell: "They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon" (Rev. 9:11). In Lovelich's *History of the Holy Grail* (c. 1450) a Saracen explains, "we han foure Goddis… / Mahownd and Termagaunt, goddis so fin / anothir hihte Jubiter and Appolyn" (49:50-52). Henry Lovelich, *History of the Holy Grail*, ed. Frederick James Furnival (London: Early English Text Society, 1905). Apollyon also battles Christian in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

[16] Even for a medieval romance, it stretches credulity for Bevis, a purchased slave, to get away with this blasphemous insult intact. The idea may be that the king is impressed with his noble bearing and spirit and is willing to be patient with his conversion.

[17] A difficult line. MS University Library, Cambridge has "for he wolde not chaunge hys lore." Eugen Kölbing, *The Romance of Sir Beues of Hamtoun* (London: Early English Text Society, 1885), 27.

	"What ye me hoten, don ich wil!"	"Whatever you command, I will do!"
	Beves was ther yer and other,	Bevis was there a year and another,
	The king him lovede also is brother,	And the king loved him as a brother.
	And the maide that was so sligh.	So did the maid, who was so discreet,[18]
580	So dede everi man that him sigh.	And every man who might see him.
	Be that he was fiftene yer olde,	By the time he was fifteen years old,
	Knight ne swain thar nas so bolde,	There was no knight or servant so bold
	That him dorste ayenes ride	Who might ride against him
	Ne with wrethe him abide.	Or abide with him in hostility.
	His ferste bataile, for soth te say	His first battle, to tell the truth,
	A dede a Cristes messe day;	He faced one Christmas Day.
	Ase Beves scholde to water ride	As Bevis happened to ride to the water,
	And fiftene Sarasins be is side,	With fifteen Saracens by his side,
	And Beves rod on Arondel,	He rode on Arondel,
590	That was a stede gode and lel.	Who was a fine and loyal steed.
	A Sarasin began to say	A Saracen began to provoke him
	And askede him, what het that day.	And asked him what the day was called.
	Beves seide: "For soth ywis,	Bevis said, "In truth,
	I not never, what dai it is,	I do not know what day it is,
	For I nas boute seve winter old,	For I was only seven years old[19]
	Fro Cristendome ich was isold;	When I was sold from Christian lands.
	Tharfore I ne can telle nought thee,	Because of that I cannot tell you
	What dai that hit mighte be."	What day it might be."
	The Sarasin beheld and lough.	The Saracen looked and laughed.
600	"This dai," a saide, "I knowe wel inough.	"This day," he said, "even I know well enough.
	This is the ferste dai of Youl,	This is the first day of Christmas,
	Thee God was boren withouten doul;	When your god was born without pain.
	For thi men maken ther mor blisse	For this men make more joy there
	Than men do her in hethenesse.	Than they do here in heathen lands.
	Anoure thee God, so I schel myn,	Honor your God, as I do mine,
	Bothe Mahoun and Apolyn!"	Both Mohammad and Apollyon!"
	Beves to that Sarasin said:	Bevis replied to the Saracen,
	"Of Cristendom yit ichave abraid,	"I have known Christianity before.
	Ichave seie on this dai right	I have seen on this very day
610	Armed mani a gentil knight,	Many a noble knight armed
	Torneande right in the feld	Tourneying right on the field
	With helmes bright and mani scheld;	With bright helmets and many shields.
	And were ich alse stith in plas,	And if I were as strong in my time
	Ase ever Gii, me fader was,	As Guy, my father, ever was,
	Ich wolde for me Lordes love,	I would for the love of my Lord,
	That sit high in hevene above,	Who sits high above in Heaven,
	Fighte with yow everichon,	Fight with each one of you
	Er than ich wolde hennes gon!"	Before I went from here!"[20]

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[18] *Sligh*: The word here probably does not have the modern nuance of being devious, but rather that Josanne was either prudent or quick-witted. In the Auchinleck *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild* the poet says of Acula, the Irish king's daughter, that "of woundes was sche sleiȝe" (761). See also *Gamelyn* (556).

[19] *Seve winter old*: As with counting days in *nights*, ME also rather pessimistically counts years in winters.

[20] Jousting and tourneying were popular games during Christmas celebrations. Here Bevis feels stung into pious ferver when the Saracens know more about Christianity than he does and make him an object of ridicule. Siobhain Bly Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity: The Auchinleck Manuscript*

	The Sarasin seide to his felawes:	The Saracen said to his fellows,
620	"Lo, brethern, hire ye nought this sawes,	"Well, brothers, do you hear these tales,
	How the yonge Cristene hounde,	How the young Christian dog
	A saith, a wolde us fellen te grounde.	Says that he will fell us to the ground?
	Wile we aboute him gon	Will we take him on
	And fonde that treitour slon?"	And see if we can slay the traitor?"
	Al aboute thai gonne thringe,	They began to press him all around
	And hard on him thai gonne dinge	And struck hard on him,
	And yaf him wondes mani on	Giving him many a wound
	Thourgh the flesch in to the bon,	Through the flesh to the bone,
	Depe wondes and sore,	Wounds deep and sore,
630	That he mighte sofre namore;	So that he might not suffer any longer.
	Tho his bodi began to smerte,	Though his body began to hurt,
	He gan plokken up is hertte,	He plucked up his courage.
	Ase tid to a Sarasin a wond	He turned as quickly to a Saracen
	And breide a swerd out of is honde,	And seized the sword from his hand,
	And fifti Sarasins, in that stonde	And he gave fifty Saracens
	Thar with a yaf hem dedli wonde,	Deadly wounds at that time.
	And sum he strok of the swire,	With some he struck off their necks
	That the heved flegh in to the rivere,	So that the head flew into the river,
	And sum he clef evene asonder;	And some he cut down in two,
640	Here hors is fet thai laine under;	So that they lay under their horse's feet.
	Ne was ther non, that mighte ascape,	There were none who might escape
	So Beues slough hem in a rape.	As Bevis killed them in his haste.
	The stedes hom to stable ran	The steeds ran home to the stable
	Withoute kenning of eni man.	Without guidance from any man.
	Beves hom began to ride,	Bevis turned to ride home,
	His wondes bledde be ech side;	His wounds bleeding from each side.
	The stede he graithed up anon,	He stabled the horse right away
	In to his chaumber he gan gon	And went into his bedchamber
	And leide him deueling on the grounde,	And laid himself flat on the ground
650	To kolen his hertte in that stounde.	To calm his heart in that place.
	Tiding com to King Ermyn	Word came to King Ermine
	That Beves hadde mad is men tyn;	That Bevis had slaughtered his men.
	The king swor and seide is sawe.	The king cursed and gave his ruling
	For thi a scholde ben to-drawe.	That for them he should be quartered.
	Up stod that maide Josian,	The maiden Josanne stood up
	And to hire fader she seide than:	And said to her father,
	"Sire, ich wot wel in me thought,	"Sire, I know very well in my mind
	That thine men ne slough he nought,	That by Mohammad or Tervagaunt,
	Be Mahoun ne be Tervagaunt,	He did not slay your men
660	Boute hit were himself defendaunt!	Unless it was in self-defense!
	Ac, fader," she saide, "be me red,	But father," she said, "by my opinion,
	Er thow do Beves to ded,	Before you put Bevis to death,
	Ich praie, sire, for love o me,	I pray, sire, if you love me,
	Do bringe that child before thee!	Have the boy brought before you.
	Whan the child, that is so bold,	When the youth, who is so daring,
	His owene tale hath itolde,	Has explained his own story,
	And thow wite the soth, aplight,	And you know the truth, indeed,

(New York: Routledge, 2005), 56. Josanne is perhaps wrong in calling Bevis' actions self-defence (660), although for the men to answer his rhetoric with an attack of fifty against one does not seem justified.

	Who hath the wrong, who hath right,	Of who was wrong and who was right,
	Yef him his dom, that he schel have,	Then give him judgment, what he will have,
670	Whather thow wilt him slen or save!"	Whether you will kill or spare him!"
	King Ermyn seide: "Me doughter fre,	King Ermine answered, "My noble daughter,
	Ase thow havest seid, so it schel be!"	It will be as you have said."
	Josiane tho anon rightes	Josanne then immediately
	Clepede to hire twei knightes:	Called to her two knights:
	"To Beves now wende ye	"Go now to Bevis
	And prai him, that he come to me:	And implore that he come to me
	Er me fader arise fro his des;	Before my father rises from his throne.
	Ful wel ich schel maken is pes!"	I will make a full peace!"
	Forth the knightes gonne gon,	The knights went forth
680	To Beves chaumber thai come anon	And soon came to Bevis' chamber
	And praide, ase he was gentil man,	And asked, if he was a gentleman,
	Come speke with Josian.	To come speak with Josanne.
	Beves stoutliche in that stounde	At that moment Bevis lifted up his head
	Haf up is heved fro the grounde;	From the ground with determination.
	With stepe eighen and rowe bren	With shining eyes and fiery brows
	So lotheliche he gan on hem sen,	He looked so loathsome to them
	The twei knightes, thar thai stode,	That the two knights who stood there
	Thai were aferde, hii wer nigh wode.	Were afraid; they nearly panicked.
	A seide: "Yif ye ner masegers,	He said, "If you were not messengers,
690	Ich wolde yow sle, losengers!	I would slay you, you lying weasels!
	I nele rise o fot fro the grounde,	I will not rise one foot from the ground
	For speke with an hethene hounde:	To speak with a heathen hound.
	She is an honde, also be ye,	She is as much a dog as you are!
	Out of me chaumber swithe ye fle!"	Get out of my chamber right now!"
	The knightes wenten out in rape,	The knights scurried out in haste,
	Thai were fain so to ascape.	They were so eager to get away.
	To Josian thai wente as tit	They went to Josanne as quickly
	And seide: "Of him is gret despit:	And said, "He is very contemptuous.
	Sertes, a clepede thee hethene hound	For sure, he called you a heathen hound
700	Thries in a lite stounde	Three times in a short while.
	We nolde for al Ermonie	For all of Armenia, we would not
	Eft sones se him with our eie!"	Face him again with our own eyes!"
	"Hardeliche," she seide, "cometh with me,	"Be brave," she said, "and come with me,
	And ich wile your waraunt be!"	And I will be your guarantor."[21]
	Forth thai wente al isame,	They went out all together
	To Beves chaumber that he came.	To Bevis' bedchamber.
	"Lemman," she seide, "gent and fre,	" Dear heart," she said, "noble and generous,
	For Godes love, spek with me!"	For God's love, talk to me."
	She keste him bothe moth and chin	She kissed him on the mouth and chin
710	And yaf him confort gode afin,	And at length comforted him well.
	So him solaste that mai,	The maid gave him such solace
	That al is care wente awai,	That all his anxieties went away,
	And seide: "Lemman, thin ore!	And he said, "Darling, your grace.
	Icham iwonded swithe sore!"	I am wounded very badly."
	"Lemman," she seide, "with gode entent	"Dearest," she said, "in good faith,
	Ichave brought an oyniment,	I have brought a medication

[21] A slightly comic moment if the messengers are so meek that they need a young woman's 'protection,' but it also emphasizes Josanne's authority in the court and her assertiveness.

	For make thee bothe hol and fere;	To make you both whole and sound.
	Wende we to me fader dere!"	Let's make our way to my dear father."
	Forth thai wenten an highing	They went forth quickly
720	Til Ermyn, the riche king,	To Ermine, the rich king,
	And Beves tolde unto him than,	And Bevis then explained to him
	How that stour ended and gan,	How the conflict began and ended,
	And schewed on him in that stounde	And showed him at that moment
	Fourti grete, grisli wounde.	Forty huge, grisly wounds.
	Thanne seide King Ermin the hore:	Then grey-haired King Ermine said,
	"I nolde, Beves, that thow ded wore	"Bevis, I wouldn't have you dead
	For al the londes, that ichave;	For all the lands that I have!
	Ich praie, doughter, that thow him save	I pray, daughter, that you can save him
	And prove to hele, ase thow can,	And heal the wounds of this sturdy man
730	The wondes of that doughti man!"	If you are able."
	In to chaumber she gan him take	She took him into a chamber
	And riche bathes she let him make,	And made him luxurious baths,
	That withinne a lite stonde	So that within a short time
	He was bothe hol and sonde.	He was both whole and sound.[22]
	Thanne was he ase fresch to fight,	Then he was as fresh to battle
	So was the faukoun to the flight.	As the falcon is to flight.
	His other prowesse who wile lere,	His other feat of prowess, whoever wishes
	Hende, herkneth, and ye mai here!	To know, listen, gentlemen, and you will hear.
	A wilde bor thar was aboute,	A wild boar which was charging about
740	Ech man of him hadde gret doute.	Put great fear into every man.
	Man and houndes, that he tok,	Men and hounds, whatever it seized,
	With his toskes he al toschok.	With its tusks it shook it apart.
	Thei him hontede knightes tene,	Ten knights hunted it
	Tharof ne yef he nought a bene,	And it didn't care a bean about it.
	At is mouth fif toskes stoden out,	From its mouth five tusks stood out;
	Everich was fif enches about,	Each was five inches wide.
	His sides wer hard and strong,	Its sides were hard and strong,
	His brostles were gret and long,	And its bristles were great and long.
	Himself was fel and kouthe fighte,	It was fierce and knew how to fight.
750	No man sle him ne mighte.	No man could slay it!
	Beves lay in is bedde a night	Bevis lay in his bed at night
	And thoughte, a wolde kethen is might	And resolved that he would prove his might
	Upon that swin himself one,	Alone against that swine,
	That no man scholde with him gone.	That no man should go with him.
	A morwe, whan hit was dai cler,	In the morning, when the day was clear,
	Ariseth knight and squier;	The knight and his squire arose.
	Beves let sadlen is ronsi,	Bevis had his horse saddled,[23]

[22] The modern belief that the medieval Europeans disliked or prohibited bathing dies hard. While the church was concerned with the temptations of public nudity, frequent bathing itself for cleanliness or socializing was common until the Renaissance. See Jennifer A. Heise, "A Short History of Bathing Before 1601," accessed 21 May 2010 at http://www.gallowglass.org/jadwiga/herbs/baths.html. The connection between hygiene and infectious wounds may not have been clearly understood, but there is an interesting account in the autobiography (*Kitab al i'tibar*) of Usmah Ibn Munqidh (1095-1188) where he observes a Frankish doctor treating an infected leg with vinegar. Actual Islamic medical techniques were considerably more advanced than European practices.

[23] *Ronsi*: A *rouncey* was a good all-purpose horse, perfectly fitting for a young warrior and less expensive than warhorses such as the *courser*.

	That bor a thoughte to honti,	Intending to hunt that boar.
	A gerte him with a gode brond	He armed himself with a good sword
760	And tok a spere in is hond,	And took a spear into his hand.
	A scheld a heng upon is side,	Hanging a shield upon his side,
	Toward the wode he gan ride.	He rode toward the woods.
	Josian, that maide, him beheld,	Josanne, the maid, looked on him
	Al hire love to him she feld;	And felt all her love for him surge.
	To hire self she seide, ther she stod:	She said to herself where she stood,
	"Ne kepte I never more gode	"I wouldn't care for any thing,
	Ne namore of al this worldes blisse,	Or any more of the world's joys,
	Thanne Beves with love o time te kisse;	More than to kiss Bevis once with love.
	In gode time were boren,	She who Bevis chose as his lover
770	That Beves hadde to lemman koren!"	Was born in a happy moment!"[24]
	Tho Beves in to the wode cam,	When Bevis came into the woods,
	His scheld aboute is nekke a nam	He placed his shield about his neck
	And tide his hors to an hei thorn	And tied his horse to a high tree,
	And blew a blast with is horn;	And blew a blast with his horn.
	Thre motes a blew al arowe,	He blew three notes in a row
	That the bor him scholde knowe.	So that the boar would hear him.
	Tho he com to the bor is den,	When he found the boar's den,
	A segh ther bones of dede men,	He saw the bones of dead men
	The bor hadde slawe in the wode,	The swine had slain in the woods,
780	Ieten here flesch and dronke her blode.	Eating their flesh and drinking their blood.
	"Aris!" queth Beves, "corsede gast,	"Get up," shouted Bevis, "cursed spirit,
	And yem me bataile wel in hast!"	And give me battle right now!"
	Sone so the bor him sigh,	As soon as the boar saw him,
	A rerde is brosteles wel an high	It hastily reared up its bristles
	And starede on Beves with eien holwe,	And stared at Bevis with hungry eyes,
	Also a wolde him have aswolwe;	As if they could swallow him.
	And for the bor yenede so wide,	And when the boar's mouth gaped wide,
	A spere Beves let to him glide;	Bevis let fly a spear toward it.
	On the scholder he smot the bor,	He struck the boar on the shoulder,
790	His spere barst to pises thore	And his spear burst to pieces there.
	The bor stod stille ayen the dent,	The boar stood motionless against the blow;
	His hyde was harde ase eni flent.	His hide was as hard as any flint.
	Now al to-borste is Beves spere,	When Bevis' spear was shattered,
	A drough his swerd, himself to were,	He drew his sword to protect himself
	And faught ayen the bor so grim,	And fought against the forbidding beast.
	A smot the bor and he to him.	He hit the boar and was struck in turn.
	Thus the bataile gan leste long	Thus the battle lasted a long while
	Til the time of evesong,	Until the time of sunset,
	That Beves was so weri of foughte,	So that Bevis was so tired from fighting
800	That of is lif he ne roughte,	That he cared nothing for his life.
	And tho the bor was also,	And when the boar was also weary,
	Awai fro Beves he gan go,	It began to move away from Bevis
	Wile Beves made is praier	While Bevis made his prayer
	To God and Mari, is moder dere,	To God and Mary, His dear mother,
	Whather scholde other slen.	Whether he should slay the other.

[24] This rendering is a contextual guess, as the poet has created a rather confusing mélange. *Bevis* is the most difficult of my texts here, and Kölberg complains that it is the hardest text to establish among medieval romances. He helps clarify lines 766-70 with eight variant MSS readings (*Beues*, 37).

	With that com the bor ayen	With that the boar came back
	And bente is brostles up, saunfaile,	And bent its bristles up, without fail,
	Ayen Beves to yeve bataile;	To fight on against Bevis.
	Out at is mouth in aither side	Out of either side of its mouth
810	The foim ful ferli gan out glide;	The foam spewed out strangely.
	And Beves in that ilche veneu,	And at that same place,
	Thourgh Godes grace and is vertu	Through God's grace and His virtue,
	With swerd out a slinte	Bevis sliced off two tusks
	Twei toskes at the ferste dent;	With his sword at the first stroke.
	A spanne of the groin beforn	He had cut off a hand's length
	With is swerd he hath of schoren.	Of its snout with his blade.
	Tho the bor so loude cride,	Then the boar cried out loudly,
	Out of the forest wide and side,	Out of the forest far and wide,
	To the castel thar that lai Ermin,	To the castle where Ermine lay.
820	Men herde the noise of the swin;	Men heard the noise of the swine.
	And, alse he made that lotheli cri,	And as it made that hideous cry,
	His swerd Beves hasteli	Bevis hastily thrust his sword
	In at the mouth gan threste tho	Into its mouth
	And karf his hertte evene ato	And carved its heart neatly into two.
	The swerd a breide ayen fot hot	He brandished the sword again swiftly
	And the bor is heved of smot,	And struck off the boar's head.
	And on a tronsoun of is spere	And on the handle of his spear
	That heved a stikede for to bere,	He stuck the head to carry it.
	Thanne a sette horn to mouthe	Then he put the horn to his mouth
830	And blew the pris ase wel kouthe,	And blew the well-known signal for victory.
	So glad he was for is honting.	So pleased he was with his hunting,
	That heved a thoughte Josian bring:	He decided to bring the head to Josanne.
	And er he com to that maide fre,	But before he came to the fair maid,
	Him com strokes so gret plenté,	He was so resolute to defend his head
	That fain he was to weren is hed	And save himself from death
	And save himself fro the ded.	That he would endure plenty of sword strokes.
	A stiward was with King Ermin,	King Ermine had a steward
	That hadde tight to sle that swin;	Who had hoped to slay that swine.
	To Beves a bar gret envie,	He had great jealousy of Bevis
840	For that he hadde the meistrie;	For having the victory.
	He dede arme his knightes stoute,	He had his stout knights armed,
	Four and twenti in a route,	Twenty four in a row,
	And ten forsters also he tok	And took ten foresters as well,
	And wente to wode, seith the bok.	And went to the woods, so says the book.
	Thar-of ne wiste Beves nought.	Bevis knew nothing of this.
	Helpe him God, that alle thing wrought!	May God, who created all things, help him!
	In is wei he rit pas for pas.	Along his path he rode step by step
	Herkneth now a ferli cas:	And came upon a awful sight
	A wende pasi in grith and pes,	As he passed by in amity and peace.
850	The stiward cride: "Leith on and sles!"	The steward cried, "Lay on and kill!"
	Beves seigh that hii to him ferde,	Bevis saw them rush to him.
	A wolde drawe to is swerde:	He would have drawn his sword,
	Thanne had he leved it thor,	But he had left it back there
	Thar he hadde slawe the bor.	Where he had slain the boar.
	He nadde nothing, himself to were,	He had nothing to defend himself
	Boute a tronsoun of a spere.	But the handle of a spear.
	Tho was Beves sore desmeid,	Though Bevis was sorely dismayed,
	The heved fro the tronsoun a braid,	He took the head from the handle
	And with the bor is heved a faught	And fought with the swine's head.

860	And wan a swerd of miche maught,	He seized a sword of great power;
	That Morgelai was cleped, aplight.	It was called Morgelai, in truth.
	Beter swerd bar never knight.	No knight ever had a better sword.
	Tho Beves hadde that swerd an hond,	When Bevis had that sword in hand
	Among the hethene knightes a wond,	He turned to the heathen knights,
	And sum upon the helm a hitte,	And some he hit on the head,
	In to the sadel he hem slitte,	Chopping them down to the saddle,
	And sum knight Beves so ofraughte,	And one knight that Bevis reached
	The heved of at the ferste draughte,	Had his head cut off at the first stroke.
	So harde he gan to lein aboute	He rushed about so forcefully
870	Among the hethene knightes stoute,	Among the strong pagan knights
	That non ne pasede hom, aplight;	That none returned home, in fact.
	So thourgh the grace of God almight	So through the grace of God almighty,
	The kinges stiward a hitte so,	He hit the king's steward so hard
	That is bodi a clef ato.	That he cleft his body in two.
	The dede kors a pulte adoun	He pulled down the dead corpse
	And lep himself in to the arsoun.	And raised himself into the saddle.
	That strok him thoughte wel iset	He thought that stroke was well placed,
	For he was horsed meche bet.	For he was horsed much better.
	He thoughte make pes doun rightes	He hoped to make some type of peace
880	Of the forsters ase of the knightes;	With the foresters as with the knights.
	To hem faste he gan ride;	He rode quickly to them.
	Thai gonne schete be ech a side,	From their side they began to shoot
	So mani arwes to him thai sende,	So many arrows at him
	Unnethe a mighte himself defende,	That he could scarcely protect himself.
	So tho is a lite stounde	And so then in a little while
	The ten forsters wer feld te grounde,	The ten foresters were all felled to the ground
	And hew hem alle to pices smale:	And cut into small pieces;
	So hit is fonde in Frensche tale.	So it is found in the French tale.
	Josian lai in a castel	From the castle where she waited,
890	And segh that sconfit everich del.	Josanne saw every bit of that quarrel.
	"O Mahoun," she seide, "oure drighte,	"O Mohammed, our Lord!" she cried.
	What Beves is man of meche mighte!	What a man of great might Bevis is!
	Al this world yif ich it hedde,	I would give all the world, if I had it,
	Ich him yeve me to wedde;	To give myself to marry him.
	Boute he me love, icham ded.	Unless he loves me I am dead.
	Swete Mahoun, what is thee red?	Sweet Mohammed, what should I do?
	Lovelonging me hath becought,	Lovesickness has enraptured me,
	Thar-of wot Beves right nought,"	Even if Bevis knows nothing of it."
	Thus that maide made hire mon,	And so that maid pleaded her complaint
900	Thar she stod in the tour al on,	Where she stood in the tower alone.
	And Beves thar the folk beleved	And Bevis left the people there
	And wente hom with the heved;	And went home with the head.
	That heved of that wilde swin	He presented the head of that wild swine
	He presente to King Ermin.	To King Ermine.
	The king thar-of was glad and blithe	The king was very glad of it
	And thankede him ful mani a sithe,	And thanked him many times,
	Ac he ne wiste ther of nowight,	Though he had no knowledge at all
	How is stiward to dethe was dight.	How his steward was brought to death.
	Thre yer after that bataile,	Three years after that battle,
910	That Beves the bor gan asaile,	From when Bevis attacked the boar,
	A king ther com in to Ermonie	A king came there to Ermine
	And thoughte winne with meistrie	And hoped to win with victory
	Josiane, that maide bright,	Josanne, that beautiful maid,

	That lovede Beves with al hire might.	Who loved Bevis with all her might.
	Brademond cride, ase he wer wod,	Brademond blustered, as if he were mad,
	To King Ermin, thar a stod:	To King Ermine, where he stood,
	"King," a seide swithe blive,	"King!" he said very abruptly,
	"Yem me thee doughter to wive!	"Give me your daughter for my wife!
	Yif thow me wernest, withouten faile,	If you refuse me, without fail,
920	I schel winne hire in plein bataile,	I will win her by open battle.
	On fele half I schel thee anughe,	I will attack you on many sides.
	And al thee londe I schel destruye	I will destroy all your lands
	And thee sle, so mai betide,	And slay you, if it so happens,
	And lay hire a night be me side,	And lay with her in the night.
	And after I wile thee doughter yeve	And after then I will give your daughter
	To a weine-pain, that is fordrive!"	To some worn-out old carter!"[25]
	Ermin answerde blive on highe:	Ermine answered proudly at once,
	"Be Mahoun, sire, thow schelt lighe!"	"By Mohammed, sir, you will be proved a liar!"
	Adoun of his tour a went	He went down from his tower
930	And after al is knightes a sent / And tolde hem	And sent for all of his knights, and told them
	How Brademond him asailed hadde,	How Brademond had threatened him,[26]
	And askede hem alle, what hii radde.	And asked them all what they advised.
	A word thanne spak that maiden bright:	Then that bright maiden spoke a word:
	"Be Mahoun, sire! wer Beves a knight,	"By Mohammed, sire, if Bevis were a knight,
	A wolde defende thee wel inough.	He would defend you well enough.
	Me self I segh, whar he slough	I saw myself when he defeated
	Your owene stiward, him beset,	Your own steward, who set upon him.
	Al one in the wode with him a met,	Bevis met him alone in the forest.
	At wode he hadde his swerd beleved,	He left his sword behind in the woods
940	Thar he smot of the bores heved;	Where he had struck off the boar's head.
	He nadde nothing, himself to were,	He had nothing to defend himself with
	Boute a tronsoun of is spere,	But the handle of his spear.
	And your stiward gret peple hadde,	And your steward had many people;
	Four and twenti knightes a ladde,	He led twenty four knights,
	Al y-armed to the teth,	All armed to the teeth
	And everi hadde swore is deth,	And all sworn to his death,
	And ten forsters of the forest	With ten foresters from the woods
	With him a broughte ase prest,	Brought there with him, equally ready.
	That thoughte him have slawe thore	They planned to slay him there
950	And take the heved of the bore,	And take the boar's head
	And yeve the stiward the renoun.	And give the steward the glory.
	Tho Beves segh that foule tresoun,	When Bevis saw that foul villainy,
	A leide on with the bor is heved,	He went at them with the boar's head
	Til that hii were adoun iweved,	Until they were knocked down.
	And of the stiward a wan that day	And on that day he took from the steward
	His gode swerd Morgelay.	His good sword, Morgelai.
	The ten forsters also a slough	He destroyed the ten foresters as well
	And hom a pasede wel inough,	And came home when he no longer
	That he of hem hadde no lothe."	Had to fear them."
960	King Ermyn thanne swor is othe,	King Ermine then swore his oath
	That he scholde be maked knight,	That Bevis should be made a knight

[25] TEAMS notes that Brademonde threatens to deflower Josanne and then pass her on to someone in the lower classes, a humiliating disgrace and the first of many threats to her virginity.

[26] 931 is an especially long line and begins here at the tail of 930.

	His baner to bere in that fight.	And to bear his banner in the fight.
	He clepede Beves at that sake	He called Bevis for that reason
	And seide: “Knight ich wile thee make.	And said, “I will make you a knight.
	Thow schelt bere in to bataile	You will carry my banner
	Me baner, Brademond to asaile!”	Into the battle to attack Brademond!”[27]
	Beves answerde with blithe mod:	Bevis answered with high spirits:
	“Blethelich,” a seide, “be the Rod!”	“With joy,” he said, “by the Cross!”
	King Ermin tho anon righte	King Ermine then straightaway
970	Dobbede Beves unto knighte	Dubbed Bevis a knight
	And yaf him a scheld gode and sur	And gave him a shield, firm and sure,
	With thre eglen of asur,	With three azure eagles,
	The champe of gold ful wel idight	With the front finely ornamented with gold,
	With fif lables of selver bright;	With five ribbons of bright silver.
	Sithe a gerte him with Morgelay,	Then he armed himself with Morgelai,
	A gonfanoun wel stout and gay	And a banner, sturdy and bright
	Josian him broughte for to bere.	That Josanne brought for him to wear.
	Sent of the scheld, I yow swere!	She was a saint of the shield, I swear to you.
	Beves dede on is actoun,	Bevis put on his jacket;
980	Hit was worth mani a toun;	It was worth many a town.
	An hauberk him broughte that mai,	The maiden brought him a mail shirt.
	So seiden alle that hit isai:	All who saw it said
	Hit was wel iwrought and faire,	It was well-crafted and handsome.
	Non egge tol mighte it nought paire.	No edge would sever it.
	After that she yaf him a stede,	After that she gave him his steed
	That swithe gode was at nede,	That would be so good in times of need,
	For hit was swift and ernede wel.	For it was swift and ran well.
	Me clepede hit Arondel.	Men called it Arondel.
	Beves in the sadel lep,	Bevis leaped into the saddle.
990	His ost him folwede al to hep	His host followed him in a group,
	With baner bright and scheldes schene,	With bright banners and shining shields,
	Thretti thosent and fiftene,	Thirty thousand and fifteen more.
	The ferste scheld trome Beves nam.	Bevis headed the first shield vanguard
	Brademond aghenes him cam;	As Brademond came against him.
	His baner bar the King Redefoun,	His banner bore King Redfoun,
	That levede on Sire Mahoun.	Who believed in Mohammad.
	Row he was also a schep,	He was as rough as a shepherd;
	Beves of him nam gode kep.	Bevis took careful note of him
	He smot Arondel with spures of golde;	And struck Arondel with golden spurs.
1000	Thanne thoughte that hors, that he scholde,	The horse knew what it was meant to do.
	Aghen Redefoun Beves gan ride	Bevis rode out against Redfoun
	And smot him thourgh out bothe side,	And struck him on both sides.
	Hauberk ne scheld ne actoun	Neither mailshirt, shield, nor jacket
	Ne vailede him nought worth a botoun,	Helped him any more than a button,
	That he ne fel ded to the grounde.	So that he fell dead to the ground.
	“Reste thee,” queth Beves, “hethen hounde!	“Rest yourself,” said Bevis, “heathen hound!
	Thee hadde beter atom than here!”	You were better off at home than here.
	“Lay on faste!” a bad his fere.	Lay on fast!” he commanded his army.
	Tho laide thai on with eger mod	They attacked with keen vigor
1010	And slowe Sarsins, as hii wer wod,	And killed Saracens as though they were berserk,

[27] *Me baner*: As in 574, Ermine is not proposing that Sir Bevis be a mere herald, but to carry a standard with his coat of arms; in effect, to be a commander leading his division.

	And Sire Beves, the Cristene knight	And Sir Bevis, the Christian knight,
	Slough ase mani in that fight	Slaughtered as many men in that battle,
	With Morgelay himself alone,	With Morgelai himself alone,
	Ase thai deden everichone.	As did everyone else.
	And ever hii were to fighte prest	They were continually pressed to the fight
	Til that the sonne set in the west.	Until the sun set in the west.
	Beves and is ost withinne a stounde	Bevis and his host, within that time
	Sexti thosent thai felde to grounde,	Fell sixty thousand to the ground
	That were out of Dameske isent,	Who were sent from Damascus
1020	That never on homward ne went;	And who never went home again.
	Tho Brademond segh is folk islayn,	When Brademond saw his men dead,
	A flegh awei with mighte and mayn.	He fled away with his army and followers.
	Ase he com ride be a cost,	As he went riding by the coast,
	Twei knightes a fond of Beves ost;	He found two knights of Bevis' host.
	Of his stede he gan doun lighte	He alighted from his horse
	And bond hem bothe anon righte,	And bound them both tightly,
	And thoughte hem lede to his prisoun	Intending to take them to his prison
	And have for hem gret raunsoun.	And hold them for great ransom.[28]
	Ase he trosede hem on is stede,	As he trussed them on his steed,
1030	Beves of hem nam gode hede,	Bevis took careful note of them
	And hasteliche in that tide	And hastily began to ride
	After Brademond he gan ride	After Brademond.
	And seide: "Brademond, olde wreche,	He said, "Brademond, you old wretch,
	Ertow come Josiane to feche?	Aren't you coming to fetch Josanne?
	Erst thow schelt pase thourgh min hond	First you will pass through my hand
	And thourgh Morgelay, me gode brond!"	And through Morgelai, my good sword!"
	Withouten eni wordes mo	Without any more words
	Beves Brademond hitte so	Bevis bludgeoned Brademond so hard
	Upon is helm in that stounde,	On his helmet in that moment
1040	That a felde him flat to grounde.	That he threw him flat to the ground.
	"Merci!" queth Bradmond, "ich me yelde,	"Mercy!" said Brademond. "I surrender,
	Recreaunt to thee, in this felde,	Defeated by you on this field!
	So harde thee smitest upon me kroun,	You have hit me so hard on the head
	Ich do me all in the bandoun,	I yield over to you
	Sexti cites with castel tour	Sixty cities with castle towers
	Thin owen, Beves, to thin onour,	To be your own, Bevis, to your honor,
	With that thow lete me ascape!"	Providing that you let me go."
	Beves answerde tho in rape:	Bevis answered immediately,
	"Nay!" a seide, "be sein Martyn!	"No," he replied, "by Saint Martin.
1050	Icham iswore to King Ermin.	I am sworn to King Ermine.
	Al that ich do, it is his dede;	All that I do is his accomplishment.
	Tharfore, sire, so God me spede,	Therefore, sir, so help me God,
	Thow schelt swere upon the lay,	You will swear upon the law
	Thow schelt werre on him night ne day,	To neither by night or day wage war against him,
	And omage eche yer him yelde	And to yield homage to him
	And al the londe of him helde!"	And all the lands in his dominion each year."

[28] The capturing of prisoners for ransom was common on medieval European warfields, and Chaucer himself was held in 1360 for £16, about US$8500 in modern currency according to the UK National Archives (accessed 24 May 2010 at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/). A knight would have been worth substantially more. Military leaders began to complain about mercenaries more interested in lining their pockets than fighting, and the poet has a scolding tone here for Brademond's opportunism.

	Brademond answerde anon righte:	Brademond answered straightaway,
	"Tharto me treuthe I thee plighte,	"I pledge my word to you,
	That I ne schel never don him dere	That I will never do him harm
1060	Ne aghen thee, Beves, armes bere!"	Nor bear arms against you, Bevis."
	And whan he hadde swore so,	And when he had sworn in this way,
	Beves let King Brademond go.	Bevis let King Brademond go.
	Allas, that he nadde him slawe	Alas that he did not slay him
	And ibrought of is life dawe!	And bring a close to his life's days!
	For sithe for al is faire beheste	For later, despite all his fair promises,
	Mani dai a maked him feste,	He made Bevis fast for many a day
	In is prisoun a lai seve yere,	In his prison, for seven years,
	Ase ye may now forthward here.	As you may hear from here on.
	Beves rod hom and gan to singe	Bevis rode home and began to sing
1070	And seide to Ermin the Kinge:	And said to Ermine, the king:
	"Sire! Brademond, King of Sarasine,	"Sire, Brademond, King of the Saracens,
	A is become one of thine;	Has become one of yours.
	The man a is to thin heste,	The man is under your command
	While his lif wile leste,	While his life lasts.
	Londes and ledes, al that he walt,	Lands and people, all that he has,
	A saith, sire, of thee hem halt!"	He says he holds them, my lord, by you."
	Thanne was King Ermin at that sithe	Then King Ermine at that time
	In is hertte swithe blithe;	Was very glad in his heart.
	A clepede is doughter and saide:	He called his daughter and said,
1080	"Josian, the faire maide,	"Josanne, fair maid.
	Unarme Beves, he wer at mete,	Unarm Bevis before dinner
	And serve thee self him ther-ate!"	And serve him there yourself."
	Tho nolde that maide never blinne,	Then that maid never rested
	Til she com to hire inne,	Until she came to her lodging
	Thar she lai hire selve anight:	Where she bedded down at night.
	Thar she sette that gentil knight,	There she set that noble knight
	Hire self yaf him water to hond	And herself gave him water to his hands
	And sette before him al is sonde.	And set before him all he requested.
	Tho Beves hadde wel i-ete	When Bevis had eaten his fill
1090	And on the maidenes bed isete,	And sat on the maiden's bed,
	That mai, that was so bright of hiwe,	That woman who was so radiant in color[29]
	Thoughte she wolde hire consaile schewe,	Thought she would reveal her heart.
	And seide: "Beves, lemman, thin ore!	She said, "Bevis, dear, your favor!
	Ichave loved thee ful yore,	I have loved you so ardently that
	Sikerli can I no rede,	I surely know no other course.
	Boute thow me love, icham dede,	I am dead unless you love me
	And boute thow with me do thee wille."	And unless you do as you wish with me!"
	"For Gode," queth Beves, "that ich do nelle!	"By God," he vowed, "I cannot do that.
	Her is," a seide, "min unliche,	You might have someone better,[30]

[29] *So bright of hiwe:* ME seems to be rich in terms for female beauty related to light reflection, such as *bright in bour*. *Beauty* itself is an import (Old French *biauté*, Latin *bellus*) and OE used *sciene*. As late as 1596 Spenser's *Faerie Queene* praises Una's "sunshyny face" (I.12.200). Millward speculates that OE was rich in adjectives for light and weak in ones of hue because of England's cloudy climate and scarcity of dyes. Celia M. Millward, *A Biography of the English Language* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 108.

1100	Brademond King, that is so riche,	Brademond the king, who is so rich.
	In al this world nis ther man,	In all this world there is no man,
	Prinse ne king ne soudan,	Prince, king, or sultan
	That thee to wive have nolde,	Who wouldn't want you as a wife
	And he the hadde ones beholde!"	If he gazed on you once.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
E&N	And y am a knyght of uncouth londe	And I am a knight from an unknown land.
--	I have no more than y in stonde,	I have no more than what I stand in,
--	Neither here ne in my herde,	Neither here nor in my keep,
--	But y it wynne with dynt of swerde!	Unless I win it with the edge of my sword."[31]
	. . . . .	. . . . .
1105	"Merci," she seide, "yet with than	"Mercy!" she said. "For all that,
	Ichavede thee lever to me lemman,	I would rather have you as my lover,
	Thee bodi in thee scherte naked,	Your body in your shirt naked,
	Than al the gold, that Crist hath maked,	Than all the gold that God has made,
	And thow wost with me do thee wille!"	And you know that you feel the same."
1110	"For Gode," queth Beves, "that I do nelle!"	"By God," Bevis replied, "I will never do it!"
	Sche fel adoun and wep right sore:	She fell down and wept bitterly:
	"Thow seidest soth her before:	"You just told the truth there.
	In al this world nis ther man,	In all this world there is no man,
	Prinse ne king ne soudan,	Prince, king, or sultan
	That me to wive have nolde,	Who wouldn't have me as wife,
	And he me hadde ones beholde,	If he looked on me once.
	And thow, cherl, me havest forsake;	And you, peasant, reject me.
	Mahoun thee yeve tene and wrake!	May Mohammed give you pain and suffering!
	Beter become the iliche	It would be better for the likes of you
1120	For to fowen an olde diche	To clean an old ditch
	Thanne for to be dobbed knight,	Than to be dubbed a knight
	Te gon among maidenes bright.	To walk beside sunny maidens!
	To other contré thow might fare:	You can go to another country;
	Mahoun thee yeve tene and care!"	May Mohammed give you trouble and woe!"
	"Damesele," a seide, "thow seist unright;	"Madam," he said, "you speak unjustly.
	Me fader was bothe erl and knight.	My father was both earl and knight.
	How mighte ich thanne ben a cherl,	How then could I be a peasant
	Whan me fader was knight and erl?	When my father was knight and earl?
	To other contré ich wile te:	I'll go to another country then.
1130	Scheltow me namore ise!	You will never see me again.
	Thow yeve me an hors: lo it her!	You gave me a horse—well, bring it here!
	I nel namore of thee daunger!"	I want no more of your court games."
	Forth him wente Sire Bevoun	Sir Bevis went out
	And tok is in in that toun,	And took lodging in the town,
	Sore aneighed and aschamed,	Sorely annoyed and ashamed,
	For she hadde him so gramed.	For she had so angered him.
	Tho Beves was to toun igo,	When Bevis had gone to town,
	Tho began that maidenes wo;	Then the maiden's woes began.

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[30] *Her is, a seide, min unliche*: "There is someone unlike me." Kölberg has the variant *Thou maiste have one me on-liche* (875) in a printed copy by Richard Pyson (1520) now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. In Kölberg, *Beues*, 52.

[31] MS of Egerton 2862 and Royal Library, Naples, XIII, B 29. In Kölberg, *Beues, 52.* The sense of these lines is that Sir Bevis is suspicious of Brademond and argues that Josanne will be fickle because of her beauty and because of his poverty. The addition also helps explain Josanne's furious reply.

	Thanne was hire wo with alle,	She was so despondent in every way,
1140	Hire thoughte, the tour wolde on hir falle.	She thought the tower would fall on her.
	She clepede hire chaumberlein Bonefas	She called her chamberlain, Boniface,
	And tolde to him al hire cas	And told him all her troubles
	And bad him to Beves wende:	And asked him to go to Bevis:
	"And sai him, ich wile amende	"And tell him, I will make amends,
	Al togedre of word and dede,	In word and deed together,
	Of that ichave him misede!"	All that I spoke falsely about him."
	Forth wente Bonefas in that stounde	Boniface went out at that moment
	And Beves in is chaumber a founde	And found Bevis in his room;
	And seide, she him theder sende,	He said she had sent him there
1150	And that she wolde alle amende	And that she would amend everything
	Al togedres to is wille,	In harmony with his will,
	Bothe loude and eke stille.	Both the loud and the quiet.
	Thanne answerde Beves the fer:	Bevis answered politely,
	"Sai, thow might nought speden her!	"Say you have nothing to cheer her.
	Ac for thow bringest fro hire mesage,	But for you, for bringing her message,
	I schel thee yeve to the wage	I will give you for your wage
	A mantel whit so melk:	A cloak as white as milk.
	The broider is of Tuli selk,	The embroidery is of Toulouse silk,
	Beten abouten with rede golde,	Shaped about with red gold,
1160	The king to were, thegh a scholde!"	Fit for a king to wear if he should."
	Bonefas him thankede yerne,	Boniface thanked him earnestly
	Hom aghen he gan terne;	And he turned back home.
	A fond that maide in sorwe and care	He found the maid in sorrow and anxiousness
	And tolde hire his answare,	And told her Bevis' answer,
	That he ne mighte nought spede	That he had no encouragement
	Aboute hire nede,	For her desires,
	And seide: "Thow haddest unright,	And added, "You were in the wrong
	So te misain a noble knight!"	To abuse such a noble knight."
	"Who yaf thee this ilche wede?	"Who gave you this clothing here?"
1170	"Beves, that hendi knight!" a sede.	"Bevis, that gracious knight," he said.
	"Allas!" she seide, "Ich was to blame,	"Alas!" she said. "I was to blame
	Whan ich seide him swiche schame,	When I spoke to him so shamefully.
	For hit nas never a cherles dede,	For it was never a peasant's way
	To yeve a maseger swiche a wede!	To give a messenger such finery."
	Whan he nel nought to me come,	"If he will not come to me,
	The wei to his chaumber I wil neme,	I will make my way to his chamber,
	And, what ever of me befalle,	And, whatever happens to me,
	Ich wile wende in to is halle!"	I will go into his hall."
	Beves herde that maide ther-oute.	Bevis heard the maid outside.
1180	Ase yif aslep, he gan to route.	As if asleep, he began to snore.
	"Awake, lemman!" she seide, "Awake!	"Wake up, darling," she said, "wake up!
	Icham icome, me pes to make.	I have come to make peace.
	Lemman, for the corteisie,	Sweetheart, for courtesy's sake,
	Spek with me a word or tweie!"	Speak with me a word or two."
	"Damesele," queth Beves thanne,	"My lady," Bevis answered,
	"Let me ligge and go the wei henne!	"Go away and let me lie here.
	Icham weri of-foughte sore,	I am exhausted from battle.
	Ich faught for thee, I nel namore."	I fought for you, I will not do it anymore."
	"Merci," she seide, "lemman, thin ore!"	"Mercy," she said, "darling, your kindness!"
1190	She fel adoun and wep wel sore:	She fell down and wept sorely.
	"Men saith," she seide, "in olde riote,	"Men say," she cried, "in tavern talk,
	That wimmannes bolt is sone schote.	That a woman's arrow is rashly shot.

	Forghem me, that ichave misede,	Forgive me that I have misspoken,
	And ich wile right now to mede	And I will right now in return
	Min false godes al forsake	Abandon all my false gods and take
	And Cristendom for thee love take!"	Christianity for the sake of your love."
	"In that maner," queth the knight,	"On those terms," said the knight,
	"I graunte thee, me swete wight!"	"I accept you, my sweet girl!"
	And kiste hire at that cordement.	And kissed her on that accord.
1200	Tharfore he was negh after schent.	For this he was nearly destroyed later.
	The twei knightes, that he unbond,	From the two knights that he freed,
	That were in Brademondes hond,	Who were in Brademond's hand,
	He made that on is chaumberlain.	He made one his chamberlain.
	Him hadde be beter, he hadde hem slein!	It would have been better had he slain them!
	Thei wente to the king and swor othe:	They went to the king and swore oaths:
	"No wonder, sire, thegh ye be wrothe,	"It's no wonder, sire, if you were angry.
	No wonder, thegh ye ben agreved,	It's no wonder if you were aggrieved,
	Whan Beves, scherewe misbeleved,	When Bevis, the wicked infidel,
	The doughter he hath now forlain.	Has now deflowered your daughter.
1210	Hit were gode, sire, that he wer slain!"	It would be good, sire, if he were executed."
	Hii lowe, the scherewes, that him gan wreie.	They lied, those vermin, in betraying him.
	In helle mote thai hongen beie!	May they be hanged in hell!
	He dede nothing, boute ones hire kiste,	He did nothing more than kiss her once;
	Nought elles bi hem men ne wiste.	Neither man knew of anything more.
	Tharfore hit is soth isaide	So thus it is truly said,
	And in me rime right wel ilaid.	And in my rhyme it's well placed:
	Delivre a thef fro the galwe,	Rescue a thief from the gallows,
	He thee hateth after be alle halwe!	And by all the saints, he will hate you.[32]
	"Allas!" queth Ermin, the King,	"Alas!" cried Ermine, the king.
1220	"Wel sore me reweth that tiding!	"How I sorely regret this news.
	Sethe he com me ferst to,	See that he comes before me first.
	So meche he hath for me ido,	He has done so much for me
	I ne mighte for al peynim londe,	That I could not have men harm him
	That men dede him eni schonde!	For all the pagan lands.
	Ac fain ich wolde awreke be,	But I would gladly be avenged
	Boute I ne mighte hit nought ise."	If I did not have to see it."
	Thanne bespak a Sarasin -	Then a Saracen spoke up;
	Have he Cristes kurs and myn -	May he have Christ's curse as well as mine.
	"Sire, she scholle for is sake	"Sire, for our purposes[33]
1230	A letter swithe anon do make	We will have a letter made quickly
	To Brademond, the stronge king,	For Brademond, the strong king;
	And do him theder the letter bringe;	And have him deliver the letter there.
	And in the letter thee schelt saie,	And in the letter you will say
	That he hath Josian forlaie!"	That he has seduced Josanne."
	Whan the letter was come to th'ende,	When the letter was finished to its end,
	After Beves the king let sende	The king sent for Bevis
	And seide: "Beves, thow most hanne	And said, "Bevis, you must go at once
	To Brademond, thin owene manne:	To Brademond, your own man,
	Al in solas and in delit	In all leisure and enjoyment.

[32] A French proverb: "Save a thief from the gallows and he will help to hang you." Also see Proverbs 19:19: "A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty; if you rescue him, you will have to do it again."

[33] *She scholle for is sake*: Royal Library, Naples, XIII, B 29 has *we schulle*, which makes more sense. In Kölberg, *Beues*, 58.

1240	Thow most him bere this ilche scriit!	You must bear this document here.
	Ac yif yow schelt me letter bere,	But if you are to carry this letter,
	Upon the lai thow schelt me swere,	You must swear to me upon the law
	That thow me schelt with no man mele,	That you will not contrive with any man
	To schewe the prente of me sele!"	To show the imprint of my seal."[34]
	"I wile," queth Beves ase snel,	"I will," Bevis said just as swiftly,
	"The leter bere treuliche and wel;	"Bear the letter faithfully and well.
	Have ich Arondel, me stede,	I have Arondel, my steed.
	Ich wile fare in to that thede,	I will travel to that country,
	And Morgelai, me gode bronde,	And with Morgelai, my good sword,
1250	Ich wile wende in to that londe!	I will pass into that land."
	King Ermin seide in is sawe,	King Ermine said in his speech
	That ner no mesager is lawe,	That it was never customary for a messenger
	To ride upon an hevi stede,	To ride upon a heavy charger
	That swiftli scholde don is nede.	In order to speedily accomplish his needs.
	"Ac nim a lighter hakenai	"But take a lighter riding horse
	And lef her the swerd Morgelai,	And leave the sword Morgelai here,
	And thow schelt come to Brademonde	And you will come to Brademond
	Sone withinne a lite stounde!"	Soon within a short while."
	Beves an hakenai bestrit	Bevis mounted a hackney horse
1260	And in his wei forth a rit	And rode forth on his way
	And bereth with him is owene deth,	Bearing with him his own death,
	Boute God him helpe, that alle thing seth!	Unless God helps him, who sees all things.
	Terne we aghen, thar we wer er,	Let's turn again to where we were before,
	And speke we of is em Saber!	And talk about his uncle Saber.
	After that Beves was thus sold,	After the time that Bevis was sold,
	For him is hertte was ever cold.	His heart was forever heavy over him.
	A clepede to him his sone Terri	He called his son Terry to him
	And bad him wenden and aspie	And asked him to go and search
	In to everi londe fer and ner,	In every land, near and far,
1270	Whider him ladde the maroner,	For where the sailors had brought him.
	And seide: "Sone, thow ert min owen,	He said, "Son, you are my own blood.
	Wel thow canst the lord knowen!	You will easily recognize the man.
	Ich hote thee, sone, in alle manere,	I am asking you, son, to search for him
	That thow him seche this seve yer.	In every way for seven years.
	Ich wile feche him, mowe thow him fynde,	I will bring him back if you find him,
	Though he be biyende Inde!"	Even if he is beyond India!"
	Terri, is sone, is forth ifare,	Terry, his son, set forth
	Beves a soughte everiwhare;	To search for Bevis everywhere.
	In al hethenes nas toun non,	In all the heathen lands there was no town
1280	That Cristene man mighte ther in gon,	Where a Christian man could travel
	That he ne hath Beves in isought,	In which he did not search for Bevis,
	Ac he ne kouthe finde him nought.	But he could not find him.
	So hit be fel upon a cas,	So it happened by chance
	That Terri com beside Damas;	That Terry arrived near Damascus.
	And ase he com forth be that stede,	And as he traveled near that place,
	A sat and dinede in a wede	He sat in his armor and ate
	Under a faire medle tre,	Under a fair crab-apple tree
	That Sire Beves gan of-see.	Which Sir Bevis came to notice.

[34] The king is asking Bevis, who presumably is not literate, to promise not to have the letter read to him. Wax seals were typically used until personal signatures became common in the modern period.

	"Sire," queth Terri, "for Sein Juline!	"Sir," said Terry, "by Saint Julian,[35]
1290	Is it thee wille, come nere and dine!"	If you please, come near and dine!"
	Beves was of-hongred sore	Bevis was sorely hungry
	And kouthe him gret thank therfore,	And showed much gratitude to him.
	For twei dawes he hadde ride	For two days he had been riding,
	Fastande in that ilche wede.	Garbed in the same clothes.
	The palmer nas nought withouten store,	The pilgrim did not lack for provisions.
	Inough a leide him before,	He laid out before him
	Bred and flesc out of is male	Plenty from his bag, bread and meat,
	And of his flaketes win and ale	And wine and ale from his jugs.
	Whan Beves hadde eten gret foisoun	When Bevis had eaten abundantly,
1300	Terri askede at Sire Bevoun,	Terry asked Sir Bevis
	Yif a herde telle yong or olde	If he had heard anyone, young or old,
	Of a child, that theder was solde.	Speak of a noble youth who had been sold there.
	His name was ihote Bevoun	His name was Bevis,
	Ibore a was at South-Hamtoun.	And he was born in Southampton.
	Beves beheld Terri and lough,	Bevis looked at Terry and laughed grimly
	And seide, a knew that child wel inough:	And said he knew the lad well enough.
	"Hit is nought," a seide, "gon longe,	"It is not," he said, "so long ago
	I segh the Sarsins that child anhonge!"	That I saw the Saracens hang that boy."
	Terri fel ther doun and swough,	Terry fell down in a faint
1310	His her, his clothes he al to-drough.	And tore at his hair and clothes.
	Whan he awok and speke mighte,	When he came to his senses and could speak,
	Sore a wep and sore sighte	He wept bitterly and sighed sorely,
	And seide: "Allas, that he was boren!	And said, "Alas that he was born!
	Is me lord Beves forloren!"	Is my lord Bevis really lost?"
	Beves tok him up at that cas	Bevis lifted him up in that moment
	And gan him for to solas:	And began to console him.
	"Wend hom," a seide, "to thee contré!	"Go back home," he said, "to your country.
	Sai the frendes so ichave thee.	Tell your friends what I have told you:
	Though thow him seche thes seve yer,	Though you sought him these seven years,
1320	Thow worst that child never the ner!"	You were never nearer the man!"
	Terri on Beves beheld	Terry looked at Bevis
	And segh the boiste with a scheld.	And saw the letter case with a shield.
	"Me thenketh, thow ert a masager,	"It seems to me you are a courier
	That in this londe walkes her;	Who walks here in this land.
	Icham a clerk and to scole yede:	I am a scholar and went to school.
	Sire, let me the letter rede,	Sir, let me read the letter,
	For thow might have gret doute,	For you might have great fears
	Thin owene deth to bere aboute!"	That you carry around your own death."
	Beves seide, ich understonde:	Bevis said, so I understand:
1330	"He, that me tok this letter an honde,	"He who put this letter into my hand
	He ne wolde love me non other,	Could not have more love for me
	Than ich were is owene brother."	Than if I were his own brother."
	Beves him thankede and thus hii delde.	Bevis thanked him and so they parted.
	Terri wente hom and telde	Terry went home and informed

[35] *Sein Juline*: Saint Julian, patron saint of hospitality. The story of Julian was popular although he appears to have been a legendary figure. E. Gordon Whatley, Anne B. Thompson, and Robert K. Upchurch, eds., "*The Life of St. Julian the Hospitaller in the* Scottish Legendary (c. 1400): Introduction," in *Saints' Lives in Middle English Collections* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004), accessed 25 May 2010 at http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/whjulintro.htm.

	His fader Saber in the Ilde of Wight,	His father Saber in the Isle of Wight
	How him tolde a gentil knight,	How he was told by a noble knight,
	That Sarsins hadde Beves forfare	While he was there, that Saracens
	And hangede him, while he was thare.	Had killed Bevis and hanged him.
	Saber wep and made drem.	Saber wept and mourned him,
1340	For he was the childes em,	For he was the boy's uncle.
	And ech yer on a dai certaine	And each year upon a certain day
	Upon th'emperur of Almaine	He asserted his heritage
	With a wel gret baronage	Against the emperor of Germany
	A cleimede his eritage.	With a large baronage.
	Let we now ben is em Saber	Let us now leave his uncle Saber
	And speke of Beves, the maseger!	And speak of Bevis, the messenger.
	Forth him wente Sire Bevoun	Sir Bevis went forth
	Til a com to Dames toun;	Until he came to the town of Damascus.
	Aboute the time of middai	About the time of mid-day
1350	Out of a mameri a sai	He saw a large crowd of Saracens
	Sarasins come gret foisoun,	Coming out of a mosque
	That hadde anoured here Mahoun,	Who had been honoring Mohammad.
	Beves of is palfrei alighte	Bevis dismounted from his horse
	And ran to her mameri ful righte	And ran immediately to their temple
	And slough here prest, that ther was in,	And slaughtered their priest, who was inside,
	And threw here godes in the fen	And threw their gods into the ditch
	And lough hem alle ther to scorn.	And laughed at them all scornfully.
	On ascapede and at-orn	One escaped and ran away
	In at the castel ghete,	Passing by the castle gate
1360	As the king sat at the mete.	As the king was sitting at dinner.
	"Sire," seide this man at the frome,	"Sire," the said man urgently,
	"Her is icome a corsede gome,	"A cursed man has come here
	That throweth our godes in the fen	Who is throwing our gods in the mud
	And sleth al oure men;	And slaying all our men.
	Unnethe I scapede among that thring,	I hardly escaped from the crowd
	For to bringe thee tiding!"	To bring you the news!"
	Brademond quakede at the bord	Brademond trembled at the table
	And seide: "That is Beves, me lord!"	And said, "It is Bevis, my lord!"
	Beves wente in at the castel ghate,	Bevis came in past the castle gate,
1370	His hors he lefte ther-ate	Leaving his horse there,
	And wente forth in to the halle	And came forth into the hall.
	And grete hem in this maner alle:	He greeted them all in this manner:
	"God, that made this world al ronde,	"God, who made the world all round,
	Thee save, Sire King Brademond,	Save you, Sir King Brademond,
	And ek alle thine fere,	As well as your companions
	That I se now here,	That I see now here.
	And yif that ilche blessing	And if that same blessing
	Liketh thee right nothing,	Is not at all to your liking,
	Mahoun, that is god thin,	May Mohammad, your god,
1380	Tervagaunt and Apolin,	Termagant and Apollyon,
	Thee blessi and dighte	Bless and preserve you
	Be alle here mighte!	With all of their might!
	Lo her, the King Ermin	Look then, King Ermine
	The sente this letter in parchemin,	Sends you this letter in parchment
	And ase the letter thee telleth to,	And asks that you should quickly do
	A bad, thow scholdest swithe do!"	As the letter instructs you."
	Beves kneueled and nolde nought stonde	Bevis knelt and would not stand
	And yaf up is deth with is owene honde.	And sealed his death with his own hand.

	Brademond quakede al for drede,	Brademond quaked with fear.
1390	He undede the letter and gan to rede	He undid the letter and began to read,
	And fond iwriten in that felle,	And found written on that hide
	How that he scholde Beves aquelle.	How he should execute Bevis.
	Thanne seide Brademond to twenti king,	Then Brademond addressed the twenty kings
	That were that dai at is gistning,	Who were at his banquet that day;
	A spak with tresoun and with gile:	He spoke with treason and with guile:
	"Ariseth up," he sede "a while,	"All rise," he said, "for a moment,
	Everich of yow fro the bord,	Every one of you from the table,
	And wolcometh your kende lord!"	And welcome your gracious lord!"
	Alle hii gonnen up right stonde,	All of them stood up.
1400	And Brademond tok Beves be the honde	Brademond took Bevis by the hand
	And held him faste at that sake,	And held him tight so that
	That he ne scholde is swerd out take,	He would not be able to draw his sword,
	And cride, alse he hadde be wod,	And shouted out as if he were mad
	To hem alle, aboute him stod:	To all of them who stood around him:
	"Ase ye me loven at this stounde,	"If you love me, at this instant,
	Bringeth this man swithe to grounde!"	Bring this man to the ground at once!"
	So faste hii gonne aboute him scheve,	They began to press around him as quickly
	Ase don ben aboute the heve.	As bees around the hive,
	So withinne a lite stounde	So that within a short moment
1410	Beves was ibrought to grounde.	Bevis was brought to the ground.
	Brademond seide him anon right:	Brademond said to him at once,
	"Yif thow me naddest wonne with fight,	"Had you not defeated me in battle,
	I nolde for nothing hit beleve,	I would not hesitate for anything
	That thow schost be hanged er eve.	To have you hanged before nightfall,
	Ac ase evel thee schel betide,	Or else decree as evil an end.
	In me prisoun thow schelt abide	You will languish in my prison
	Under th'erthe twenti teise,	Twenty fathoms under the earth.
	Thar thow schelt have meche miseise.	There you will have no comfort.
	Ne scheltow have, til thow be ded,	You will not get, until you are dead,
1420	Boute ech a dai quarter of a lof bred;	More than a quarter loaf of bread a day.
	Yif thow wilt drinke, thegh it be nought swet,	If you want a drink, it will not be sweet.
	Thee schelt hit take under the fet!"	You will drink from under your feet!"
	A dede Beves binde to a ston gret,	He had Bevis bound to a great millstone
	That wegh seve quarters of whet,	That weighed sixty bushels of wheat,
	And het him caste in to prisoun,	And had him thrown into the prison,
	That twenti teise was dep adoun.	Which went down twenty fathoms deep.
	At the prisoun dore Beves fond	At the cell door Bevis found
	A tronsoun, that he tok in is hond.	A club, which he took in his hand.
	Tharwith a thoughte were him there	He realized it was there
1430	Fram wormes, that in prisoun were.	For the snakes that were in the cell.
	Now is Beves at this petes grounde.	Now Bevis is at the pit's bottom.
	God bringe him up hol and sonde!	God bring him up safe and sound!
	Now speke we of Josian, the maide,	Now we will speak of Josanne, the maid,
	That com to hire fader and seide:	Who came to her father and said,
	"Sire," she seide, "whar Beves be,	"Sire," she asked, "where is Bevis,
	That me mighte him nought fern ise?"	That I might not see him for so long a time?"
	"Doughter," a seide, "a is ifare	"Daughter," he said, "he has journeyed
	In to his londe and woneth thare,	Back to his land and is living there,
	In to is owene eritage,	Into his own inheritance,
1440	And hath a wif of gret parage,	And has a wife of high parentage,
	The kinges doughter of Ingelonde,	The king of England's daughter,
	Ase men doth me to understonde."	As men have me understand."

	Thanne was that maide wo ynough,	Then that maid had despair enough.
	In hire chaumber hire her she drogh	In her chamber, she tore out her hair
	And wep and seide ever mo,	And wept and continually cried out
	That sum tresoun thar was ydo.	That some treachery had been done.[36]
	"That me ne telde ord and ende,	"He didn't tell me at the start or end
	What dai awai whanne a wolde wende."	The day when he would go away."
	Of Mombraunt the King Yvor,	There was a rich king of lavish wealth,
1450	A riche king of gret tresore,	King Ivor of Mombrant.[37]
	Whan he owhar to werre wolde,	When he went anywhere to make war,
	Fiftene kinges him sewe scholde:	Fifteen kings would follow him.
	Comen a is Josian to wedde;	He came, hoping to marry Josanne.
	Aghen hire fader so a spedde,	He fared so well with her father
	That he hire grauntede to is wive	That he granted her as his wife
	And al is londe after is live.	And all his land after his passing.
	Tho Josian wiste, she scholde be quen,	When Josanne learned she would be queen,
	Hit was nought be hire wille; I wen	It was not by her will, I am sure.
	Hire were lever have had lasse	She would have preferred a lower rank
1460	And have be Beves is contasse.	And to be Bevis' countess.
	Natheles, now it is so,	Nonetheless, now it was so,
	Hire fader wil she moste do,	And she had to do her father's will.
	Ac ever she seide: "Bevoun,	But she continually cried, "Bevis,
	Hende knight of South Hamtoun,	Noble knight of Southhampton,
	Naddestow me never forsake,	You would never have forsaken me
	Yif sum tresoun hit nadde make:	If some treason had not happened.
	Ac for the love, that was so gode,	But for your love, which was so good,
	That I lovede ase min hertte blode,	Which I felt like my heart's own blood,
	Ichave," she seide, "a ring on,	I will put," she said, "a ring on my hand.
1470	That of swiche vertu is the ston:	The stone is of such a quality
	While ichave on that ilche ring,	That while I have that ring on,
	To me schel no man have welling,	No man will have his way with me.
	And Beves!" she seide, "be God above,	And Bevis," she vowed, "by God above,
	I schel it weren for thee love!"	I will wear it for your love!"
	Whan hit to that time spedde,	When the time pressed near
	That Yvor scholde that maide wedde,	That Ivor should wed that maid,
	He let sende withouten ensoine	He sent word, without delay,
	After the Soudan of Babiloine	To the sultan of Babylon,
	And after the fiftene kinge,	And to the fifteen kings,
1480	That him scholde omage bringe,	That they should pay respect to him,
	And bad hem come lest and meste,	And called for them to come, high and low,
	To onoure that meri feste.	To honor that merry feast.
	Of that feste nel ich namor telle,	About that feast I will say no more,
	For to highe with our spelle.	In order to hasten with our story.

[36] I am grateful for Seaman's interpretation, who points out that Josanne does not scorn Bevis but immediately suspects foul play. Myra Seaman, "Engendering Genre in Middle English Romance: Performing the Feminine in *Sir Beves of Hamtoun*," *Studies in Philology* 98:1 (2001): 62.

[37] *Mombraunt*: Supposedly this is also in Armenia, but Bevis' comrade tells him not to go to Armenia but north (2040). Again, I cannot find this place if it exists, although it (and King Ivoryn) turns up in legends. See Alfred J. Church, *Stories of Charlemagne* (London: Seeley & Co., 1902), 363. There are numerous medieval surnames and placenames in France such as *Monbran*, *Mombrant, and Montbran* (near Pléboulle, near Brest). As it is evidently a Saracen kingdom it may be in lands nearing Muslim Spain, and there are two additional variations on the placename near Toulouse.

	Whan al the feste to-yede,	When all the celebrations had finished,
	Ech knight wente to is stede,	Each knight went to his home,
	Men graithede cartes and somers,	Men prepared carts and packhorses,
	Knightes to horse and squiers,	Knights went with horses and squires,
	And Josian with meche care	And Josanne, with great ceremony,
1490	Theder was brought in hire chare.	Was brought forth in her chariot.
	King Ermin nom Arondel	King Ermine took Arondel
	And let him sadlen faire and wel,	And had him saddled splendidly.
	A wente to Beves chaumber, ther he lay,	He went to Bevis' room where he had slept
	And nom his swerd Morgelay;	And took his sword, Morgelai.
	With Arondel agan it lede	With Arondel again he went
	To King Yvor, and thus a sede:	To King Ivor, and he said thus:
	"Sone," a sede, "have this stede,	"Son," he said, "take this steed,
	The beste fole, that man mai fede,	The best foal that a man may feed,
	And this swerd of stel broun,	And this sword of shining steel,
1500	That was Beves of Hamtoun.	Which belonged to Bevis of Hampton.
	A nolde hit yeve, wer it in is honde,	He would not have parted with it,
	Nought for al painim londe!"	Were it in his hand, for all the pagan lands!"
	"Ne ich," queth the King Yvor,	"Nor will I," said King Ivor,
	"For al the gold ne the tresor,	"For all the gold or the treasure
	That thow might in the cité belouke!"	That you could guard within the city."
	"Sone," queth Ermin, "wel mot thee it brouke!"	"Son," said Ermine, "may it serve you well."
	Yver gan homward te ride	Ivor began to ride homeward
	And dede lede Arondel be is side.	And led Arondel by his side.
	Whan he com withoute Mombraunt,	When he was out of Mombrant,
1510	A swor is oth be Tervagaunt,	He swore an oath by Tervagant
	That he wolde in to his cité ride	That he would ride into his own city
	Upon Arondel before is bride.	Upon Arondel in front of his bride.
	Arondel thar he bestrit;	He mounted on Arondel.
	That hors wel sone underyit,	That horse very soon knew
	That Beves nas nought upon is rigge	That Bevis was not upon its back.
	The king wel sore scholde hit abegge.	The king soon paid for it painfully.
	He ran over dich and thorn,	It ran over ditch and thorns,
	Thourgh wode and thourgh thekke korn;	Through woods and thick grain fields.
	For no water ne for no londe,	Not for water, not for land,
1520	Nowhar nolde that stede astonde;	Would that steed stop anywhere.
	At the laste a threw Yvor doun	Finally it threw Ivor down
	And al to-brak the kinges kroun,	And nearly broke the king's head,
	That al is kingdom wel unnethe	So that all of his subjects could barely
	Arerede him ther fro the dethe;	Save it from being put to death there.
	And er hii mighte that hors winne,	And before they could catch that horse,
	Thai laughte him with queinte ginne.	They had to trap it with clever tricks.
	A wonderthing now ye may here.	You might now hear a wondrous thing.
	After al that seve yere	After all that, for seven years
	To rakenteis a stod iteide,	It stood bound in chains.
1530	Nas mete ne drinke before him leid,	No food or drink was laid before it,
	Hey ne oten ne water clere,	No hay or oats or clear water,
	Boute be a kord of a solere.	Except by a rope from a balcony.
	No man dorste come him hende,	No man dared come near
	Thar that hors stod in bende.	Where that horse stood in fetters.
	Now is Josian a quene;	Now Josanne was a queen,
	Beves in prisoun hath gret tene.	And Bevis sat in prison with great hardship,
	The romounce telleth, ther a set,	As the romance says; there he lay
	Til the her on is heved grew to is fet;	Until the hair on his head grew to his feet.

	Snakes and euetes and oades fale,	There were snakes and lizards and toads,
1540	How mani, can I nought telle in tale,	How many, I cannot count,
	That in the prisoun were with him,	That were in the prison with him,
	That provede ever with her venim	That tried to poison Bevis,
	To sle Beves, that gentil knight,	That noble knight, with their venom.
	Oc, thourgh the grace of God Almight,	But through the grace of God Almighty,
	With the tronsoun, that he to prisoun tok,	With the club that he had in the prison
	A slough hem alle, so saith the bok.	He killed them all, so says the book.
	A fleande nadder was in an hole,	A flying adder was in a crevice,
	For elde blak ase eni cole;	As black as any coal from age.
	Unto Beves she gan flinge	Toward Bevis she flung herself,[38]
1550	And in the forehed thoughte him stinge.	Thinking to sting him in the forehead.
	Beves was redi with is tronsoun	Bevis was ready with the bat
	And smot hire, that she fel adoun.	And struck her so that she fell down.
	Upon aghen the nadder rowe	The adder reared up again
	And breide awei his right browe;	And tore away his right eyebrow.
	Tho was Beves sore agreved	Then Bevis was sorely angered
	And smot the nadder on the heved;	And cracked the adder on the head.
	So harde dent he hire yaf,	He gave her such a hard blow
	The brein clevede on is staf.	That the brains stuck to the stick.
	Doun fel the nadder, withouten faile,	Down went the adder, without a doubt,
1560	And smot so Beves with the taile,	And struck at Bevis with its tail
	That negh a les ther contenaunse,	So that he nearly lost his wits;
	Almest is lif was in balaunse.	His life was almost in the balance.
	Whan he awakede of that swough,	When he came to from that swoon,
	The tronsoun eft to him a drough	He drew the club back to him
	And bet hire al to pises smale,	And beat the adder into little pieces,
	As hit is fonde in Frensche tale.	As it is told in the French tale.
	Tho he hadde slawe the foule fendes,	Though he had killed the foul fiends,
	Be that hadde Beves lein in bendes	Bevis laid there in bonds
	Seve yer in peines grete,	For seven years in great pain,[39]
1570	Lite idronke and lasse iete;	Drinking little and eating less.
	His browe stank for defaut of yeme,	His brow smelled for lack of care,
	That it set after ase a seme,	When it became infected and scarred,
	Wharthourgh that maide ne kneu him nought,	So that the maid did not know him
	Whan hii were eft togedre brought.	When they were brought together later.
	On a dai, ase he was mad and feint,	One day, when he was mad and faint,
	To Jesu Crist he made is pleint	He made his plea to Jesus Christ
	And to his moder, seinte Marie,	And to His mother, sainted Mary,
	Reuliche he gan to hem crie:	Mournfully crying to them:
	"Lord," a seide, "Hevene King,	"Lord," he said, "Heaven's king,
1580	Schepere of erthe and alle thing:	Shaper of Earth and all things,
	What have ich so meche misgilt,	What great sin have I committed
	That thow sext and tholen wilt,	That You see and allow
	That Thee wetherwines and Thee fo	Your enemies and Your foes
	Schel Thee servaunt do this wo?	To do such woe to Your servant?

[38] *She gan flinge*: I have rendered Bevis' encounter with the swine with *it* to avoid pronoun confusion, but ME often uses gendered pronouns for animals.

[39] *Seve yer:* As with Biblical sevens and forties, these are poetic and indeterminate lengths of time. Medieval prisons were simply holding cells until punishment was administered, and long sentences were a nineteenth-century development.

	Ich bedde Thee, Lord, for Thee pité,	I beseech You, Lord, for Your pity,
	That Thow have merci on me	That You will have mercy on me
	And yeve grace, hennes to gange	And give me grace to go from here,
	Or sone be drawen other anhange!	Or else be quartered or hung!
	Me roughte never, what deth to me come,	I do not care what death comes to me
1590	With that ich were hennes nome!	So long as I am delivered from here."
	The gailers, that him scholde yeme,	The jailors, who were supposed to guard him,
	Whan hii herde him thus reme,	Cried out when they heard him.
	"Thef! cherl!" seide that on tho:	"Thief! Fool!" shouted one of them.
	"Now beth thee lif dawes ydo,	"Enough, your life's days are now over.
	For king ne kaiser ne for no sore	No matter what king, emperor, or trouble comes,
	Ne scheltow leve no lenger more."	You shall not live any longer!"
	Anon rightes with that word	Straightaway with those words,
	A laumpe he let doun be a cord,	He dropped down a lamp on a rope.
	A swerd a tok be his side,	He took a sword on his side
1600	And be the cord he gan doun glide	And slid down on the rope
	And smot him with that other hond,	And stabbed him with the other hand,
	And Beves to the grounde a wond.	And Bevis tumbled to the ground.
	"Allas," queth Beves, "that ilche stounde!	"Alas!" said Bevis that very moment.
	Wo is the man, that lith ybounde	"Woe is the man who lies in bondage,
	Medel bothe fet and honde!	By the waist and both hand and foot!
	Tho ich com ferst in to this londe,	When I first came into this land,
	Hadde ich had me swerd Morgelay	I had my sword Morgelai,
	And Arondel, me gode palfray,	And Arondel, my fine horse.
	For Dames, nadde be tresoun,	Were it not for this treason I would not
1610	I nolde have yeve a botoun,	Have given a button for Damascus.
	And now the meste wreche of alle	And now the lowest trash of all
	With a strok me doth adoun falle,	Lays me down with a sword stroke.
	Bidde ich never with Jesu speke,	May I never pray to Jesus
	Boute ich ther-of may ben awreke!"	Before I can be avenged for it!"
	A smot the gailer with is fest,	He struck the jailor with his fist,
	That is nekke him to-berst.	So that his neck was broken.
	His felawe above gan to crie:	In the jailor's voice he cried to his partner,[40]
	"Highe hider, felawe," queth Beves, "highe!"	"Hurry down, friend," said Bevis, "Hurry!"
	"Yif thow most have help," a sede,	"If you need help," he answered,
1620	"Ich come to thee with a gode spede!"	"I'll come down to you at top speed!"
	"Yis!" queth Beves, al for gile,	"Yes!" answered Bevis, all in deceit,
	And knette the rop thar while	And meanwhile he knotted the rope there
	Ase high ase a mighte reche.	As high as he could reach.
	Tho queth Beves with reuful speche:	Then Bevis pleased, with a mournful tone:
	"For the love of Sein Mahoun,	"For the love of Saint Mohammad,
	Be the rop glid blive adoun	Slide down the rope fast
	And help, that this thef wer ded!"	And help, so that this thief will be dead!"
	Whan he hadde thus ised,	When he had spoken so,
	That other gailer no leng abod,	The other jailor no longer lingered,
1630	Boute by the rop adoun he glod.	But glided down on the rope.
	Whan the rop failede in is hond,	When his hand let go of the line,
	Beves held up that gode bronde	Bevis held up that good blade
	And felde to gronde that sori wight,	And dropped to the ground that sorry creature,

[40] *His felawe above gan to crie*: The Chetham Library, no. 8009, Manchester MS has *to his*. *Al for gile* (1621) suggests that Bevis is mimicking the first jailor's voice to trick the second. In Kölberg, *Beues*, 84.

	Thourghout is bodi that swerd he pight.	Putting the sword through his body.
	Now er thai ded, the geilers tweie,	Now the two jailors were dead,
	And Beves lith to the rakenteie,	And Bevis lay there in fetters.
	His lif him thoughte al to long,	His life seemed all too long to him.
	Thre daies after he ne et ne drong,	For three days after he did not eat or drink.
	Tofore that, for soth to sai	Before then, to tell the truth,
1640	A was woned, ech other dai	He was used to having
	Of berelof to have a quarter	A quarter of a barley-loaf
	To his mete and to his diner;	Each other day for his food and dinner.
	And, for is meisters wer bothe ded,	And now, as his masters were both dead,
	Thre daies after he ne et no bred.	For three days after he did not eat bread.
	To Jesu Crist he bed a bone,	He prayed a plea to Jesus Christ,
	And He him grauntede wel sone;	And He very soon granted it to him.
	So yerne he gan to Jesu speke,	So fervently did he call on Jesus
	That his vetres gonne breke	That his fetters began to crack
	And of his medel the grete ston.	Along with the boulder by his waist.
1650	Jesu Crist he thankede anon;	He immediately thanked Jesus Christ
	A wente quik out of prisoun	And went quickly out of the prison
	Be the rop the gailer com adoun,	On the rope the jailor came down on,
	And wente in to the castel right,	And went straight into the castle.
	Ac it was aboute the midnight;	But it was about midnight.
	He lokede aboute fer and ner,	He looked around near and far;
	No man wakande ne segh he ther;	He saw no man awake there.
	He beheld forther a lite	Further on, he noticed a light
	To a chaunber under a garite,	From a chamber under a watchtower.
	Thar-inne he segh torges ilight;	Inside it he saw torches lit.
1660	Beves wente theder ful right;	Bevis went directly there
	Twelf knightes a fond ther aslepe,	And found twelve knights asleep
	That hadde the castel for to kepe;	Who were there to guard the castle.
	The chaumber dore a fond unsteke,	He found the chamber door unlocked
	And priveliche he gan in reke	And secretly stole in
	And armede him in yrene wede,	And clothed himself in iron armor,
	The beste, that he fond at nede,	The best that he could find in his need,
	And gerte him with a gode bronde	And fitted himself with a good sword
	And tok a gode spere in is honde;	And took a firm spear in his hand.
	A scheld aboute is nekke he cast	He threw a shield around his neck
1670	And wente out of the chaumber in hast.	And went out of the chamber in haste.
	Forther a herde in a stable	Further on he heard in a stable
	Pages fele, withoute fable,	A group of pages, without a lie,
	Ase thai sete in here raging;	As they sat in their noisy debauchery.
	In at the dore Beves gan spring,	Bevis sprang in through the door,
	And for thai scholde him nought wrain,	And so that they could not betray him,
	Under his hond he made him plai.	With his hand he made them fight.
	And whan the Sarasins wer islawe,	And when the Saracens were killed,
	The beste stede he let forth drawe	He led forth the best steed
	And sadelede hit and wel adight.	And saddled it and dressed it well.
1680	And wente him forth anon right	He went forth at once
	And gan to crie with loude steven	And began to cry in a loud voice,
	And the porter he gan nevenen:	Calling the porter's name.
	"Awake!" a seide, "proude felawe,	"Wake up," he shouted, "proud fellow!
	Thow were worthi ben hanged and drawe!	You ought to be hung and quartered.
	Highe, the gates wer unsteke,	Hurry! The gates are unlocked,
	Beves is out of prisoun reke,	Bevis has escaped out of prison,
	And icham sent now for is sake,	And I am sent now on his account

	The treitour yif ich mighte of-take!”	To see if I might catch the traitor!”
	The porter was al bewaped:	The porter was all befuddled;
1690	“Allas!” queth he, “is Beves ascaped?”	“Alas!” he said, “Has Bevis escaped?”
	Up he caste the gates wide,	He threw the gates open wide,
	And Beves bi him gan out ride	And Bevis rode by him
	And tok is wei ful hastelie	And took his way in great haste
	Toward the londe of Ermonie.	Toward the land of Armenia.
	He nadde ride in is wei	He had ridden on his way no more
	Boute seve mile of that contrei,	Than seven miles from that country
	He wex asleped wondersore,	When he grew exceedingly sleepy.
	He mighte ride no forthermore;	He could not ride any further.
	He reinede his hors to a chesteine	He tied his horse to a chestnut tree
1700	And felle aslepe upon the pleine;	And fell asleep upon the plain.
	And alse a slep, in is swevene	And as he slept, in his dream,
	Him thoughte, Brademond and kinges seven	It seemed that Brademond and seven kings
	Stod over him with swerdes drawe,	Stood over him with swords drawn,
	Al slepande him wolde han slawe.	Ready to slay him as he was sleeping.
	Of that sweven he was of-drad;	He woke up in dread from that nightmare.
	He lep to hors ase he wer mad,	He leaped on his horse as if he were mad,
	Towarde Damas agein, aplight!	Toward Damascus again, in fact.
	Now reste we her a lite wight,	Now let’s pause here a little while,
	And speke we scholle of Brademond.	And we will speak of Brademond.
1710	Amorwe, whan he it hadde ifonde,	In the morning, after he found out
	That Beves was ascaped so,	That Bevis had escaped so,
	In is hertte him was ful wo.	He was very troubled at heart.
	That time be comin acent	At that time, by common assent,
	Thar was comin parlement,	There was to be an open parliament.
	Erles, barouns, lasse and more,	Earls, barons, high and low,
	And fiftene kinges were samned thore.	And fifteen kings were summoned there.
	To hem Brademond tolde thare,	Brademond told them there
	That Beves was fro him ifare,	That Bevis had escaped from him
	And bad help with might and main,	And asked their help, with strength and force,
1720	For to feche Beves again.	To fetch Bevis back again.
	A king thar was swithe fer,	One king there was very ruthless;
	His nam was hote Grander.	His name was Grander.
	An hors he hadde of gret pris,	He had a horse of great worth
	That was icleped Trinchefis:	Which was named Trinchefis.
	For him a yaf selver wight,	He paid its weight in silver for it
	Er he that hors have might.	Before he could have that horse.
	He armede him in yrene wede,	He clothed himself in iron armor.
	Seve knightes he gan with him lede	He led out seven knights alongside him
	And prikede forth on Trenchefis	And spurred forth on Trenchefis,
1730	And wende wenne meche pris;	And thought to win great honor.
	And Beves sone he gan se,	He soon spotted Bevis
	Ase he rod toward the cité.	As he rode toward the city.
	“Ayilt thee,” a seide, “thow fox welp,	“Yield yourself,” he cried, “you fox cub.[41]
	Thee god schel thee nothing help,	Your god will give you no help now!
	For her thourgh min hondes one,	For here with my own hands alone,
	For sothe, thow schelt thee lif forgon!”	In truth, you will lose your life.”

[41] *Fox welp*: Being called a fox’s cub does not sound very insulting in PDE, but in ME culture animal comparisons were usually negative, and foxes were constant nuisances for livestock farmers.

	"So helpe me God!" queth Beves tho,	"So help me God!" Bevis protested then,
	"Hit were no meistri, me to slo,	"There would be no honor in slaying me,
	For this is the ferthe dai agon,	For this is the fourth day passed
1740	Mete ne drinke ne bot i non:	That I have had no food or drink.
	Ac natheles, God it wot,	But nonetheless, God knows,
	Yif ich alle nedes mot,	If it must be so,
	Yit ich wile asaie,	I will take you on,
	A lite box thee to paie!"	And pay you with a strike or two!"[42]
	King Grander was of herte grim	King Grander was grim at heart
	And rod to Beves and he to him;	And rode toward Bevis, and he to him.
	And ase thei bothe togedre mete,	And as they both crashed together,
	With here launces thei gonne mete,	Their lances met
	That hit gonnen al to-drive	So that they were overtaxed
1750	And teborsten on pises five.	And burst into five pieces.
	Here swerdes drowe knightes stoute	The sturdy knights drew their swords
	And fighteth faste, it is no doute;	And fought closely, there is no doubt.
	The medwe squaughte of her dentes,	The meadow was torn by their strokes;
	The fur flegh out, so spark o flintes;	The fire flew out, like sparks from flint.
	Thus thai leide on in bothe side	In this way they battled on both sides
	Betwene midmorwe and undertide.	Between mid-morning and noon.
	King Grander was agremed strong,	King Grander was fiercely angered
	That Sire Beves him stod so long,	That Sir Bevis had withstood him so long,
	And with is swerd a hitte is scheld,	And with his sword he hit his shield
1760	A quarter fel in to the feld,	So that a quarter fell onto the field.
	Hauberk, plate and aktoun,	Through mail, armor, and jacket,
	In to Beves forther arsoun	Into Bevis' farthest saddlebow,
	Half a fot he karf doun right.	He carved down a good half a foot.
	Tho Beves segh that strok of might,	When Bevis saw that mighty stroke,
	A seide: "That dent was wel iset,	He said, "That blow was well set.
	Fasten I wile another bet!"	I will do another one better!"
	With that word Beves smot doun	With those words Bevis struck down
	Grander is scheld with is fachoun,	Grander's shield with its ornamented blade,
	And is left honde be the wrest,	And his left hand by the wrist
1770	Hit flegh awei thourgh help of Crist.	Flew away through the help of Christ.
	Tho Grander hadde his scheld ilore,	Though Grander had lost his shield,
	He faught ase he wer wode therfore;	He fought as if he were mad because of it.
	A yaf Beves strokes that tide,	At that moment he gave Bevis blows
	Non ne moste other abide.	That no one else would have endured.
	Beves ther-of was agreved	Bevis was enraged because of it
	And smot of King Grander is heved,	And struck off King Grander's head.
	The dede kors in that throwe	With that blow the dead corpse
	Fel out over the sadel bowe.	Fell out over the saddlebow.
	Tho King Grander was islawe,	When King Grander was slain,
1780	The seve knightes of hethen lawe	Bevis killed the seven knights
	Beves slough that ilche stounde,	Of heathen lands at that moment;
	So hit is in Frensch yfounde.	So it is found in the French.
	For nought Beves nolde belave,	Bevis would not hesitate for anything;
	The beter hors a wolde have;	He wanted to have the better horse.
	Beves Trenchefis bestrit,	Bevis mounted Trenchefis,

[42] *Lite box*: Two other MSS have *strok or twoo* (Egerton 2862 and Royal Library, Naples, XIII, B 29). In Kölberg, *Beuis*, 89.

	And in is weie forth a rit,	And rode forth on his way,
	And Brademond with al is ost	And Brademond, with all his men,
	Com after with meche bost;	Came following with wild boasts.
	So longe hii han Beves drive,	They drove Bevis for so long
1790	That hii come to the clive,	Until they came to the cliffs
	Ther the wilde se was.	Where the wild sea was.
	Harkneth now a wondercas!	Now hear about a miraculous thing!
	In to the se a moste, iwis,	He had to go into the sea, surely,
	Other fighte aghenes al hethenes.	Or else fight against all the heathens.
	To Jesu Crist he bad a bone,	He made a plea to Jesus Christ,
	And He him grauntede wel sone:	And He soon granted it to him:
	"Lord," a sede, "hevene king,	"Lord," he said, "Heaven's king,
	Schepere of erthe and alle thing,	Shaper of Earth and all things,
	Thow madest fisch ase wel alse man,	You made the fish as well as men,
1800	That nothing of senne ne can,	Who know nothing about sin.
	Ne nought of fisches kenne	Nor have any kin of fish
	Never yet ne dede senne,	Ever yet committed any crimes,
	Of this hethene hounde,	Unlike these heathen hounds
	That beste Thee and bounde	Who overcame and bound You
	And bete Thee body to the dethe,	And beat Your body to death.
	Tharfore ich may alse ethe	Therefore I might as easily
	To water fle in this stede,	Flee into the water on this steed,
	To fisch, that never senne dede,	Among the fish, who never sin,
	Than her daien in londe	Rather than dying here on land
1810	In al this Sarasines honde!'	By the hands of all these Saracens!"
	Beves smot is hors, that it lep	Bevis struck his horse so that it leaped
	In to the se, that was wel dep.	Into the sea, which was very deep.
	Whan he in to the se cam,	When it plunged into the water,
	Over the se, I wot, a swam;	It swam, I swear, over the waves.
	In a dai and in a night	For a day and a night
	A bar over that gentil knight.	It carried that noble knight.
	Whan he com of that wilde brok,	When it came from that wild water,
	His gode stede him resede and schok,	His good steed raised itself and shook,
	And Beves, for honger in that stounde	And because of its hunger at that moment,
1820	The hors threw him doun to the grounde.	The horse threw Bevis down to the ground.
	"Allas!" queth Beves, whan he doun cam,	"Alas!" said Bevis when he came down,
	"Whilom ichadde an erldam	"Once I had an earldom
	And an hors gode and snel,	And a horse, fine and swift,
	That men clepede Arondel;	That men called Arondel.
	Now ich wolde yeve hit kof	Now I would give it all away at once
	For a schiver of a lof!"	For a slice of a loaf!"
	A restede him ther a lite tide,	He rested himself there a little while.
	His gode stede he gan bestride	Then he mounted his good steed
	And rod over dale and doun,	And rode over hill and dale
1830	Til he com to a gret toun;	Until he came to a great town.
	The levedi thar-of over the castel lai,	The lady of the castle sat there,
	And Beves hire sone of-say	And Bevis soon spotted her
	And wende ben al out of care	And perceived that she was troubled,
	And thoughte wel to spede thare.	And thought it best to hurry there.
	Beves to the castel gate rit	Bevis rode to the castle gate
	And spak to hire, above him sit:	And spoke to her who sat above him:
	"Dame," a seide, "that sit above,	"Lady," he said, "who dwells above,
	For that ilche lordes love,	For the love of the same lord
	On wham thin herte is on iset:	That your heart is set on,

1840	Yeve me today a meles met!”	Grant me today a meal’s portion!”
	The levedi answerde him tho:	The lady then answered him,
	“Boute thow fro the gate go,	“Unless you go away from the gate,
	Thee wer beter elleswhar than her;	You would be better off elsewhere.
	Go, or the tit an evel diner!	Go, before you get a foul dinner!
	Me lord,” she seide, “is a geaunt	My lord,” she continued, “is a giant
	And leveth on Mahoun and Tervagaunt	And he follows Mohammad and Tervagant.
	And felleth Cristene men to grounde,	He drops Christian men to the ground,
	For he hateth hem ase hounde!”	For he hates them like dogs!”
	“Be God!” queth Beves, “I swere an othe:	“By God,” vowed Bevis, “I swear an oath.
1850	Be him lef and be him lothe,	Whether he is he fair or foul,
	Her ich wile have the mete	I will have some food here
	With love or eighe, whather I mai gete!”	For love or hate, whatever comes to me!”
	The levedi swithe wroth with alle	The lady was very offended with all that
	Wente hire forth in to the halle	And went down into the hall
	And tolde hire lord anon fore,	And told her lord at once
	How a man hadde iswore,	How a man had sworn
	That he nolde fro the ghete,	That he would not go from the gate
	Er he hadde ther the mete.	Before he had some food.
	The geaunt was wonderstrong,	The giant was amazingly strong
1860	Rome thretti fote long;	And thirty feet long in length.
	He tok a levour in is hond,	He took a club into his hand
	And forth to the gate he wond.	And made his way forth to the gate.
	Of Beves he nam gode hede,	He took good notice of Bevis,
	Ful wel a knew Beves is stede:	For he knew his steed very well.
	“Thow ert nome thef, ywis:	“You are caught, thief, that is a fact.
	Whar stele thow stede Trenchefis,	Where did you steal Trenchefis,
	That thow ridest upon here?	The steed you ride on here?
	Hit was me brotheres Grandere!”	It was my brother Grander’s!”
	“Grander,” queth Beves, “I yaf hod	“I gave Grander a hood,” said Bevis,
1870	And made him a kroune brod;	“And gave him a tonsure.[43]
	Tho he was next under me fest,	When he was pressed under me,
	Wel I wot, ich made him prest,	I know well, I made him a priest,
	And high dekne ich wile make thee,	And I will make you an archdeacon
	Er ich ever fro thee te!”	Before I ever go from you.”
	Thanne seide the geaunt: “Meister sire,	Then the giant said, “Sir,
	Slough thow me brother Grandere,	If you killed my brother Grander,
	For al this castel ful of golde	I would not let you live
	A live lete thee ich nolde!”	For all the gold in this castle!”
	“Ne ich thee,” queth Beves, “I trowe!”	“Nor I you,” said Bevis, “I promise!”
1880	Thus beginneth grim to growe.	And so the hostilities were inflamed.
	The geaunt, that ich spak of er,	The giant, whom I spoke of before,
	The staf, that he to fighte ber,	Had a staff which he took to the fight
	Was twenti fote in lengthe be tale,	That was twenty feet in length.
	Tharto gret and nothing smale:	It was massive and in no way light.
	To Sire Beves a smot therwith	He struck Bevis with it,
	A sterne strok withouten grith,	A harsh blow with no mercy,
	Ac a failede of his divis	But he failed in his aim

[43] *And made him a kroune brod*: Sir Bevis here begins a series of dark jokes on ordaining Grander as a priest by giving his head an extra-close shave, i.e. cutting it off. For more clerical puns and jokes, see *Gamelyn* 512, 529.

	And in the heved smot Trenchefis,	And hit Trenchefis in the head,
	That ded to grounde fel the stede.	And the steed fell dead to the ground.
1890	"O," queth Beves, "so God me spede,	"Oh!" exclaimed Bevis, "so God help me,
	Thow havest don gret vileinie,	You have done a villainous crime
	Whan thow sparde me bodi	When you spare my body
	And for me gilt min hors aqueld,	And kill this horse for my actions!
	Thow witest him, that mai nought weld.	You blame it when it has no control.
	Be God, I swere thee an oth:	By God, I swear you an oath.
	Thow schelt nought, whan we tegoth,	You will not, when we meet together,
	Laughande me wende fram,	Walk away from me laughing.
	Now thow havest mad me gram!"	Now you have made me fierce!"
	Beves is swerd anon up swapte,	Bevis swept up his sword at once,
1900	He and the geaunt togedre rapte	As he and the giant rushed together,
	And delde strokes mani and fale:	And dealt out strokes, many and fast.
	The nombre can I nought telle in tale.	I cannot count the number of them.
	The geaunt up is clobbe haf	The giant heaved up his club
	And smot to Beves with is staf,	And struck at Bevis with his staff
	That his scheld flegh from him thore	So that his shield was thrown from him,
	Thre akres brede and sumdel more.	Three acres away and somewhat more.
	Tho was Beves in strong erur	Then Bevis was in a hot temper
	And karf ato the grete levour	And cut the great club in two
	And on the geauntes brest a wonde,	And wounded the giant on his breast,
1910	That negh a felde him to the grounde.	Which nearly brought him to the ground.
	The geaunt thoughte this bataile hard,	The giant thought this battle a hard one.
	Anon he drough to him a dart,	He quickly drew a spear to himself
	Thourgh Beves scholder he hit schet,	And hurled it through Bevis' shoulder.
	The blod ran doun to Beves fet,	The blood ran down to Bevis' feet.
	Tho Beves segh is owene blod,	When Bevis saw his own blood,
	Out of is wit he wex negh wod,	He nearly became enraged out of his wits.
	Unto the geaunt ful swithe he ran	He ran in a rush to the giant
	And kedde that he was doughti man,	And proved that he was a stout warrior,
	And smot ato his nekke bon:	Cutting his neck bone in two.
1920	The geaunt fel to grounde anon.	The giant fell to the ground at once.
	Beves wente in at castel gate,	Bevis went in past the castle gate
	The levedi a mette ther-ate.	And he met the lady there.
	"Dame!" a seide, "go, yeve me mete,	"Madam," he said, "go, bring me food,
	That ever have thow Cristes hete!"	Or you will have Christ's hate forever!"
	The levedi, sore adrad with alle,	The lady, badly frightened by all this,
	Ladde Beves in to the halle,	Brought Bevis into the hall
	And of everiche sonde,	And from every dish
	That him com to honde,	That came to his hand,
	A dede hire ete al ther ferst,	He had her eat of it first
1930	That she ne dede him no berst,	So that she would do him no injury,
	And drinke ferst of the win,	And drink of the wine first
	That no poisoun was ther-in.	So that no poison would be in it.
	Whan Beves hadde ete inough,	When Bevis had eaten enough,
	A keverchef to him a drough	He drew a handkerchief to him
	In that ilche stounde,	At that same moment
	To stope mide is wonde.	To stop up his wound.
	"Dame, dame," Beves sede,	"Lady, lady," Bevis said,
	"Let sadele me a gode stede,	"Have a good horse saddled for me,
	For hennes ich wile ride,	For I will leave and ride away.
1940	I nel lo lenger her abide!"	I will no longer linger here."
	The levedi seide, she wolde fawe;	The lady said that she would gladly.

	A gode stede she let forth drawe	She had a fine steed brought forth
	And sadeled hit and wel adight,	And had it saddled and well equipped,
	And Beves, that hendi knight,	And Bevis, that fearless knight,
	Into the sadel a lippte,	Leaped into the saddle,
	That no stirop he ne drippte.	So that he touched no stirrups.
	Forth him wente Sire Bevoun,	Sir Bevis went forth
	Til he com withoute the toun	Until he came outside the town
	In to a grene mede.	Into a green meadow.
1950	"Now, loverd Crist," a sede,	"Now, Lord Jesus," he said,
	"Yeve it, Brademond the king,	"If you granted it that King Brademond,
	He and al is ofspring,	Him and all his offspring,
	Wer right her upon this grene:	Were right here upon this green,
	Now ich wolde of me tene	I would be be very well avenged
	Swithe wel ben awreke,	For my pain.
	Scholde he never go ne speke:	He would never leave or speak with his mouth.
	Now min honger is me aset,	Now that my hunger is eased
	Ne liste me never fighten bet!"	I was never more ready to fight!"
	Forth a wente be the strem,	He went forth along the stream
1960	Til a come to Jurisalem;	Until he came to Jerusalem.
	To the patriark a wente cof,	He went straight to the patriarch
	And al his lif he him schrof	And took confession for his past life;
	And tolde him how hit was bego,	And he told him how it had begun,
	Of is wele and of is wo.	Of his successes and his failures.[44]
	The patriark hadde reuthe	The patriarch had pity
	Of him and ek of is treuthe	On him and his vows as well,
	And forbed him upon his lif,	And forbade him, upon his life,
	That he never toke wif,	That he never take a wife
	Boute she were clene maide.	Unless she were a virgin maid.
1970	"Nai, for sothe!" Sire Beves saide.	"I will not, for certain!" Sir Bevis said.
	On a dai aghenes the eve	On that day toward evening,
	Of the patriarke he tok is leve;	He made his goodbye to the patriarch.
	Erliche amorwe, whan it was dai,	Early in the morning, when it was day,
	Forth a wente in is wai;	He went forth on his way.
	And also a rod himself alone:	And as he rode alone by himself,[45]
	"Lord," a thoughte, "whar mai I gone?	"Lord," he thought, "what should I do?
	Whar ich in to Ingelonde fare?	Where should I go in England?
	Nai," a thoughte, "what sholde I thare,	No!" he decided. "What would I do there
	Boute yif ichadde ost to gader,	Unless I had an army to gather
1980	For to sle me stifader?"	To slay my stepfather?"
	He thoughte, that he wolde an hie	He resolved that he would hurry on
	In to the londe of Ermonie,	Into the land of Armenia—
	To Ermonie, that was is bane,	To Armenia, which had been his curse—
	To his lemman Josiane.	To his darling Josanne.
	And also a wente theder right,	And as he went straight there,
	A mette with a gentil knight,	He met with a noble knight
	That in the londe of Ermonie	Who had given him good companionship
	Hadde bore him gode companie;	In the land of Armenia.

[44] A sentimental scene for the audience, as Bevis has not been in a Christian church since at least his childhood.

[45] *Also a rod himself alone*: As with double negatives, ME poetic style sometimes piles on redundant synonyms for being together (possibly influenced by the lost OE dual case) or being alone.

	Thai kiste hem anon with that	They kissed each other upon meeting
1990	And ather askede of otheres stat.	And asked about each other's condition.
	Thanne seide Beves and lough:	Then Bevis laughed and said,
	"Ich ave fare hard inough,	"I have fared hard enough,
	Sofred bothe honger and chele	Suffered both hunger and cold,
	And other peines mani and fele	And other pains, many and strong,
	Thourgh King Ermines gile:	Through King Ermine's guile.
	Yet ich thenke to yelde is while,	For that I intend to repay him.[46]
	For he me sente to Brademond,	He sent me to Brademond
	To have slawe me that stonde:	To have me killed at that time.
	God be thanked, a dede nought so,	May God be thanked that he did not do so;
2000	Ac in is prisoun with meche wo	But I have spent these seven years
	Ichave leie this seven yare,	In his prison with great suffering,
	Ac now icham from him ifare	And now I have escaped far from him
	Thourgh Godes grace and min engyn,	Through God's grace and my own cunning.
	Ac al ich wite it King Ermyn,	But I blame it all on King Ermine.
	And, ne wer is doughter Josiane,	And if it were not for his daughter Josanne,
	Sertes, ich wolde ben is bane!"	For certain, I would be his mortal enemy!"
	"Josiane," queth the knight, "is a wif	"Josanne," replied the knight, "is now a wife,
	Aghen hire wille with meche strif.	Against her will and with great coercion.
	Seve yer hit is gon and more,	Seven years has passed and more
2010	That the riche King Yvore	Since the rich king Yvor has married her
	To Mombraunt hath hire wedde	And brought her to Mombraunt,
	Bothe to bord and to bedde,	Both for his table and for his bed.
	And hath the swerd Morgelai	And he has the sword Morgelai
	And Arondel, the gode palfrai:	And Arondel, that fine horse.
	Ac sithe the time, that I was bore,	But since the time that I was born,
	Swiche game hadde ich never before,	I never before had such amusement
	Ase ich hadde that ilche tide,	As I had in that moment
	Whan I segh King Yvor ride	When I saw King Yvor ride
	Toward Mombraunt on Arondel;	Toward Mombrant on Arondel!
2020	The hors was nought ipaied wel:	The horse was not pleased at all.
	He arnede awai with the king	He bolted away with the king,
	Thourgh felde and wode, withouten lesing,	Through fields and woods, without a lie,
	And in a mure don him cast,	And threw him down in the mud,
	Almest he hadde deied in hast.	Almost killing him in its haste.
	Ac er hii wonne the stede,	Before they could catch the steed,
	Ropes in the contré thai leide;	They had to lay traps in the countryside.
	Ac never sithe, withoute fable,	But since then, without a lie,
	Ne com the stede out of the stable,	That horse was so sorely angered that day
	So sore he was aneied that tide;	That he has never come out of the stable.
2030	Sithe dorste no man on him ride!"	Since then, no man dares to ride him."
	For this tiding Beves was blithe,	At this news Bevis was delighted;
	His joie kouthe he no man kithe.	He could not put his joy in words.
	"Wer Josiane," a thoughte, "ase lele,	"If Josanne were as faithful," he thought,
	Alse is me stede Arondel,	"As my steed Arondel is,
	Yet scholde ich come out of wo!"	I would still yet come out of woe!"
	And at the knight he askede tho:	And then he asked the knight,

[46] *Ich thenke to yelde is while*: TEAMS suggests something close to "I think to yield would be a good idea," but the context does not suggest it. Some MSS have *hope,* i.e. intend, for *thenke*. *Quiten hir while* can also be a ME idiom for "repay one's efforts."

	"Whiderwardes is Mombraunt?"	"Where is Mombrant from here?"
	"Sere," a sede, "be Tervagaunt,	"Sir," he said, "by Tervagant,
	Thow might nought thus wende forth,	You must not travel this way;
2040	Thow most terne al aghen north!"	You must go completely north."
	Beves ternede his stede	Bevis turned his steed
	And rod north, Gode spede;	And rode north, God speed him!
	Ever a was pasaunt,	He was moving constantly
	Til a com to Mombraunt.	Until he came to Mombrant.
	Mombraunt is a riche cité;	Mombrant is a rich city.
	In al the londe of Sarsine	In all the lands of the Saracens
	Nis ther non therto iliche	There is none like it
	Ne be fele parti so riche.	That is even partly so grand.
	And whan that hende knight Bevoun	And when the noble knight Bevis
2050	Come withouten the toun,	Came near the town,
	Tharwith a palmer he mette,	He met up with a pilgrim
	And swithe faire he him grette:	And greeted him courteously.
	"Palmer," a sede, "whar is the king?"	"Pilgrim," Bevis said, "where is the king?"
	"Sire," a seide, "an honting	"Sir," he answered, "he is hunting
	With kinges fiftene."	With fifteen kings."
	"And whar," a seide, "is the quene?"	"And where," Bevis said, "is the queen?"
	"Sire," a seide, "in hire bour."	"Sir," he answered, "in her chamber."
	"Palmer," a seide, "paramour,	"Pilgrim," Bevis said, "for kindness' sake,
	Yem me thine wede	Trade me your clothes
2060	For min and for me stede!"	For mine and for my horse."
	"God yeve it," queth the palmare,	"God grant it," said the pilgrim,
	"We hadde drive that chefare!"	"That we drive that bargain!"
	Beves of is palfrei alighte	Bevis dismounted from his palfrey
	And schrede the palmer as a knighte	And clothed the pilgrim as a knight
	And yaf him is hors, that he rod in,	And gave him his horse that he rode on,
	For is bordon and is sklavin.	For his staff and his cloak.
	The palmer rod forth ase a king,	The pilgrim rode forth like a king,
	And Beves went alse a bretheling.	And Bevis walked as a beggar.
	Whan he com to the castel gate,	When he came to the castle gate,
2070	Anon he fond thar-ate	He immediately found
	Mani palmer thar stonde	Many pilgrims standing there
	Of fele kene londe,	From many kinds of lands,
	And he askede hem in that stede,	And he asked them at that moment
	What hii alle thar dede.	What they were all doing there.
	Thanne seide on, that thar stod:	One of them who stood there said,
	"We beth icome to have gode,	"We are here to receive charity,
	And so thow ert also!"	And so you will as well."
	"Who," queth Beves, "schel it us do?"	Bevis said, "Who will give it to us?"
	"The quene, God hire schilde fro care!	"The queen, may God protect her from worries!
2080	Meche she loveth palmare;	She loves pilgrims very much.
	Al that she mai finden here,	All that she finds here,
	Everiche dai in the yere,	Every day of the year,
	Faire she wile hem fede	She feeds them generously
	And yeve hem riche wede	And gives them fine clothes,
	For a knightes love, Bevoun,	All for a knight's love—Bevis,
	That was iboren at Southamtoun;	Who was born in Southampton.
	To a riche man she wolde him bringe,	She would make a rich man of anyone
	That kouthe telle of him tiding!"	Who could tell news of him!"
	"Whanne," queth Beves, "schel this be don?"	Bevis asked, "When will this happen?"
2090	A seide: "Betwene middai and noun."	He said, "Between mid-morning and noon."

	Beves, hit ful wel he sai,	Bevis saw full well
	Hit nas boute yong dai;	That it was still early in the day.
	A thoughte that he wolde er than	He decided that before then he would
	Wende aboute the barbican,	Walk around the tower
	For to loke and for to se,	In order to look and to find out
	How it mighte best be,	How it might best be done
	Yif he the castel wolde breke,	If he could break into the castle,
	Whar a mighte best in reke;	And where he might best sneak in.
	And also a com be a touret,	And as he passed by a turret
2100	That was in the castel iset,	That was set into the castle wall,
	A herde wepe and crie;	He heard a woman weeping and crying.
	Thederward he gan him hie.	He hastened in that direction.
	"O allas," she seide, "Bevoun,	"Oh, alas!" she said, "Bevis,
	Hende knight of Southhamtoun,	Handsome knight of Southampton,
	Now ichave bide that day,	Now I have lived to see the day
	That to the treste I ne may:	That I cannot trust in you.
	That ilche God, that thow of speke,	The same god that you spoke of
	He is fals and thow ert eke!"	Is false, and you are also!"
	In al the sevene yer eche dai	In all those seven years, each day,
2110	Josiane, that faire mai,	Josanne, that fair maid,
	Was woned swich del to make,	Was accustomed to making such grief,
	Al for Sire Beves sake.	All for Sir Bevis' sake.
	The levedi gan to the gate te,	The lady began to go to the gate
	The palmeres thar to se;	To see the pilgrims there.
	And Beves, after anon	And Bevis, after a while,
	To the gate he gan gon.	Walked toward the gate.
	The palmers gonne al in threste,	The pilgrims all pushed in;
	Beves abod and was the laste;	Bevis waited and was the last.
	And whan the maide segh him thar,	And when the maid saw him there,
2120	Of Beves she nas nothing war;	She had no idea at all it was Bevis.
	"Thee semest," queth she, "man of anour,	"You seem," she said, "to be a man of honor.
	Thow schelt this dai be priour	You will be first this day
	And beginne oure deis:	And preside at the master's table.[47]
	Thee semest hende and corteis."	You seem gracious and courteous."
	Mete and drinke thai hadde afyn,	They had food and drink throughout,
	Bothe piment and plenté a wyn,	Both beer and mixed wine in plenty.[48]
	Swithe wel thai hadde ifare;	They dined very well.
	Thanne seide the quene to eche palmare:	Then the queen said to each pilgrim,
	"Herde ever eni of yow telle	"Have you ever heard stories
2130	In eni lede or eni spelle,	From any people, or any mention,
	Or in feld other in toun,	In any field or in town
	Of a knight, Beves of Hamtoun?"	Of a knight, Bevis of Southhampton?"
	"Nai!" queth al that thar ware.	"No," replied all that were there.
	"What thow?" she seide, "niwe palmare?"	"What about you, newcomer?" she said.
	Thanne seide Beves and lough:	Then Bevis laughed and said,
	"That knight ich knowe wel inough!	"I know that knight well enough!
	Atom," a seide, "in is contré	He is at home," he said, "in his country.

[47] *Deis*: The dais in a medieval hall was a raised platform where the lord and nobility would dine, separate from servants and commoners. The practice survives in wedding receptions.

[48] *Piment*: Pyment is a variety of mead (honey beer) fermented with grape juice. It was often spiced with cinnamon or nutmeg, or served warm with fruit.

	Icham an erl and also is he;	I am an earl and he is too.
	At Rome he made me a spel	He told me a story in Rome
2140	Of an hors, men clepede Arondel:	About a horse that men call Arondel.
	Wide whar ichave iwent	In all the wide lands I have travelled,
	And me warisoun ispent	And have spent my possessions,
	I sought hit bothe fer and ner,	I looked for it both near and far.
	Men telleth me, that it is her;	Men tell me that it is here.
	Yif ever lovedestow wel that knight,	If you ever loved that knight well,
	Let me of that hors have a sight!"	Allow me a sight of that horse."
	What helpeth hit, to make fable?	What good would it do to lie?
	She ladde Beves to the stable:	She brought Bevis to the stable.
	Josian beheld him before,	Josanne gazed at him before her;
2150	She segh his browe to-tore;	She saw his scarred brow.
	After Bonefas she gan grede,	She called for Boniface.
	At stable dore to him she sede;	At the stable door she said to him,
	"Be the moder, that me hath bore,	"By the mother who bore me,
	Ner this mannes browe to-tore,	If this man's brow were not all torn,
	Me wolde thenke be his fasoun,	I would think by his manners
	That hit were Beves of Hamtoun!"	That it was Bevis of Southampton!"
	Whan that hors herde nevene	When that horse heard the sound
	His kende lordes stevene,	Of his rightful lord's voice,
	His rakenteis he al terof	He broke away from his fetters
2160	And wente in to the kourt wel kof	And galloped quickly into the court
	And neide and made miche pride	And neighed and made a great display
	With gret joie be ech a side.	With great joy on each side.
	"Allas!" tho queth Josiane,	"Alas!" Josanne then said,
	"Wel mani a man is bane	"Many a man is fated
	To dai he worth ilaught,	To be laughed at today
	Er than this stede ben icaught!"	Before this horse is caught."
	Thanne seide Beves and lough:	Then Bevis chuckled and said,
	"Ich can take hit wel inough:	"I can catch him well enough.
	Wolde ye," a sede, "yeve me leve,	If you," he said, "give me permission,
2170	Hit ne scholde no man greve!'	No man will be grieved by him."
	"Take hit thanne," she sede,	"Catch him, then," she said,
	"And in to stable thow it lede	"And lead him into the stable
	And teie it thar it stod,	And tie him where he stood,
	And thow schelt have mede gode!"	And you will have a good reward."
	Beves to the hors tegh;	Bevis walked to the horse.
	Tho the hors him knew and segh.	When the horse saw him and knew him,
	He ne wawede no fot,	He did not move a foot
	Til Beves hadde the stirop;	Until Bevis had the stirrup on
	Beves in to the sadel him threw,	And threw himself into the saddle.
2180	Tharbi that maide him wel knew.	With that the maid knew him well.
	Anon seide Josian with than:	Then Josanne cried out at once,
	"O Beves, gode lemman,	"Oh, Bevis, dear heart,
	Let me with thee reke	Deal with me[49]
	In that maner, we han ispeke,	In the way we spoke about long ago!
	And thenk, thow me to wive tok,	And remember how you took me as your wife
	Whan ich me false godes forsok:	When I abandoned my false gods.
	Now thow hast thin hors Arondel,	Now that you have your horse Arondel

[49] *Reke*: *Reckon* or *deal*. But *ride* (away) in the Chetham Library, No. 8009, Manchester MS.

	Thee swerd ich thee fette schel,	I will fetch you your sword.
	And let me wende with thee sithe	Let me go with you after then,
2190	Hom in to thin owene kithe!"	Home to your own country!"
	Queth Beves: "Be Godes name,	Bevis exclaimed, "For God's sake,
	Ichave for thee sofred meche schame,	I have suffered great shame for you
	Lain in prisoun swithe strong:	And lay in a strong prison.
	Yif ich thee lovede, hit were wrong!	If I loved you, it was wrong!
	The patriark me het upon me lif,	The patriarch ordered me on my life
	That I ne tok never wif,	That I never take a wife
	Boute she were maide clene;	Unless she were a virgin maid.
	And thow havest seve year ben a quene,	If you have been a queen for seven years
	And everi night a king be thee:	With a king beside you every night,
2200	How mightow thanne maide be?"	How might you then be a maiden?"
	"Merci," she seide, "lemman fre,	"Have mercy," she said, "gentle heart.
	Led me hom to thee contré,	Take me home to your country.
	And boute thee finde me maide wimman,	And if you do not find me a pure woman,
	Be that eni man saie can,	And if any man can say otherwise,
	Send me aghen to me fon	Send me back to my enemies
	Al naked in me smok alon!"	Alone and naked except for my smock."
	Beves seide: "So I schel,	Bevis said, "So I will.
	In that forward I graunte wel!"	I readily agree to that contract!"
	Bonefas to Sire Beves sede:	Boniface said to Sir Bevis,
2210	"Sire, thee is beter do be rede!	"Sir, it would be best for you to do as I advise.
	The king cometh sone fro honting	The king will soon return from hunting,
	And with him mani a riche king,	And with many a rich king with him,
	Fiftene told al in tale,	Fifteen in count,
	Dukes and erles mani and fale.	Dukes and earls, many and various.
	Whan hii fonde us alle agon,	When they find us all gone,
	Thai wolde after us everichon	They will go after us, every one,
	With wondergret chevalrie,	With expert horsemanship,
	And do us schame and vileinie;	And shame us and do us harm.
	Ac formeste, sire, withouten fable,	But first, sir, without lie,
2220	Led Arondel in to the stable,	Lead Arondel into the stable,
	And ate the gate thow him abide,	And wait at the gate
	Til the king cometh bi the ride;	Until the king comes riding by you.
	A wile thee asken at the frome,	He will ask you right away
	Whider thow schelt and whannes thow come;	Who you are and where you come from.
	Sai, that thow havest wide iwent,	Say that you have traveled widely
	And thow come be Dabilent,	And you have come from Abilent,[50]
	That is hennes four jurné:	Which is a four-day journey from here.
	Sai, men wile ther the king sle,	Say that men there will slay the king
	Boute him come help of sum other;	Unless someone goes there to help him.
2230	And King Yvor is his brother,	King Yvor is his brother,
	And whan he hereth that tiding,	And when he hears that news,

[50] *Dabilent*: This begins another wild goose chase, with some sources suggesting an Abilent tower near Jerusalem, as well as a contention that d'Abilent is a corruption of Babylon. There is a tradition of a lost medieval Abillant in Normandy, and R.P. Haviland, in researching the genealogy of his surname, suggests its location near present-day Valognes. No horse could possibly travel there from southern France, 1000 km away, in four days (2227). Either we have the wrong locations or the placenames are somewhat fanciful. R.P. Haviland, e-mail post, "Haviland-L Archives," *Rootsweb*, accessed 29 May 2010 at http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/HAVILAND/2005-10/1128642591

	Theder a wile an highing	He will go there in haste
	With al is power and is ost:	With all his power and his host.
	Thanne mai we with lite bost	Then we can set forth
	Forth in oure wei go!"	On our way with little trouble."
	Beves seide: "It schel be so!"	Bevis said, "It will be so!"
	And Arondel to stable lad,	And he led Arondel to the stable
	Ase Bonefas him bad;	As Boniface told him.
	And to the gate Beves yode	And Bevis walked to the gate
2240	With other beggers, that ther stode,	With the other beggars that stood there,
	And pyk and skrippe be is side,	With a staff and purse by his side,
	In a sklavin row and wide;	In a cloak that was rough and loose.
	His berd was yelw, to is brest wax	His beard was yellow and grown to his chest,
	And to his gerdel heng is fax.	And his hair hung to his waist.
	Al thai seide, that hii ne sighe	All of them said that they never saw
	So faire palmer never with eighe,	So stately a pilgrim with their own eyes
	Ne com ther non in that contré:	Who ever came to that country.
	Thus wondred on him that him gan se;	Thus those who saw him wondered,
	And so stod Beves in that thring,	And so Bevis stood in that group,
2250	Til noun belle began to ring.	Until noon bells began to ring.
	Fram honting com the King Yvore,	King Yvor returned from hunting
	And fiftene kinges him before,	With fifteen kings before him,
	Dukes and erles, barouns how fale	And dukes and earls and barons;
	I can nought telle the righte tale.	How many, I cannot give the right number.
	Mervaile thai hadde of Beves alle.	They all wondered at Bevis.
	Yvor gan Beves to him calle	Yvor called Bevis to him
	And seide: "Palmer, thow comst fro ferre:	And said, "Pilgrim, you come from far away.
	Whar is pes and whar is werre?	Where is there peace and where is there war?
	Trewe tales thow canst me sain."	You can give me good information."
2260	Thanne answerde Beves again:	Then Bevis answered in return,
	"Sire, ich come fro Jurisalem	"Sire, I come from Jerusalem,
	Fro Nazareth and fro Bedlem,	From Nazareth, and from Bethlehem,
	Emauns castel and Synaie;	Emmaus' castle, and Sinai;
	Ynde, Erop, and Asie,	India, Europe, and Asia;
	Egippte, Grese, and Babiloine,	Egypt, Greece, and Babylon,
	Tars, Sesile and Sesaoine,	Tarsus, Sicily, and Saxony;
	In Fris, in Sodeine and in Tire,	I was in Friesland, Sidon, and Tyre,
	In Aufrik and in mani empire,	In Africa and in many empires.
	Ac al is pes thar ichave went,	All is peaceful wherever I went,
2270	Save in the lond of Dabilent.	Except in the land of Abilent.
	In pes mai no man come thare,	No man may find peace there;
	Thar is werre, sorwe and care.	There is war, sorrow, and trouble.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
E	The kyng of that londe, verament,	The king of that land, in truth,
--	By this tyme y trow be shent	Must be overthrown by now, I believe.[51]
	. . . . .	. . . . .
2273	Thre kinges and dukes five	Three other kings and five dukes
	His chevalrie adoun ginneth drive,	Have driven down his cavalry,
	And meche other peple ischent,	And many other people are killed,
	Cites itake and tounes ibrent;	Cities taken and towns burned.
	Him to a castel thai han idrive,	They have driven him to a castle

[51] Extra lines from Egerton 2862. In Kölberg, *Beues*, 110.

	That stant be the se upon a clive,	That stands by the sea upon a cliff,
	And al the ost lith him aboute,	And all their host surrounds him.
2280	Be this to daie a is in doute,"	By today his life must be in doubt."
	King Yvor seide: "Allas, allas,	King Yvor said, "Alas, alas!
	Lordinges, this is a sori cas!	Lordings, this is a sorry situation.
	That is me brother, ye witen wel,	That is my brother, you know well,
	That lith beseged in that castel:	Who lies besieged in that castle.
	To hors and armes, lasse and more,	To horse, to arms, high and low,
	In haste swithe, that we wer thore!"	At great speed so that we will be there!"
	Thai armede hem anon bedene,	They immediately armed themselves,
	Yvor and his kinges fiftene,	Yvor and his fifteen kings,
	And to the Cité of Diablent	And they went forth together
2290	Alle samen forth they went.	To the city of Abilent.
	But an old king, that hight Garcy,	But he left an old king whose name
	At home he lefte to kepe the lady.	Was Garcy at home to guard the lady.
	Thoo seid Beves: "Make yow yare,	Bevis then said, "Get yourselves ready
	Yif that ye wille with me fare!"	If you wish to go with me."
	Sir Bonefas answered thoo:	Sir Boniface answered,
	"Yif ye wil by my consaile do:	"If you will do as I counsel.
	Here is an olde king Garcy,	The old king Garcy is here,
	That muche can of nygremancy;	Who knows a great deal about sorcery.
	He may see in his goldryng,	He can see in his gold ring
2300	What any man dooth in alle thing.	What any man is doing in all matters.
	I know an erbe in the forest.	I know an herb in the forest;
	Now wille I sende therafter prest	I will send for it quickly now
	And let brochen Reynessh wyne	And open a cask of Rhenish wine
	And do that yerbe anoon therynne,	And put that herb in it at once.
	And what he be, that ther-of doth drynke,	And whoever drinks from it
	He shal lerne for to wynke	Will be induced to nod off
	And slepe anon after ryght	And will sleep right away afterward
	Al a day and al a nyght."	For all day and all night."
	Sir Bonefas dide al this thing;	Sir Boniface did all these things.
2310	They resen up in the dawnyng;	They rose up at dawn;
	Inowgh they toke what they wolde,	They took enough of what they wished,
	Both of silver and of golde,	Both silver and gold,
	And other tresoure they toke also,	And took other treasures as well,
	And in hur way they gunne goo.	And set off on their way.
	And when they were went away,	And when they had gone away,
	Garcy awaked a morow day	Garcy woke up the next morning
	And had wonder swith stronge,	And was full of great puzzlement
	That he hadde slept so longe.	That he had slept for so long.
	His ryng he gan to him tee,	He reached for his ring
2320	For to loke and for to see;	To look and to see
	And in his ryng say he thare,	And in his ring he saw
	The queene awey with the palmer was fare.	The queen traveling with the pilgrim.
	To his men he grad ryght:	He cried out to his men at once,
	"As armes, lordinges, for to fyght!"	"To arms, gentlemen, to battle!"
	And tolde his folke, verament,	And he told his people, truly,
	How the queene was awey went.	How the queen had gone away.
	They armed hem in ryche wede	They clothed themselves in fine armor,
	And every knyght lep on his stede,	And every knight leaped on his steed
	And after went al that route	And then all the company went out
2330	And besette hem al aboute.	And beset the queen and Bevis all around.
	Thenne seide Beves to Bonefas:	Then Bevis said to Boniface,

	"Kepe wel Josian at this cas,	"Protect Josanne well in this moment,
	And I wil wynde to bataile,	And I will set out to battle
	Garcy and his ost assaile.	Andtake on Garcy and his men.
	I wil fonde, what I do may,	I will attempt to do what I can;
	I have rested me moony a day.	I have rested for many a day.
	Fyght, I will now my fylle	I will have my fill of fighting now
	And hem overcom by Goddes wille!"	And will overcome them by God's will!"
	Tho Bonefas to him saide:	Then Boniface said to him,
2340	"Sir, yow is better do by my reed:	"Sir, it would be better for you to do as I advise;
	Ye shal be in the lasse dout,	You will be in less danger,
	For I know the contré al about;	For I know the country all around.
	I can bryng yow in to a cave,	I can bring you into a cave
	There a sheparde with a stave,	To be like a shepherd with a staff.
	Theyghe men hadden his deth sworn,	Even if men had sworn your death,
	He myght him kepe wel therforn!"	You could hide yourself there forever."[52]
	Into the cave he hath hem brought;	He brought them into the cave.
	Garcy, the Kyng, hem couth fynde nought,	Garcy, the king, could not find them
	Therfore him was swith woo;	And was very angered because of it.
2350	He and his ost bethought hem thoo,	He and his host decided among themselves
	Hoom agheyn for to wende	To turn back home again and to send
	And sende Ascopart hem to shende.	The giant, Ascopart, to destroy them.[53]
	In the cave they were al nyght	They spent all night in the cave
	Withoute mete or drynke, aplyght.	Without food or drink, in truth.
	Twoo dayes it was goon,	Two days had passed
	That mete ne drynke had they noon.	Without them having any food or drink.
	Josian was afyngered soore	Josanne was sorely hungry
	And told anoon Beves therfore.	And told Bevis about it directly.
	Beves seid, "How darst thou of me meete crave?	Bevis said, "How can you nag me for food?
2360	Wel thou wotest, that noon I have."	You know very well that I have none."
	Josian answered sone anoon	Josanne soon after pleaded again
	And bade Sir Beves to wood goon:	And asked Sir Bevis to go into the woods:
	I have herde of savagenes,	"I have heard about savages,
	Whenne yonge men were in wyldernes,	When young men were in the wilderness,
	That they toke hert and hinde	That they catch stags and does
	And other bestes, that they myght fynde;	And other animals that they might find.
	They slowen hem and soden hem in her hide;	They kill them and prepare them in their hides.
	Thus doon men that in wood abyde.	This is what men do who live in the woods.
	Sir, thou myghtest bestes lyghtly take,	Sir, you can easily catch our dinner,
2370	For sause good I wyl thee make!"	For I will make you a good sauce."
	Beves seide to Bonefas than:	Bevis said to Boniface then,
	"I pray thee kepe wel Josian,	"I ask you to protect Josanne well
	The while I wynde into the forest,	While I go into the forest
	For to take sum wylde beest!"	To catch some wild animal."
	Forth went Beves in that forest,	Bevis went forth into the forest;
	Beestes to sheete he was ful prest.	He was ready to shoot some game.

[52] MS University Library, Cambridge Ff. 2.38 has *owre* instead of *his* (2345) and *ye might be there for evyrmore* (2346). In Kölberg, *Beuis*, 113. The shepherd reference is likely meant as a simile.

[53] Giants in ancient and medieval literature are almost always evil or animalistic. As with Goliath and Grendel, they usually descend from Cain. An exception is St. Christopher, a third century martyr who is claimed to have ferried Christ as a child across a river. Ascopard is unusual in being alternatively altruistic and selfish.

	Als sone as he was forth yfare,	As soon as he had set out,
	Two lyouns ther com yn thare,	Two lions came inside there,
	Grennand and rampand with her feet.	Snarling and raised up on their hind legs.
2380	Sir Bonefas then als skeet	Just as quickly Sir Boniface
	His hors to him thoo he drowgh	Took to his horse
	And armyd him wel ynowgh	And armed himself sufficiently
	And yave the lyouns bataile to fyght;	And offered battle to the lions.
	Al to lytel was his myght.	His might was all too little.
	The twoo lyouns sone had sloon	Soon the two lions had slain them,
	That oon his hors, that other the man.	One his horse, the other the man.
	Josian into the cave gan shete,	Josanne shut herself in the cave,
	And the twoo lyouns at hur feete,	And the two lions were at her heels,
	Grennand on hur with muche grame,	Snarling at her with great savagery.
2390	But they ne myght do hur no shame,	But they could not do her any wrong,
	For the kind of lyouns, ywis,	For it is the nature of lions, in truth.
	A kynges doughter, that maide is,	The maiden was a king's daughter,
	Kinges doughter, quene and maide both,	And a princess, queen, and virgin also,
	The lyouns myght do hur noo wroth.	And so the lions could do her no harm.[54]
	Beves com sone fro huntyng	Bevis soon returned from hunting
	With three hertes, without lesyng,	With three deer, without a lie,
	And fonde an hors gnawe to the boon,	And found a horse gnawed to the bone
	And Josian awey was goon.	And Josianne gone away.
	He sowned soone for sorow and thought,	He was overcome with sorrow and worry.[55]
2400	Fro cave to cave he her sought,	He searched for her from cave to cave
	To wete how that cas myght be,	To find out what had happened.
	And in a cave he gan to see,	And in one cave he saw
	Where Josain sate in grete doute	Where Josanne cowered in great fear
	And twoo lions hur about.	With two lions about her.
	Too Sir Beves gan she speke:	To Sir Bevis she began to cry,
	"Sir, thyn help, me to awreke	"Sir, help me to have vengeance
	Of these two liouns, that thy chamberleyn,	On these two lions who have just now
	Ryght now han him slayn!"	Slain your steward!"
	She seide, she wolde that oon hoolde,	She said she would hold the one
2410	While that he that other quelde.	While he killed the other.
	Aboute the nekke she hent that oon,	She grasped the one about the neck,
	And Beves bade let him goon,	But Bevis told her to let him go
	And seide: "Dame, forsoth, ywys,	And said, "Lady, in truth, without a lie,
	I myght yelp of lytel prys,	I would have little to be proud of
	There I had a lyon quelde,	If I killed a lion here
	The while a woman another helde!	While a woman held the other.
	Thow shalt never umbraide me,	You will never have reason to belittle me
	When thou comest hoom to my contré:	When you come home to my country.
	But thou let hem goo both twoo,	If you will not let both of them go,
2420	Have good day, fro thee I goo!"	Goodbye and I will go from you!"
	She let hem skip up and doun,	She let them jump up and down

[54] "A commonplace of medieval lore was that virginity could confer invulnerability" (TEAMS). Spenser's *Faerie Queene* also has the heroine Una, who is escorted by a lion that protects her chastity. Here the lions menace Josian but are unable to touch her.

[55] *He sowned soone*: Swooning conjures up images of Victorian women fainting theatrically, but in ME it can also simply mean being overcome by emotion. Although in *Floris and Blancheflour* the constant swooning tests a modern reader's patience, it would normally not have been seen as effeminate.

	And Beves assailed the lyoun.	And Bevis attacked the lion.
	Strenger bataile ne strenger fyght	You have never before heard a tale
	Herde ye never of no knyght	Of a stronger battle or fiercer fight
	Byfore this in romaunce telle,	Faced by any knight in a romance
	Than Beves had of beestes felle.	Than Bevis had with the cruel beasts.
	Al that herkeneth word and ende,	May all who hear every word to the end,
	To hevyn mot her sowles wende!	Have their souls ascend to Heaven!
	That oon was a lionesse,	The other was a lioness
2430	That Sir Bevis dide grete distresse;	Who gave Sir Bevis great distress.
	At the first begynnyng	At the first instant
	To Beves hondes she gan spryng	She sprung on Bevis' hands
	And al to peces rent hem there,	And ripped them to pieces
	Or Beves myght ther-of be werre.	Before Bevis could be wary of it.
	That other lyon, that Josian gan holde,	The other lion, which Josanne held,
	To fight with Beves was ful bold;	Was very keen to fight with Bevis.
	He ran to him with grete randon	He leaped at him with great passion
	And with his pawes he rent adoun	And with his paws he tore down
	His armour almost to ground,	His armor, almost to the ground,
2440	And in his thyghe a wel grete wound.	And gave him a savage wound in his thigh.
	Tho was Beves in hert grame,	Then Bevis was steeled at heart,
	For the lioun had do him shame;	For the lion had shamed him.
	As he were wood, he gan to fyght;	He began to fight as if he were mad.
	The lionesse seyghe that sight	The lioness saw that sight
	And raught to Beves, without faile,	And rushed at Bevis without fail.
	Both at oones they gan him assaile.	Both at once they attacked him.
	Thoo was Beves, in strong tempestes,	Then Bevis was in great danger;
	So strong and egre were these beestes,	These beasts were so strong and eager
	That nyghe they hadde him there queld;	That they nearly killed him there.
2450	Unnethe he kept him with his shelde.	He barely protected himself with his shield.
	With Morgelay, that wel wold byte,	He began to strike at the lion
	To the lioun he gan smyte;	With Morgelai, which had a strong bite.
	His ryght foot he shore asonder,	He sheared off his right foot.
	Sir Beves shilde the Lyoun ranne under	The lion ran under Sir Bevis' shield,
	And with his teeth with sory happe	And with its teeth, with sorry luck,
	He kitte a pece of his lappe,	It caught a piece of his shirt,
	And Beves that ilke stounde	And Bevis, in that same instant,
	For anguysse fel to the grounde,	Was pulled to the ground in anguish.
	And hastely Beves than up stert,	But Bevis started up hastily,
2460	For he was grevyd in his hert;	For he was enraged in his heart.
	He kyd wel tho, he was agrevyd,	Then he knew what to do. He was angered
	And clef a twoo the lyon is hevyd,	And split the lion's head in two
	And to his hert the poynt thrast;	And thrust the point to its heart.
	Thus the lioun died at the last.	Thus the lion died in the end.
	Stoutliche the liounesse than	Then the lioness pounced on Bevis,
	Asailede Beves, that doughti man,	That hardy man, with determination,
	And with hire mouth is scheld tok	Clomping his shield with her mouth
	So sterneliche, saith the bok,	So firmly, so the book says,
	That doun it fel of is left hond.	That it was pulled down off his left hand.
2470	Tho Josian gan understonde,	Josanne then believed
	That hire lord scholde ben slawe;	That her lord was about to be slain.
	Helpe him she wolde fawe.	She would gladly help him.
	Anon she hente that lioun:	At once she seized the lioness.
	Beves bad hire go sitte adoun,	Bevis ordered her to go sit down
	And swor be God in Trinité,	And swore by God in Trinity

	Boute she lete that lioun be,	That unless she left that lioness alone,
	A wolde hire sle in that destresse	He would slay her in that crisis
	Ase fain ase the liounesse.	As readily as the lioness!
	Tho she ne moste him nought helpe fighte,	When she could not help him fight,
2480	His scheld she broughte him anon righte	Straightaway she brought him his shield
	And yede hire sitte adoun, saun faile,	And sat herself down, without fail,
	And let him worthe in that bataile.	And let him prove himself in that battle.
	The liounesse was stout and sterne,	The lioness was stout and determined.
	Aghen to Beves she gan erne	Again she pounced on Bevis,
	And be the right leg she him grep,	And she gripped him by the right leg,
	Ase the wolf doth the schep,	As the wolf does to the sheep,
	That negh she braide out is sparlire;	So that she nearly tore out his calf.
	Tho was Beves in gret yre,	Then Bevis was in a great rage,
	And in that ilche selve veneu	And in that very same spot,
2490	Thourgh Godes grace and is vertu	Through God's grace and His virtue,
	The liounesse so harde he smot	He struck at the lioness so hard
	With Morgelai, that biter bot	With Morgelai that it cut bitterly
	Evene upon the regge an high,	Evenly down the back in haste,
	That Morgelai in therthe fligh.	So that Morgelai flew into the earth.
	Tho was Josian ful fain,	Then Josanne was jubilant
	Tho that hii were bothe slain,	When the lions were both slain,
	And Beves was glad and blithe,	And Bevis was pleased and glad.
	His joie ne kouthe he no man kithe,	He could hide his joy from no man,
	And ofte he thankede the king in glori	And he continually thanked the King of Glory
2500	Of his grace and is viktori;	For His grace and his victory.
	Ac wo him was for Bonefas,	But he was sorry for Boniface.
	And tho he segh, non other it nas,	And when he saw there was no alternative,
	A sette Josian upon a mule	He set Josanne upon a mule
	And ride forth a lite while,	And rode forth a little while.
	And metten with a geaunt	They met with a giant
	With a lotheliche semlaunt.	Who had a loathsome appearance.
	He was wonderliche strong,	He was amazingly strong
	Rome thretti fote long;	And thirty feet tall in height.
	His berd was bothe gret and rowe;	His beard was both great and shaggy.
2510	A space of fot betwene is browe;	There was a foot's space between his brows.
	His clob was, to yeve a strok,	His club, to give a hard blow with,
	A lite bodi of an ok.	Was a small trunk of an oak.
	Beves hadde of him wonder gret	Bevis was greatly amazed by him
	And askede him, what a het,	And asked him what he was called,
	And yef men of his contré	And if the men of his country
	Were ase meche ase was he.	Were as large as he was.
	"Me name," a sede, "is Ascopard:	"My name," he said, "is Ascopard.
	Garci me sente hiderward,	Garcy sent me out here
	For to bringe this quene aghen	In order to bring the queen back
2520	And thee, Beves, her of-slen.	And to slay you here, Bevis.
	Icham Garci is chaumpioun	I am Garcy's champion,
	And was idrive out of me toun;	And I was driven out of my town
	Al for that ich was so lite,	Because I was so little
	Everi man me wolde smite;	That every man would hit me.
	Ich was so lite and so merugh,	I was so small and so delicate
	Everi man me clepede dwerugh,	That every man called me a dwarf.
	And now icham in this londe,	And now that I am in this land,
	Iwoxe mor, ich understonde,	I have grown more, I can see,
	And strengere than other tene,	And am stronger than ten others.

2530	And that schel on us be sene;	And that will be clear to see;
	I schel thee sle her, yif I mai!"	I will slay you here, if I can."
	"Thourgh Godes help," queth Beves, "nai!"	"Through God's help, no!" said Bevis.
	Beves prikede Arondel a side,	Bevis spurred Arondel's flanks;
	Aghen Ascopard he gan ride	He charged against Ascopard
	And smot him on the scholder an high,	And struck him on the shoulder in haste
	That his spere al to-fligh,	So that his spear was splintered.
	And Ascopard with a retret	And Ascopard, with a step back,
	Smot after Beves a dent gret,	Struck Bevis with a great blow,
	And with is o fot a slintte	And with his own foot he slipped
2540	And fel with is owene dentte.	And fell from his own force.
	Beves of is palfrai alighte	Bevis came down from his palfrey
	And drough his swerd anon righte	And drew his sword at once
	And wolde have smiten of is heved;	And would have cut off his head.
	Josian besoughte him, it were beleved:	Josanne begged him to desist.
	"Sire," she seide, "so God thee save,	"Sir," she pleaded, "so God save you,
	Let him liven and ben our knave!"	Let him live and be our servant!"
	"Dame, a wile us betrai!"	"Lady, he will betray us."
	"Sire, ich wil ben is bourgh, nai!"	"No, sir, I will be his guarantor."
	Thar a dede Beves omage	So Ascopard did Bevis homage there
2550	And becom is owene page.	And became his page.[56]
	Forth thai wenten alle thre,	All three of them went forth
	Til that hii come to the se;	Until they came to the sea.
	A dromond hii fonde ther stonde,	They found a fast galley standing there
	That wolde in to hethene londe,	That was bound for heathen lands,
	With Sarasines stout and fer,	With Saracens that were stout and fierce.
	Boute thai nadde no maroner.	But they had no mariner.
	Tho hii sighe Ascopard come,	When they saw Ascopard coming,
	Hii thoughten wel, alle and some,	They thought well, all and some,
	He wolde hem surliche hem lede,	That he would surely pilot them,
2560	For he was maroner god at nede.	For he was a fine mariner in need.
	Whan he in to the schipe cam,	When he boarded the ship,
	His gode bat an honde he nam,	He took his good stick into his hand,
	A drof hem out and dede hem harm,	And he drove them out and did them harm.
	Arondel a bar to schip in is arm,	He carried Arondel to the ship in his arm,
	And after in a lite while	And after a little while,
	Josian and hire mule,	Josanne and her mule.
	And drowen up saile al so snel	And he drew up the sail just as fast
	And sailede forth faire and wel,	And sailed forth expertly and well,
	That hii come withouten ensoine	So that they arrived without delay
2570	To the haven of Coloine.	At the harbor of Cologne.
	Whan he to londe kem,	When they came to the shore
	Men tolde, the bischop was is em,	Men told him of his uncle the bishop,
	A noble man wis afin	A noble man, wise in every way,
	And highte Saber Florentin.	Who was called Saber Florentine.
	Beves grete him at that cas	Bevis greeted him at that opportunity
	And tolde him what he was.	And told him who he was.
	The beschop was glad afin	The bishop was very pleased to hear this
	And seide: "Wolkome, leve cosin!	And said, "Welcome, dear nephew!

[56] The scene seems to approve of Josanne's act of mercy, but later Bevis is proven right and her wrong. In a late episode in the story omitted here Ascopard does betray the two and is killed by Saber.

	Gladder I nas, sethe ich was bore,	I was never so glad, since I was born.
2580	Ich wende, thow haddest be forlore.	I thought that you had been lost.
	Who is this levedi schene?"	And who is this beautiful lady?"
	"Sire, of hethenesse a quene,	"Sir, a queen from heathen lands,
	And she wile, for me sake,	And she will, for my sake,
	Cristendome at thee take."	Receive baptism from you."
	"Who is this with the grete visage?"	"And who is this with the massive features?"
	"Sire," a sede, "hit is me page	"Sir," he said, "it is my page,
	And wile ben icristnede also,	And he will be christened also,
	And ich bidde, that ye hit do!"	And I ask that you will do it."
	The nexste dai after than	The next day after then,
2590	The beschop cristnede Josian.	The bishop christened Josanne.
	For Ascopard was mad a kove;	For Ascopard a baptismal font was made;
	Whan the beschop him scholde in schove,	But when the bishop tried to immerse him,
	A lep anon upon the benche	He leaped at once upon the bench
	And seide: "Prest, wiltow me drenche?	And said, "Bishop, you want to drown me?
	The devel yeve thee helle pine,	May the devil give you Hell's pains!
	Icham to meche te be cristine!"	I am too big to be christened."
	After Josian is cristing	After Josanne's baptism,
	Beves dede a gret fighting,	Bevis performed a great feat of fighting.
	Swich bataile dede never non	Such battle was never faced
2600	Cristene man of flesch ne bon,	By any Christian man of flesh or blood
	Of a dragoun ther be side,	Against a dragon beside him, like the one
	That Beves slough ther in that tide,	That Bevis killed there on that day,
	Save Sire Launcelet de Lake,	Except for Sir Lancelot de Lac.
	He faught with a fur drake	He fought with a firebreathing dragon,
	And Wade dede also,	And Wade did also,
	And never knightes boute thai to,	And no knight ever, except those two,
	And Gy a Warwik, ich understonde,	And Guy of Warwick, as I understand,
	Slough a dragoun in NorthHomberlonde.	Killed a dragon in Northumberland.
	How that ilche dragoun com ther,	How that dragon came there,
2610	Ich wile yow telle, in what maner.	And in what way, I will tell you.
	Thar was a king in Poyle land	There was a king in the land of Apulia,[57]
	And another in Calabre, ich understonde;	And another in Calabria, as I am told.
	This twe kinge foughte ifere	These two kings fought together
	More than foure and twenti yere,	More than twenty-four years,
	That hii never pes nolde,	And they never settled for peace,
	Naither for selver ne for golde,	Neither for silver or for gold.
	And al the contré, saundoute,	And as for the country, without a doubt,
	Thai distruede hit al aboute;	They ruined it all around;
	Thai hadde mani mannes kours,	They had the curse of many a man,
2620	Wharthourgh hii ferden wel the wors;	For causing them to fare the worse.
	Tharfore hii deide in dedli sinne	Therefore they died in deadly sin
	And helle pine thai gan hem winne.	And won for themselves Hell's pains.
	After in a lite while	After a little while
	Thai become dragouns vile,	They became vile dragons,
	And so thai foughte dragouns ifere	And so they fought together as dragons
	Mor than foure and thretti yere.	More than thirty-four years.
	An ermite was in that londe,	A hermit was in that land

[57] *Apulia*: In Southeastern Italy, near Taranto. *Calabre* is likely Reggio di Calabria, in the southwestern tip near Sicily.

	That was feld of Godes sonde;	Who received merciful grace from God;
	To Jesu Crist a bed a bone,	He prayed to Jesus Christ
2630	That he dilivre the dragouns sone	That He would soon drive the dragons
	Out of that ilche stede,	Out of that very place,
	That hii namore harm ne dede.	So that they would do no more harm.
	And Jesu Crist, that sit in hevene,	And Jesus Christ, who sits in Heaven,
	Wel herde that ermites stevene	Heard that hermit's voice clearly
	And grauntede him is praiere.	And granted him his prayer.
	Anon the dragouns bothe ifere	At once both of the dragons
	Toke here flight and flowe awai,	Took flight together and flew away,
	Thar never eft man hem ne sai.	So that men never saw them after.
	That on flegh anon with than,	They quickly flew from there
2640	Til a com to Toscan.	Until they came to Tuscany.
	That other dragoun is flight nome	The second dragon took flight
	To Seinte Peter is brige of Rome;	To Saint Peter's Bridge in Rome.
	Thar he schel leggen ay,	There he will lay forever
	Til hit come Domes Dai.	Until Judgment Day comes.
	And everi seve yer ones,	And once every seven years,
	Whan the dragoun moweth is bones,	When the dragon shifts his bones,
	Than cometh a roke and a stink	A vapor and a stink
	Out of the water under the brink,	Comes out of the water from under the brink,
	That men ther-of taketh the fevere,	Causing men to become feverish,
2650	That never after mai he kevere;	From which they never recover.
	And who that nel nought leve me,	And whoever does not believe me
	Wite at pilgrimes that ther hath be,	Can ask pilgrims who have been there
	For thai can telle yow, iwis,	For they can tell you, truly,
	Of that dragoun how it is.	How it is with that dragon.
	That other thanne flegh an highe	The other then flew on high
	Thourgh Toskan and Lombardie,	Through Tuscany and Lombardy,
	Thourgh Province, withouten ensoine,	Through Provence without delay,
	Into the londe of Coloyne;	Into the land of Cologne.
	Thar the dragoun gan arive	There the dragon arrived
2660	At Coloyne under a clive.	In Cologne under a cliff.
	His eren were rowe and ek long,	His ears were rough and long as well;
	His frount before hard and strong;	His forehead was hard and strong.
	Eighte toskes at is mouth stod out,	Eight tusks stuck out from his mouth;
	The leste was seventene ench about,	The smallest was seventeen inches around.
	The her, the cholle under the chin,	His hair and the scales under his jowls
	He was bothe leith and grim;	Were both loathsome and grim.
	A was imaned ase a stede;	He was maned like a steed
	The heved a bar with meche pride,	And bore his head with great pride;
	Betwene the scholder and the taile	Between the shoulder and the tail
2670	Foure and twenti fot, saunfaile.	It was twenty-four feet, without a doubt.
	His taile was of gret stringethe,	His tail was of great strength;
	Sextene fot a was a lingthe;	It was sixteen feet in length.
	His bodi ase a wintonne.	His skin was like a wine barrel.
	Whan hit schon the brighte sonne,	When the bright sun shone,
	His wingges schon so the glas.	His wings glinted like glass.
	His sides wer hard ase eni bras.	His sides were as hard as any brass;
	His brest was hard ase eni ston;	His breast was as hard as any stone.
	A foulere thing nas never non.	A fouler thing was never known.
	Ye, that wile a stounde dwelle,	If you will stay for a while,
2680	Of his stringethe I mai yow telle.	I will tell you about Bevis' might.
	Beves yede to bedde a night	Bevis went to bed that night

	With torges and with candel light.	With torches and with candlelight.
	Whan he was in bedde ibrought,	When he had gone to bed,
	On Jesu Crist was al is thought.	All of his thoughts were on Jesus Christ.
	Him thoughte, a king, that was wod,	He dreamed of a king who was mad
	Hadde wonded him ther a stod;	And wounded him where he stood.
	He hadde wonded him biter and sore,	He injured him bitterly and painfully;
	A wende a mighte leve namore,	He thought he would live no longer.
	And yet him thoughte a virgine	And yet he dreamed that a virgin
2690	Him broughte out of al is pine.	Delivered him from all of his suffering.
	Whan he of is slep abraid,	When he started from his sleep,
	Of is swevene he was afraid.	He was frightened by his vision.
	Thanne a herde a reuli cri,	Then he dreamed he heard a doleful cry
	And besoughte Jesu merci:	And a plea for Jesus' mercy:
	"For the venim is on me throwe,	"From the venom thrown on me
	Her I legge al to-blowe,	I lie here all swollen,
	And roteth me flesch fro the bon,	And my flesh rots from the bone.
	Bote ne tit me never non!"	I have no remedy at hand at all."
	And in is cri a seide: "Allas,	And in his lament he said, "Alas
2700	That ever yet I maked was!"	That I was ever created!"
	Anon whan hit was dai light,	Soon when it was daylight,
	Beves awakede and askede right,	Bevis awoke and straightaway asked
	What al that cri mighte ben.	What all those cries might mean.
	His men him answerde aghen	His men answered him back
	And seide, that he was a knight,	And said it was the voice of a knight.
	In bataile he was holden wight;	In combat he was held to be manly.
	Alse a wente him to plaie	As he went out to do battle
	Aboute her in this contrai,	Around there in that country,
	In this contré aviroun	Thereabout in that area
2710	A mette with a vile dragoun,	He met with a foul dragon,
	And venim he hath on him throwe:	And he spewed venom on him.
	Thar a lith al to-blowe!	He lies there all swollen.
	"Lord Crist," queth Beves tho,	"Christ the Lord!" Bevis then cried,
	"Mai eni man the dragoun slo!"	"This dragon can slay any man."
	His men answerde, withouten lesing:	His men answered without a lie,
	"Thar nis neither emperur ne king,	"There is no emperor or king
	That come thar the dragoun wore,	Who came near where the dragon was,
	An hondred thosend men and more,	A hundred thousand men and more,
	That he nolde slen hem everichon,	That he would not kill every one;
2720	Ne scholde hii never thannes gon."	None of them would ever get away."
	"Ascopard," a seide, "whar ertow?"	"Ascopard," he called, "where are you?"
	"Icham her; what wilte now?"	"I am here. What would you like?"
	"Wile we to the dragoun gon?	"Will we go to the dragon?
	Thourgh Godes help we scholle him slo!"	Through God's help we will slay him!"
	"Ya, sire, so mot I the,	"Yes, sir, as I live and breathe,
	Bletheliche wile I wende with thee!"	I will gladly go with you."
	Beves armede him ful wel,	Bevis armed himself carefully,
	Bothe in yrene and in stel,	Both in iron and in steel,
	And gerte him with a gode bronde	And equipped himself with a good sword
2730	And tok a spere in is honde.	And took a spear into his hand.
	Out ate gate he gan ride,	Beyond the gate he rode out,
	And Ascopard be his side.	With Ascopard by his side.
	Alse hii wente in here pleghing,	As they went, to pass time,
	Hii speke of mani selkouth thing.	They talked about many wondrous things.
	That dragoun lai in is den	That dragon lay in his den

	And segh come the twei men;	And saw the two men coming.
	A made a cri and a wonder,	He made a cry and a show,
	Ase hit were a dent of thonder.	As if it were a clap of thunder.
	Ascopard was adrad so sore,	Ascopard was so terrified
2740	Forther dorste he go namore;	That he did not dare go further.
	A seide to Beves, that was is fere:	He said to Bevis, his brother in arms,
	"A wonderthing ye mai here!"	"You can hear an astounding thing!"
	Beves saide: "Have thow no doute,	Bevis said, "Have no doubt of it,
	The dragoun lith her aboute;	The dragon lies nearby.
	Hadde we the dragoun wonne,	If we defeated the dragon, we would
	We hadde the feireste pris under sonne!"	Have the fairest prize under the sun!"
	Ascopard swor, be Sein Jon,	Ascopard swore by Saint John
	A fot ne dorste he forther gon.	That he would not go one foot further.
	Beves answerde and seide tho;	Bevis answered and said then,
2750	"Ascopard, whi seistow so?	"Ascopard, why do you say so?
	Whi schelt thow afered be	Why should you be afraid
	Of thing that thow might nought sen?"	Of something that you have not seen?"
	A swor, alse he moste then,	He swore that he must leave then;
	He nolde him neither hire ne sen:	He could not hear or see the dragon.
	"Icham weri, ich mot have reste:	"I am weary, I must have rest.
	Go now forth and do the beste!"	Go forth now and do your best!"
	Thanne seide Beves this wordes fre:	Then Bevis said these noble words,
	"Schame hit is, to terne aghe.	"It is shameful to turn back."
	A smot his stede be the side,	He spurred his steed on the sides
2760	Aghen the dragoun he gan ride,	And rode against the dragon.
	The dragoun segh, that he cam	The dragon saw him so that he came
	Yenande aghenes him anan,	Roaring against him at once,
	Yenande and gapande on him so,	Yawning and gaping on him
	Ase he wolde him swolwe tho.	As if he would swallow him.
	Whan Beves segh that ilche sight,	When Bevis saw that sight,
	The dragoun of so meche might,	The dragon of such great might,
	Hadde therthe opnede anon,	If the earth had immediately opened itself
	For drede a wolde ther in han gon;	He would have jumped into it for fright.
	A spere he let to him glide	He sent a spear flying at him
2770	And smot the dragoun on the side;	And struck the dragon on the side.
	The spere sterte aghen anon,	The spear recoiled off at once,
	So the hail upon the ston,	Like the hail off a stone,
	And to-barst on pices five.	And burst apart into five pieces.
	His swerd he drough alse blive;	He drew out his sword as quickly,
	Tho thai foughte, alse I yow sai,	And they fought, as I tell you,
	Til it was high noun of the dai.	Until it was high noon in the daytime.
	The dragoun was atened stronge,	The dragon was greatly irritated
	That o man him scholde stonde so longe;	That one man should withstand him so long.
	The dragoun harde him gan asaile	The dragon attacked him savagely
2780	And smot his hors with the taile	And lashed his horse with his tail
	Right amideward the hed,	Right alongside the head
	That he fel to grounde ded.	So that he fell to the earth dead.
	Now is Beves to grounde brought,	Now Bevis was brought to the ground.
	Helpe him God, that alle thing wrought!	May God, who made all things, help him!
	Beves was hardi and of gode hert,	Bevis was hardy and stout-hearted.
	Aghen the dragoun anon a stert	At once he faced the dragon
	And harde him a gan asaile,	And fought him fiercely
	And he aghen with strong bataile;	And he responded with strong hostility.
	So betwene hem leste that fight	So between them the fight lasted

2790	Til it was the therke night.	Until it was dark night.
	Beves hadde thanne swich thrast,	At the time Bevis had such thirst
	Him thoughte his herte to-brast;	That he thought his heart would burst.
	Thanne segh he a water him beside,	Then he saw some water nearby,
	So hit mighte wel betide,	As it might well happen.
	Fain a wolde theder flen,	He wished to run toward it,
	He ne dorste fro the dragoun ten;	But he did not dare turn from the dragon.
	The dragoun asailede him fot hot,	The dragon attacked him in a rush;
	With is taile on his scheld a smot,	With his tail he lashed his shield,
	That hit clevede hevene ato,	So that it was cut evenly in two,
2800	His left scholder dede also.	Along with his left shoulder.
	Beves was hardi and of gode hert,	Bevis was hardy and stout-hearted;
	Into the welle anon a stert.	At once he started into the well.
	Lordinges, herkneth to me now:	Lordings, listen to me now:
	The welle was of swich vertu:	The well was of great virtue.
	A virgine wonede in that londe,	A virgin who lived in that land
	Hadde bathede in, ich understonde;	Had bathed in it, as I understand.
	That water was so holi,	That water was so holy
	That the dragoun, sikerli,	That the dragon, for sure,
	Ne dorste neghe the welle aboute	Did not dare to come near the well
2810	Be fourti fote, saundoute.	Within forty feet, without a doubt.
	Whan Beves parsevede this,	When Bevis realized this,
	Wel glad a was in hertte, iwis;	He was very relieved at heart, indeed.
	A dede of is helm of stel	He took off his helmet of steel
	And colede him ther in fraiche wel,	And cooled himself in the fresh water.
	And of is helm a drank thore	And from his helmet he drank there
	A large galon other more.	A good gallon or more.
	A nemenede Sein Gorge, our levedi knight,	He called on Saint George, our beloved knight,
	And sete on his helm, that was bright;	And set his shining helmet on.
	And Beves with eger mode	And Bevis, with a renewed spirit,
2820	Out of the welle sone a yode;	Soon rose out of the well.
	The dragoun harde him asaile gan,	The dragon again hit him hard;
	He him defendeth ase a man.	He defended himself as a man.
	So betwene hem leste the fight,	So between them the fight lasted
	Til hit sprong the dai light,	Until daylight sprang.
	Whan Beves mighte aboute sen,	When Bevis could see about him,
	Blithe he gan thanne ben;	He began to be gladdened then.
	Beves on the dragoun hew,	As Bevis hacked at the dragon,
	The dragoun on him venim threw;	The dragon spewed venom on him.
	Al ferde Beves bodi there	Bevis's body was all transformed
2830	A foule mesel alse yif a were;	As if he were the foulest leper.
	Thar the venim on him felle,	Where the venom landed on him,
	His flesch gan ranclen and tebelle,	His flesh began to fester and swell.
	Thar the venim was icast,	Where the poison was thrown,
	His armes gan al to-brast;	His arms began to burst apart.
	Al to-brosten is ventaile,	All his neck armor was destroyed,
	And of his hauberk a thosend maile.	And a thousand links had fallen from his mail.
	Thanne Beves, sone an highe	Then Bevis in great urgency
	Wel loude he gan to Jesu criye:	Began to cry loudly to Jesus:
	"Lord, that rerede the Lazaroun,	"Lord, who raised up Lazarus,
2840	Dilivre me fro this fend dragoun!"	Deliver me from this fiendish dragon!"
	Tho he segh his hauberk toren,	When he saw his chain mail torn,
	"Lord!" a seide, "That I was boren!"	"Lord," he said, "alas that I was ever born!"
	That seide Beves, thar a stod,	That said, Bevis, where he stood,

	And leide on, ase he wer wod;	Laid on as if he were berserk.
	The dragoun harde him gan asaile	The dragon fought him ruthlessly
	And smot on the helm with is taile,	And struck at his head with his tail,
	That his helm clevede ato,	So that his helmet was split in two,
	And his bacinet dede also.	With his underhelmet as well.
	Tweies a ros and tweis a fel,	Twice he rose and twice he fell.
2850	The thredde tim overthrew in the wel;	The third time he was thrown into the well
	Thar-inne a lai up right;	He lay inside it facing upward,
	A neste, whather hit was dai other night.	Not knowing whether it was day or night.
	Whan overgon was his smerte	When the pain had diminished
	And rekevred was of is hertte,	And his courage was renewed,
	Beves sette him up anon;	Bevis raised himself up at once.
	The venim was awei igon;	The venom had faded away;
	He was ase hol a man	He was as whole a man
	Ase he was whan he theder cam.	As he was when he came there.
	On is knes he gan to falle,	He fell on his knees
2860	To Jesu Crist he gan to calle:	And began to call on Jesus Christ.
	"Help," a seide, "Godes sone,	"Help me," he said, "Son of God,
	That this dragoun wer overcome!	So that this dragon will be overcome.
	Boute ich mowe the dragoun slon	Unless I can slay the dragon
	Er than ich hennes gon,	Before I go from here,
	Schel hit never aslawe be	It will never be slain
	For no man in Cristenté!"	By any man in Christendom!"
	To God he made his praiere	He made his prayer to God
	And to Marie, his moder dere;	And to Mary, His dear mother.
	That herde the dragoun, ther a stod,	The dragon heard that where he stood
2870	And flegh awei, ase he wer wod.	And flew away as if he were in a panic.
	Beves ran after, withouten faile,	Bevis ran after, without fail,
	And the dragoun he gan asaile;	And continued to attack the dragon
	With is swerd, that he out braide,	With his sword that he drew out.
	On the dragoun wel hard a laide,	He laid on the dragon furiously,
	And so harde a hew him than,	And he hacked at him so hard
	A karf ato his heved pan,	That he split his skull in two.
	And hondred dentes a smot that stonde,	He struck a hundred blows in that place.
	Er he mighte kerven a wonder,	Before he could cut another wound,[58]
	A hitte him so on the cholle	He hit him so hard on the chest
2880	And karf ato the throte bolle.	That he carved his throat in two.[59]
	The dragoun lai on is side,	The dragon lay on his side,
	On him a yenede swithe wide.	Gaping its mouth widely at Bevis.
	Beves thanne with strokes smerte	Then Bevis, with painful strokes,
	Smot the dragoun to the herte,	Pierced the dragon in his heart.
	An hondred dentes a smot in on,	He struck a hundred blows
	Er the heved wolde fro the bodi gon,	Before he could remove the head from the body,
	And the gode knight Bevoun	And the good knight Bevis
	The tonge karf of the dragoun;	Carved the tongue from the dragon.
	Upon the tronsoun of is spere	Upon the handle of his spear,
2890	The tonge a stikede for to bere.	He stuck the tongue to carry it.

[58] *Wonder*: Kölberg's transcription of Auchinleck has *wonde*.

[59] TEAMS explains that "The *cholle* is that part of a dragon's anatomy which extends from the chin to the throat and from ear to ear" (note to line 2665). Bevis strikes the dragon on his *throte bolle*, evidently his Adam's apple.

	A wented tho withouten ensoine	He marched then without delay
	Toward the toun of Coloine.	Toward the town of Cologne.
	Thanne herde he belles ringe,	Then he heard bells ringing
	Prestes, clerkes loude singe;	And priests and clerics singing sadly.
	A man ther he hath imet,	He met a man there,
	And swithe faire he hath him gret,	And greeted him very courteously,
	And asked that ilche man tho,	And then asked the man
	Whi thai ronge and songe so.	Why they were ringing and lamenting.
	"Sire," a seide, "withouten faile,	"Sir," he said, "without a doubt,
2900	Beves is ded in bataile;	Bevis is dead in battle.
	Tharfore, for sothe I saie thee:	Because of that, in truth I tell you,
	Hit is Beves dirige!"	It is Bevis' dirge."
	"Nai," queth Beves, "be Sein Martin!"	"It is not so, by Saint Martin!" Bevis said.
	And wente to Bischop Florentin.	And he went to Bishop Florentine.
	Tho the bischop hadde of him a sight,	When the bishop had a sight of him,
	A thankede Jesu ful of might	He thanked Jesus, full of might,
	And broughte Beves in to the toun	And brought Bevis into the town
	With a faire prosesioun;	With a stately procession.
	Thanne al the folk that thar was,	Then all the people who were there
2910	Thankede Jesu of that gras.	Thanked Jesus for that act of grace.
	On a dai Sire Beves sede:	Upon one day, Sir Bevis said,
	"Leve em, what is to rede	"Dear uncle, what is to be done
	Of me stifader Devoun	About my stepfather Devon,
	That holdeth me londes at Hamtoun?"	Who holds my lands in Southampton?"
	The beschop seide anon right:	The bishop replied straightaway,
	"Kosin, Saber, thin em, is in Wight,	"Nephew, your uncle Saber is in Wight,
	And everi yer on a dai certaine	And every year on a certain day,
	Upon th'emperur of Almaine	He undertakes a great battle
	He ginneth gret bataile take,	Against the emperor of Germany,
2920	Beves, al for thine sake;	Bevis, all for your sake.
	He weneth wel, that thow be ded;	He fully suspects that you are dead.
	Tharfore, kosin, be me red,	Therefore, nephew, do as I advise;
	An hondred men ich yeve thee wighte,	I will give you a hundred strong warriors
	Aghen th'emperur to fighte,	To fight against the emperor,
	Stalworde men and fer,	Loyal men, and fierce,
	And thow schelt wende te Saber:	And you will go to Saber and say
	Sai, ich grette him wel ilome!	That I greet him many times.
	Yif ye han nede, sendeth to me,	If you have need, send word to me;
	Ich wile yow helpe with al me might,	I will help you with all my might
2930	Aghen th'emperur to fight.	To fight against the emperor.
	While thow dost this ilche tourne,	And while you are in this campaign
	The levedi schel with me sojurne,	The lady will stay with me,
	And the page Ascopard	And your page, Ascopard,
	Schel hire bothe wite and ward."	Will both direct and guard her."
	Forth wente Beves with than	With that Bevis went forth
	To his lemman Josian:	To his darling Josanne:
	"Lemman," a seide, "ich wile go	"My dear," he said, "I am going
	And avenge me of me fo,	To avenge myself on my foe,
	Yif ich mighte with eni ginne	If I can by any means
2940	Me kende eritage to winne!"	Win my rightful heritage."
	"Swete lemman," Josian sede,	"Sweet darling," said Josanne,
	"Who schel me thanne wisse and rede?"	"Who will guide and protect me then?"
	Beves sede "Lemman min,	Bevis said, "My dear one,
	Min em, the Bischop Florentin,	My uncle, Bishop Florentine,

	And Ascopard, me gode page,	And Ascopard, my good page,
	Schel thee warde fro damage.”	Will protect you from harm.”
	“Ye, have ich Ascopard,” she sede,	“Yes, I have Ascopard,” she said,
	Of no man ne stant me drede;	“I have no fear of any man.
	Ich take thee God and seinte Marie:	I entrust you to God and Saint Mary.
2950	Sone so thow might, to me thow highe!”	As soon as you can, return to me!”
	Beves wente forth anon	Bevis at once set forth
	With is men everichon,	With every one of his men
	That the bischop him hadde yeve.	That the bishop had given him.
	So longe thai hadde here wei idrive,	They had driven on for a long while
	That hii come upon a done,	When they came upon a hill
	A mile out of South Hamtone.	A mile out of Southampton.
	“Lordinges,” to his men a sede,	“Lordings,” he said to his men,
	“Ye scholle do be mine rede!	“You will act by my directions.
	Have ich eni so hardi on,	Do I have anyone so brave
2960	That dorre to Hamtoun gon,	That dares to go to Southampton,
	To th’emperur of Almaine,	To the emperor of Germany,
	And sai: her cometh a vintaine,	And say that a division has come,
	Al prest an hondred knighte	All ready with a hundred knights,
	That fore his love wilen fighte	All freshly arrived from France,
	Both with spere and with launce,	Who for my love will fight,
	Al fresch icome out of Fraunce!	Both with spear and with lance?
	Ac ever, an erneste and a rage,	But always, in seriousness and play,
	Ever speketh Frensche laungage,	Always speak the French language,
	And sai, ich hatte Gerard,	And say that I am called Gerard,
2970	And fighte ich wile be forward,	And I will fight as a mercenary;
	And of the meistri icham sure,	And I am sure of victory
	Yif he wile yilde min hure?”	If he will pay my wages.”
	Forth ther com on redi reke,	One man readily came forth
	That renabliche kouthe Frensch speke;	Who could speak French elegantly.
	“Sire,” a seide, “ich wile gon,	“Sir,” he said, “I will go
	The mesage for to don anon!”	To deliver your message at once.”
	Forth a wente to the castel gate	He went forth to the castle gate
	The porter a mette ther-ate,	Where he met the porter,
	To th’emperur he hath him lad,	Who brought him to the emperor.
2980	Al a seide, ase Beves him bad.	He said everything as Bevis ordered him.
	Th’emperur and Beves sete ifere	The emperor and Bevis sat together
	That ilche night at the sopere;	That same night at supper.
	Th’emperur askede him, what a het;	The emperor asked him what his name was.
	“Gerard!” a seide alse sket	“Gerard,” he answered as quickly.
	“Gerard!” a seide, “for soth iwis,	“Gerard!” he mused. “In truth indeed,
	This levedi hadde her er this	My lady had, long before now,
	An erl to lord, er ich hire wedde,	An earl as her lord before I married her.
	A sone betwene hem to thai hadde,	They had a son between them,
	A proud wreche and a ying,	A proud and childish wretch,
2990	And for sothe a lite gadling;	And in truth, a little good-for-nothing.
	So was is fader of proud mode,	He was like his father, with a defiant spirit,
	Icomen of sum lether blode;	And descended from some foul blood.
	His sone, that was a proud garsoun,	His son—that was an arrogant boy—
	Men him clepede Bevoun;	Men called him Bevis.
	Sone he was of age,	As soon as he was of age,
	A solde me his eritage	He sold me his inheritance
	And spente his panes in scham and schonde,	And frittered his money in shame and disgrace,
	And sithe flegh out of Ingelonde.	And later fled out of England.

	Now hath he her an em in Wight,	Now he has an uncle in Wight,
3000	Sire Saber, a wel strong knight,	Sir Saber, a formidable knight,
	And cometh with gret barnage	Who comes with a great baronage
	And cleimeth his eritage,	And claims back his legacy,
	And ofte me doth her gret gile,	And often does great mischief to me here.
	And thow might yilden is while,	If you could pay back his efforts
	Him to sle with swerd in felde,	And slay him with a sword in the field,
	Wel ich wolde thin here yelde!"	I would pay your army well!"
	"Sire," queth Beves anon right,	"Sire," Bevis replied at once,
	"Ichave knightes of meche might,	"I have knights of formidable might
	That beth unarmed her of wede,	Who are here unclothed in armor,
3010	For we ne mighte non out lede	For we could not muster out
	Over the se withouten aneighe;	Over the sea without great difficulty.
	Tharfore, sire, swithe an highe	Therefore, sire, you might quickly
	Let arme me knightes echon,	Have each of my knights armed
	And yef hem gode hors forth enon,	And give them good horses speedily enough.
	An hondred men sent thow thee self,	Send a hundred men yourself,
	Ase mani ichave be min helf,	As many as I have on my half.
	Dight me the schip and thin men bothe,	Fit out my ship and your men as well,
	And I schel swere thee an othe,	And I will swear you an oath,
	That I schel yeve swiche asaut	That I will give such an assault
3020	On that ilche Sabaaut,	On that same Saber
	That withinne a lite while	That within a little while
	Thow schelt here of a queinte gile!"	You will hear word of a cunning plot!"[60]
	Al thus th'emperur hath him dight	All this the emperor supplied him with,
	Bothe hors, armes, and knight,	Both horses, arms, and knights,
	Tharto schipes with gode vitaile;	Fitted on the ship with good provisions.
	Forth thai wente and drowe saile.	They went forth and drew their sails.
	In the schipe the knightes seten, ywis,	On the ship the knights sat paired, for sure,
	On of here, another of his.	One of Bevis', another of the emperor's.
	Whan thai come amidde the forde,	When they came into the ford,
3030	Ech threw is felawe over the bord;	Each threw his fellow overboard.
	Of th'emperures knightes everichon	Out of all the emperor's knights,
	Withinne bord ne levede non.	None were left on the ship.
	Saber hem ful wel ysay,	Saber saw them full well
	Ase he upon his toure lay,	As he sat in his tower;
	Mani baner he segh arered.	He saw many banners raised.
	Tho was Saber sumdel afered,	Then Saber was somewhat anxious
	That th'emperur with is ost come,	That the emperor, with whom he had warred
	Biker he made wel ylome.	Enough times, had come with his host.
	Beves wiste wel and sede,	Bevis knew that well and warned
3040	That Saber him wolde drede;	That Saber would be panicked by him.
	Upon the higheste mast is top there	Upon the highest mast's top,
	He let sette up a stremere	He had a streamer set there
	Of his fader armure,	With his father's colors
	Saber the rather to make sure,	To reassure Saber sooner.
	For mani a time thar beforen	For many a time before then
	He hadde hit in to bataile boren.	He had carried it into battle.

[60] *Thow schelt here of a queinte gile*: Bevis seems fond of making ironic jokes, as here the 'cunning trick' will be on the emperor and not Saber. Similarly, Bevis tells Terry that "You were never nearer the child" (1320), which is true in a sense Terry does not realize.

	Tho the schip to londe drough,	When the ship drew to shore,
	Saber hit knew wel inough	Saber recognized it well enough
	And thoughte and gan to understonde,	And thought and began to understand
3050	That Beves was come inte Ingelonde.	That Bevis had come into England.
	"Lord," a sede, "hered Thow be,	"Lord!" he said, "may You be praised,
	That ich mai me kende lord se:	That I may see my lawful lord.
	That he wer ded, ich was ofdrad,	I was afraid that he was dead;
	Meche sorwe ichave for him had."	I have had much sorrow over him."
	A wente with is knightes blive,	He went with his knights excitedly
	Thar the schipes scholde arive;	Where the ship would arrive.
	Either other gan to kisse,	Each began to kiss the other
	And made meche joie and blisse,	And made great joy and celebration.
	And Beves tolde him in a while,	And Bevis told him in a while
3060	He hadde do th'emperur a gile.	He had played a trick on the emperor.
	Tho seide Beves with than:	Then with that Bevis said,
	"Have ich eni so hardi man,	"Do I have any man so fearless
	That dorre to Hamtoun gon	That dares to go to Hampton,
	Over the water sone anon,	Over the water soon from now,
	And sai th'emperur anon right,	And tell the emperor directly
	That I nam no Frensche knight,	That I am no French knight,
	Ne that I ne hatte nought Gerard,	Nor am I named Gerard,
	That made with him the forward,	Who made the pact with him.
	And sai him, ich hatte Bevoun,	And tell him my name is Bevis,
3070	And cleymeth the seinori of Hamtoun,	And I claim the lordship of Hampton,
	And that is wif is me dame,	And his wife is my mother.
	That schel hem bothe terne to grame;	That will turn them both to rage.
	Now of hem bothe togadre	Now, against them both together,
	I schel fonde wreke me fadre?"	I will endeavor to avenge my father!"
	Up thar sterte an hardi on:	One hardy man started up:
	"Sire," a seide, "ich wile gon,	"Sir," he said, "I will go.
	The mesage fordoth hem bothe,	The message condemns them both,
	And maken hem sori and wrothe."	And will make them sorry and wrathful."
	Forth a wente ase hot	He went forth at once
3080	Over the water in a bot,	Over the water in a boat.
	Forth a wente also whate	He marched on as quickly
	In at the castel gate;	Past the castle gate.
	At the soper alse a set,	At supper as he sat,
	Th'emperur he gan thus gret:	He greeted the emperor in this way:
	"Sire emperur, I thee bringe	"Sir Emperor, I bring you
	A swithe sertaine tiding:	A certain reliable report.
	Wel the grete that ilche knight,	You received well that knight
	That sopede with thee yerstene night;	Who dined with you last night.
	A saith a hatte nought Gerard,	He says he is not called Gerard,
3090	That made with thee the forward;	Who made an agreement with you.
	A saith, that he hatte Bevoun	He says that his name is Bevis,
	And cleymeth the seinori of Hamtoun,	And he claims the lordship of Hampton,
	And is icome with thee to speke,	And is coming to speak with you
	Of his fader deth to ben awreke,	To be avenged of his father's death,
	Thee te sle with schame and schonde	To slay you with shame and disgrace,
	And for to winne is owene londe."	And to win back his own land."
	Th'emperur herde of him that word,	As the emperor heard these words from him,
	His sone stod before the bord;	His son stood before the table.
	He thoughte with is longe knif	He thought with his long knife
3100	Bereve that mesageres lif;	To take away that messenger's life.

	A threw is knif and kouthe nought redi	He threw his knife and could not aim it
	And smot his sone thourgh the bodi.	And struck his son through his body.
	The mesager spak a gainli word	The messenger spoke some fitting words
	Before th'emperur is bord:	Before the emperor's table:
	"Thow gropedest the wif anight to lowe,	"You've fondled your wife too vulgarly at night,
	Thow might nought sen aright to throwe;	And you can't see straight to throw.
	Thow havest so swonke on hire to night,	You have rutted on her at night so much
	Thow havest negh forlore the sight:	That you have nearly lost your sight![61]
	Her thow havest lither haunsel,	You've had a lean reward here;
3110	A worse thee betide schel!"	A worse one will be waiting for you!"
	And smot is hors with the spore	And he struck his horse with his spurs
	And arnde out at halle dore;	And sped out of the hall's doors.
	Wel and faire he hath him dight	He conducted himself well and expertly
	And com aghen to Beves in Wight	And came back to Bevis in Wight
	And tolde a slough is sone for grame;	And reported he killed his son in his temper.
	Beves lough and hadde gode game.	Bevis laughed and had good amusement.
	Lete we with Sire Beves thanne	We will pause with Sir Bevis then
	And speke of Josiane,	And speak about Josanne
	That in Coloine was with Beves em,	Who was in Cologne with Bevis' uncle
3120	Til that he aghen theder kem.	Until he might return again.
	In that londe that ilche while	In that land at the same time
	Thar wonede an erl, that highte Mile:	There lived an earl who was called Miles.
	To Josian he hadde his love cast	He had his heart set on Josanne
	And gan hire to wowen fast,	And he began to woo her aggressively.
	Faire a spak to terne hire thought,	He spoke amorously to change her thoughts,
	And she seide a was aboute nought.	And she said it was all for nothing.
	That erl was wroth in is manere,	The earl was hostile in his manner,
	For Josian him nolde here,	For Josanne would not listen to him,
	And spak to hire with loude gret:	And he spoke to her with a loud complaint:
3130	"For wham," a seide, "scholde ich it lete,	"Why should I stop," he thundered,
	Boute ich mai have of thee me wille?	Until I have from you what I want?
	Ich wile," a seide, "who that nille!"	I will go on, regardless of whoever says no!"
	She seide: "While ichave Ascopard,	She said, "While I have Ascopard,
	Of thee nam ich nothing afard,	I am not afraid of you,
	For thee wrethe ne for thin ost,	Not of your wrath, not of your host,
	Ne for thee ne for thine bost!"	Not of you for all your threats!"
	And tho thoughte that Erl Mile	And then Earl Miles thought
	To do Josian a gile:	Of a trick to trap Josanne.
	A leter he let for to write,	He had a letter written,
3140	In this maner he dede adite,	And in this manner he had it composed,
	That Ascopard come scholde	That Ascopard should go
	To Beves, thar the letter him tolde,	To Bevis, where the letter directed him,
	In to a castel in an yle,	Into a castle on an island,
	The brede of the water thre mile;	Where the water's breadth was three miles.
	To Ascopard thai come snel;	They came quickly to Ascopard
	Thai seide, Beves him grette wel	And said that Bevis greeted him well
	And besoughte, for is love	And pleaded, for his love,

[61] Early print versions omit such fun lines, but in the MS we have this supreme insult. It was a medieval belief that sexual excess caused men to lose vigor and have poor vision, and thus the emperor's feeble aim. Kölberg gives the example of a comic German poem from the fourteenth century, *Der Pfarrer vom Kalenberge*, where a bishop asks a parson for advice for his bad eyes. In Kölberg, *Beuis*, 321.

	In haste a scholde to him come.	That he should come in haste to him.
	Forth wente Ascopard ase hot	Ascopard set forth as rapidly,
3150	Over the water in a bot;	Over the water in a boat.
	Whan he was over the water come,	When he had come over the water,
	Hii unlek the ghate at the frome;	He unlocked the gate as soon as he arrived.
	And whan he was comen withinne,	And when he had come inside,
	Thai sperede him faste with ginne.	They imprisoned him by locking him up.
	Aghen to Josiane Miles gan terne:	Again Miles returned to Josanne:
	"For wham," a seide, "schel ich it werne?"	"For who," he said, "should I be denied?"
	She thoughte for to kepe hire, aplight,	She thought to protect herself, certainly.
	She sente a masager to Wight,	She sent a message to the Isle of Wight
	To Beves, be letter and tolde fore	To Bevis in a letter, and she told him
3160	Al togedre lasse and more.	Everything at once, less and more.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
Köl	On a day the erl to her cam	One day the earl came to her
Köl	And in his armes he her nam	And seized her in his arms.[62]
	. . . . .	. . . . .
3161	Miles wolde have is wille	Miles wanted to have his will,
	And she bed him holde stille:	And she begged him to be still.
	"Nought, thegh I scholde lese me lif,	"I will not, even if I should lose my life,
	Boute ich were thee weddede wif;	Unless I were your wedded wife!
	Yif eni man me scholde wedde,	If any man should marry me,
	Thanne mot ich go with him to bedde.	Then I must go with him to bed.
	I trow, he is nought now here,	I swear, he is not here now,
	That schel be me weddefere!"	The man who will be my husband."
	"I schel thee wedde aghenes thee wille,	"Then I will marry you against your will.
3170	Tomorwe I schel hit fulfille!"	Tomorrow I will see it done."
	And kiste hire anon right	And he kissed her right after that
	And sente after baroun and knight	And sent for barons and knights
	And bed hem come leste and meste,	And ordered them to come, lowest and highest,
	To anoure that meri feste.	To honor that merry feast.
	The night is gon, that dai comen is,	The night passed, so that day came,
	The spusaile don hit is	And the marriage was performed
	With merthe in that toun	With festivity in that town
	And joie of erl and baroun.	And joy in earl and baron.
	And whan hit drough toward the night,	And when it drew near the night,
3180	Here soper was ther redi dight,	Their supper was made ready.
	And thegh thai richelich weren ifed,	And though they were being richly fed,
	That erl wolde ben abed.	The earl wanted to go to bed.
	Josian he het lede to bour,	He ordered Josanne brought to the bower,
	To have hire under covertour;	To have her under the covers.
	Upon hire bedde ther she sat,	She sat there upon her bed.
	That erl com to hire with that,	With that the earl came to her
	With knightes gret compainie	With a great procession of knights
	With pyment and with spisorie,	With spiced wine and dainties,
	With al the gamen that hii hedde,	And with all the tricks that they had
3190	For to make hire dronke a bedde;	To make her drunk in her bed.
	Ac al another was hire thought,	But her thoughts were elsewhere;
	Ne gamnede hire that gle right nought.	That gaiety did not amuse her at all.

[62] Extra lines in Egerton, Naples, Cambridge, and Chetham, but not in Auchinleck (Kölberg, *Beuis*, 146). The missing sense is that Miles intends to ravish Josanne with or without marriage.

	"Sire," she seide to that erl sone,	"Sir," she soon said to the earl,
	"Ich bidde thow graunte me a bone,	I ask that you grant me a favor.
	And boute thow graunte me this one,	And unless you grant me this one,
	I ne schel thee never bedde none.	I will never ask anything again.
	Ich bidde thee at the ferste frome,	I ask you from the start
	That man ne wimman her in come;	That neither man nor woman come in here.
	Belok hem thar-oute for love o me,	Lock them outside for love of me
3200	That no man se our privité!	So that no man invades our privacy.
	Wimmen beth schamfast in dede	Women are modest in our deeds
	And namliche maidenes," sche sede.	And particularly maidens," she said.
	That erl seide a wolde faine.	That earl said he gladly would.
	A drof out bothe knight and swaine,	He shooed out both knight and servant,
	Levedies, maidenes, and grome,	Ladies, maidens, and young men,
	That non ne moste ther-in come,	So that no one could come in there,
	And schette the dore with the keie.	And he shut the door with the key.
	Litel a wende have be so veie.	He little suspected to be doomed.
	Josian he com aghen to:	He came back to Josanne.
3210	"Lemman," a seide, "ichave ido,	"Darling," he said, "I have done it,
	Thee bone ichave do with lawe,	I have done your request in good faith.
	Me schon I mot me self of drawe,	I will take my own shoes off,
	As I never yet ne dede."	As I have never done before."[63]
	Adoun a set him in that stede;	He set himself down in that place.
	Thanne was before his bed itight,	In front of his bed there was
	Ase fele han of this gentil knight,	A bedcurtain on a metal rail,
	A covertine on raile tre,	As many noble knights had,
	For no man scholde on bed ise.	So that no one might see them in bed.
	Josian bethoughte on highing,	Josanne thought to herself in haste;
3220	On a towaile she made knotte riding,	With a towel she made a noose.
	Aboute his nekke she hit threw	She threw it about his neck
	And on the raile tre she drew;	And drew it on the crossbeam.
	Be the nekke she hath him up tight	By the neck she choked him tight
	And let him so ride al the night.	And let him hang in this way all the night.
	Josian lai in hire bed.	Josanne laid in her bed;
	No wonder, though she wer adred.	It was no wonder that she was terrified.
	Dai is come in alle wise,	Day came in all its glory.
	A morwe the barouns gonne arise	In the morning the barons began to arise,
	Sum to honten and sum to cherche,	Some to hunt and some to go to church,
3230	And werkmen gonne for to werche.	And workmen went to go to work.
	The sonne schon, hit drough to under,	The sun shone; it grew late.
	The barouns thar-of hadde wonder;	The barons were puzzled
	That th'erl lai so longe a bed,	That the earl lay so long in bed;
	Gret wonder thar-of he hedde.	They had great curiosity over it.
	Queth sum: "Let him lie stille!	Some said, "Let him be!
	Of Josian he hath al is wille."	With Josanne he has all his will."
	Middai com, hit drough te noune,	Mid-morning came, it drew to noon;
	The barouns speke ther eft soune:	The barons soon after spoke again.
	Queth the boldeste: "How mai this be?	The boldest said, "How can this be?
3240	Wende ich wile up and ise!"	I will go up and see!"
	That baroun dorste wel speke,	That baron dared to speak out,

[63] Kölberg gives the explanation that the earl would have had a chamberlain to take his shoes off, and Miles is complaining that he must do it himself (*Beuis*, 323).

	To the chaumber he gan reke	And he went quickly to the chamber
	And smot the dore with is honde,	And struck the door with his hand,
	That al wide opun it wonde.	So that it swung wide open.
	"Awake," a seide, "Sire Erl Mile,	"Wake up," he said, "Sir Earl Miles!
	Thow havest sleped so longe while,	You have slept for so long a while
	Thin heved oweth to ake wel:	That your head will ache.
	Dame, let make him a caudel!"	Lady, have a cordial made for him!"[64]
	"Nai," queth Josian at that sake,	"No," said Josanne to that cause.
3250	"Never eft ne schel his heved ake!	"Never again will his head ache.
	Ichave so tyled him for that sore,	I have treated him for those pains
	Schel hit never eft ake more,	So that it will never ache again.
	Yerstendai he me wedded with wrong	Yesterday he wedded me with injustice
	And tonight ichave him honge.	And last night I hanged him.
	Doth be me al youre wille,	Do with me as you will!
	Schel he never eft wimman spille!"	He will never defile another woman!"
	Al hii made meche sorwe;	All of them made great sorrow.
	Anon rightes in that morwe	Right away on that morning
	Sum hire demte thanne	Some condemned her
3260	In a tonne for to branne.	To be burned in a barrel later.
	Withoute the toun hii pighte a stake,	Outside the town they set up a stake,
	Thar the fur was imake,	Where the fire was made.
	The tonne thai hadde ther iset,	They set the barrel there
	Thai fette wode and elet.	And they fetched wood and kindling.
	Ascopard withinne the castel lay,	Ascopard lay inside the castle,
	The tonne and al the folk he say;	Seeing the town and the people.
	Ful wel him thoughte that while,	He realized full well that moment
	That him trokede a gret gile,	That he had been tricked with great guile.
	For he was in the castel beloke,	Because he was locked in the castle,
3270	The castel wal he hath tobroken;	He shattered the castle wall.
	He was maroner wel gode,	He was an expert mariner.
	A stertte in to the salte flode,	He leaped into the salty sea,
	A fischer he segh fot hot,	And he quickly saw a fisherman.
	Ever a swam toward the bot.	He swam directly toward the boat.
	The fischer wende, sum fend it were,	The fisher thought it was some fiend;
	Out of is bot he flegh for fere.	He flew out of his boat for fear.
	Ascopard hente the bot an honde	Ascopard took the boat in hand
	And rew himself to the londe,	And rowed himself to the coast.
	Toward the fur faste a schok,	Toward the fire he hastened quickly.
3280	Beves com and him oftok:	Bevis appeared and overtook him.
	"Treitour," a seide, "whar hastow be?	"Traitor," he said. "where have you been?
	This dai thow havest betraied me!"	Today you have betrayed me!"
	"Nai, sire!" Ascopard seide,	"No, sir!" Ascopard pleaded
	And tolde, Miles him hadde betraide.	And explained that Miles had deceived him.
	Toward the fur thai wente blive:	Reconciled, they went toward the fire.
	The prest, that hire scholde schrive,	The priest was there to hear her confession.
	Godes blessing mote he fonge,	May he have God's blessing
	For that he held Josiane so longe!	In that he delayed Josanne for so long.
	In hire smok she stod naked,	She stood naked in her smock
3290	Thar the fur was imaked;	Where the fire was made.

[64] *Caudel*: A sweet alcoholic beverage much like a thin porridge or egg-nog, served hot. The drink had medicinal purposes but seems to have been popular mainly for hangovers or as a nightcap.

	Ase men scholde hire forbrenne,	As men prepared to burn her,
	Beves on Arondel com renne	Bevis came galloping on Arondel
	With is swerd Morgelay;	With his sword Morgelai.
	Ascopard com be another way,	Ascopard came by another way,
	And slowen in that ilche stounde	And in that same place he killed
	Al that hii aboute the fur founde,	All that he found about the fire.
	And that he hadde for is while,	And this was what that proud earl,
	That proude erl, Sire Mile.	Sir Miles, had for his guile.
	A sette Josian on is palfrai,	Bevis set Josanne on his palfrey,
3300	And wente forth in here wai;	And they went forth on their way.
	Thai wente to schip anon righte	They boarded their ship right after
	And sailede forth in to Wighte.	And sailed forth into Wight.
	Wel was Saber paid with than	Then Saber was well pleased
	Of Ascopard and of Josian.	With Ascopard and Josanne.
	Beves and Saber sente here sonde	Bevis and Saber sent their message
	Wide in to fele londe,	Far and wide into many lands,
	And hii sente an hie	And they sent in haste
	After gret chevalrie,	For a great cavalry,
	Of al the londe the stringeste knighte,	For the strongest knights in all the land
3310	That hii owhar finde mighte.	That they might find anywhere.
	That emperur negh daide,	The emperor nearly died;
	His wif confortede him and saide:	His wife comforted him and said,
	"Sire," she seide, "doute yow nought!	"Sir," she said, "do not be afraid![65]
	Of gode consaile icham bethought:	I have taken good counsel.
	Ye scholle sende, for sertaine,	You should send, for sure,
	After your ost in to Almaine,	For your army in Germany.
	And whan your ost is come togadre,	And when your host has come together,
	Send to the King of Scotlonde, me fadre;	Send word to the King of Scotland, my father.
	He wile come to thee an highe	He will come to you in haste
3320	With wondergret chevalrie,	With a great and fearsome cavalry,
	That thow derst have no sore	So that you need not be troubled
	Of that thef, Saber the hore,	By that thief, grey-haired Saber,
	Ne of Beves, that is me lothe:	Nor by Bevis, who is loathsome to me.
	Yit ye schollen hem hangen bothe!"	You will see both of them hang yet."
	Tho the letters were yare,	When the letters were ready,
	The masegers wer forth ifare.	The messengers set forth.
	In Mai, whan lef and gras ginth springe,	In May, when leaf and grass begin to spring,
	And the foules merie to singe,	And the birds sing merrily,
	The King of Scotlonde com to fighte	The King of Scotland came to fight
3330	With thretti thosend of hardi knighte	Alongside thirty thousand strong knights
	Of Almaine, is owene barouny,	From the emperor's barony in Germany,
	With wonder-gret chevalry.	With an enormously great cavalry.
	"Lordinges," a seide, "ye witeth alle,"	"Lordings," he said when they were
	Whan hii were before him in the halle,	Before him in the hall, "you know all,
	"That ofte this thef, Saber the hore,	How this thief, grey-haired Saber,
	Me hath aneied swithe sore.	Has so often aggravated me sorely.

[65] *Doute yow nought*: The queen uses formal address (*you*) to her husband. Like Jane Austen's busybody Mrs. Bennet who calls her husband "Mr. Bennet," the show of submission does not match the queen's aggressiveness. For a discussion of the Scottish queen's contrast to Josanne, another foreign queen, see Calkin, 94.

	Now is him come help to fighte,	Now Bevis of Hampton, a hardy knight,
	Beves of Hamtoun, an hardi knighte,	Has come to help him fight.
	To Sarasins was solde gon longe;	He was sold to the Saracens long ago.
3340	Ich wende he hadde ben anhonge.	I believed he had been hanged.
	He me threteth for to slen	He threatens to slay me
	And for to winne is londe aghen;	And to win his land back again.
	With him he hath a geaunt brought:	He has brought a giant with him;
	Erthliche man semeth he nought,	He seems like no earthly man,
	Ne no man of flesch ne felle,	Nor like any man of flesh or blood,
	Boute a fend stolen out of helle;	But a fiend who has stolen out of Hell!
	Ascopart men clepeth him ther oute,	Men around there call him Ascopart;
	Of him ichave swithe gret doute.	I have such great fear of him.
	Ac, lordinges," a seide, "arme ye wel,	But, lordings," he said, "arm yourselves well.
3350	We scholle besege hem in here castel;	We will besiege them in their castle.
	The Ascopard be strong and sterk,	Even if Ascopard is strong and fearsome,
	Mani hondes maketh light werk!"	Many hands make light work."[66]
	Forth thai wenten ase snel,	They went forth as swiftly
	Til thai come to the castel	Until they came to the castle
	Thar Saber and Beves weren inne.	Where Saber and Bevis were inside.
	Thai pighte pavilouns and bente ginne.	They raised pavilions and field machinery.
	Saber stod on is tour an high,	Saber stood in his tower on high
	Al that grete ost a sigh;	And he saw all that great army.
	Gret wonder ther of he hade,	He was greatly amazed by it.
3360	The holi crois before him he made	He made the holy Cross before him
	And swor be his berde hore,	And swore by his grey beard
	Hit scholde some of hem rewe sore.	That some of them would sorely regret it.
	Saber doun of his tour went,	Saber went down from his tower.
	After al is knightes a sent:	He sent for all of his knights.
	"Has armes, lordinges!" he gan segge,	"To arms, lordings!" he called.
	"Th'emperur ther oute us wile belegge.	"The emperor outside wants to besiege us.
	Make we thre vintaine,	We will make three divisions
	That be gode and certaine!	Which will be firm and sure.
	The ferste ich wile me self out lede,	The first I will lead out myself,
3370	And thow that other, Beves!" a sede,	And you the other, Bevis!" he said.
	"And Ascopard the thredde schel have	"And Ascopard will have the third
	With is gode, grete stave.	With his strong, huge staff.
	Be we thre upon the grene,	If we three are upon the green,
	Wel ich wot and nought ne wene:	I know well and have no doubt
	Mani man is thar oute kete,	Many a man that we catch out there
	This dai schel is lif forlete!"	Will lose his life this day!"
	Saber is horn began to blowe,	Saber began to sound his horn
	That his ost him scholde knowe.	So that his host should know him.
	"Lordinges," a seide, "ne doute yow nought,	"Lordings," he said, "have no fear.
3380	Ye scholle this dai be holde so dought,	You will triumph this day so valiantly
	That hem were beter at Rome,	That they would be better off in Rome
	Thanne hii hadde hider icome."	Than to have come here!"
	Tho th'emperur herde in castel blowe,	When the emperor heard the sound from
	Tharbi he gan to knowe,	The castle, he realized by it

[66] According to Bartlett Jere Whiting, this is the first recorded usage of this proverb (TEAMS). The source is probably *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases from English Writings Mainly before 1500* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

	That hii armede hem in the castel;	That they were arming themselves inside.
	His knightes he het ase snel:	He ordered his knights as quickly:
	"Has armes, lordinges, to bataile!	"To arms, lordings, to battle!
	Out hii cometh, us to asaile."	Out they come, to attack us!"
	Twei ostes thai gonne make,	They formed into two divisions.
3390	He of Scotlonde hath on itake,	The King of Scotland took one.
	Th'emperur that other ladde:	He met his death there that day;
	His deth that dai ther he hadde.	And the emperor led the other.
	Out of the castel cam before	Saber came out of the castle first
	Saber with is berde hore,	With his grey beard,
	And in is compainie	And in his company
	Thre hondred knightes hardie.	There were three hundred hardy knights.
	Sire Morice of Mounclere	Sir Morris of Montclear
	His stede smot aghenes Sabere;	Struck against Saber on his steed;
	His spere was sumdel kene,	His spear was somewhat pointed,
3400	And Saber rod him aghene:	Yet Saber rode against him.
	Though is spere wer scharp igrounde,	Though his spear was sharply ground,
	Saber slough him in that stounde.	Saber killed him in that place.
	Out on Arondel tho com Bevoun	Then Bevis came out on Arondel
	And mette with is stifader Devoun,	And met with his stepfather Devon;
	And with a dent of gret fors	And with a blow of great force
	A bar him doun of his hors;	He threw him down from his horse.
	With Morgelay, that wolde wel bite,	With Morgelai, which could bite well,
	He hadde ment is heved of smite;	He meant to strike off his head.
	His ost cam riding him to,	His host came riding to him,
3410	Wel ten thosend other mo;	Well ten thousand or more.
	So stronge were tho hii come.	So strong were those that came
	Th'emperur Beves hii benome	That they took the emperor from Bevis
	And broughte him an horse tho;	And rescued him and his horse;
	Tharfore was Beves swithe wo.	Bevis was very angry for it.
	Thar com in the thredde part	Then the third part arrived
	With is batte Ascopard;	With Ascopard with his club.
	Ever alse he com than,	As he approached, he continually
	A felde bothe hors and man.	Felled both horse and man.
	Tharwith was Beves wel apaide,	Bevis was well pleased with him,
3420	A clepede Ascopard and to him saide:	And called Ascopard and said to him,
	"Ascopard, tak right gode hede:	"Ascopard, pay close attention;
	Th'emperur rit on a whit stede;	The emperor is riding on a white steed.
	Thin hure I schel thee yilde wel,	Your wage will be well paid
	With that thow bringe him to me castel!"	If you will bring him to my castle."
	"Sire," a seide, "I schel for sothe	"Sir," he said, "I will for sure
	In to the castel bringe him to thee!"	Bring him into the castle to you!"
	Ascopard leide on wel inough,	Ascopard laid on well enough;
	Bothe man and hors he slough;	He killed both man and horse.
	Thar nas non armur in that londe,	There was no armor in the land
3430	That mighte the geauntes strok astonde.	That could withstand the giant's stroke.
	The King of Scotlonde, with is bat	He gave the King of Scotland such a harsh stroke
	A yaf him swiche a sori flat	Upon the helmet with his club
	Upon the helm in that stounde,	That in that moment
	That man and hors fel ded to grounde.	Man and horse fell dead to the ground.
	Thanne anon, withoute sojur,	After that, without pausing,
	A wente to that emperur,	He went to the emperor,
	And hasteliche with might and main	And hastily, with power and agility,
	A hente the hors be the rain;	He seized his horse by the reins.

	Wolde he, nolde he, faire and wel	He carried horse and man to the castle,
3440	He bar hors and man to the castel.	Whether they liked it or not, firmly and strongly.
	Of al that other, siker aplighte,	Of all the others, for a certain fact,
	That were ensemled in that fighte,	Who were engaged in that battle,
	Of Scotlonde and of Almaine,	From Scotland and from Germany,
	Beves and Saber with might and maine	Bevis and Saber, with might and strength,
	With deth is dentes gonne doun drive,	Drove them down with deadly blows
	That thar ne scapede non alive.	So that none there escaped alive.
	And thus Sire Beves wan the pris	And thus Sir Bevis won victory
	And vengede him of is enemis,	And avenged himself on his enemies.
	And to the castel thai wente isame	They went to the castle together
3450	With gret solas, gle and game,	With great relief, joy, and freedom.
	And that his stifader wer ded,	And to ensure that his stepfather was dead,
	Ase tit he let felle a led	At once he had a lead kettle filled
	Ful of pich and of bremston,	Full of pitch, burning sulfur,
	And hot led let falle ther-on;	And molten lead, which was poured out.
	Whan hit alther swither seth,	When all who were in it seethed,
	Th'emperur thar in a deth,	The emperor met his death there
	Thar a lay atenende.	Where he lay at his end.
	Wende his saule, whider it wende!	May his soul go wherever it may!
	His moder over the castel lai,	His mother lay on the castle top,
3460	Hire lord sethen in the pich she sai;	And she saw her lord boiling in the pitch.
	So swithe wo hire was for sore,	She was so distressed from shock,
	She fel and brak hire nekke therfore.	She fell and broke her neck from it.
	Alse glad he was of hire,	Bevis was as satisfied with her,
	Of his damme, ase of is stipsire,	His mother, as he was with his stepfather,
	And seide: "Damme, forgheve me this gilt,	And said, "Mother, forgive me this act;
	I ne yaf thee nother dent ne pilt!"	I never gave you any blow or knock!"
	Thanne al the lordes of Hamteschire	Then all the lords of Hampton shire
	Made Beves lord and sire	Made Bevis lord and sire
	And dede him feuté and omage,	And performed fealty and homage,
3470	Ase hit was lawe and right usage.	As was lawful and customary.
	Tho was Beves glad and blithe	Then Bevis was glad and content
	And thankede God ful mani a sithe,	And thanked God many times
	That he was wreke wel inough	That he was avenged well enough
	Of him, that his father slough.	On him who killed his father.
	Wel hasteliche she let sende	Very speedily, Josanne sent word
	To Coloine after the bischop hende,	To Cologne for the gracious bishop
	And spusede Beves and Josiane.	Who married Bevis and Josanne.
	Of no joie nas ther wane;	There was no lack of joy!
	Though ich discrive nought the bredale,	Though I won't elaborate on the wedding,
3480	Ye mai wel wite, hit was riale,	You might well guess that it was royal,
	That ther was in alle wise	That there was in every way
	Mete and drinke and riche servise.	Food and drink and lavish hospitality.
	Now hath Beves al is stat;	Now Bevis had all his estate.
	Tweie children on hir he begat	With her he fathered two children
	In the formeste yere,	In their first year
	Whiles that hii were ifere.	While they were together.
	And Saber him redde thar	And Saber then advised him
	Wende to the King Edgar;	To go to King Edgar.[67]

[67] Possibly Edgar the Aetheling (c. 1051-c. 1126), who was proclaimed king of England in 1066 but never reigned.

	Tho with inne a lite stounde	Then, within a short space,
3490	The king a fond at Lounde.	He found the king at London.
	Beves a knes doun him set,	Bevis sat himself on his knees
	The king hendeliche a gret;	And greeted the king courteously.
	The king askede him, what he were	The king asked him who he was
	And what nedes a wolde there.	And what he needed there.
	Thanne answerde Bevoun:	Then Bevis answered,
	"Ichatte Beves of Hamtoun;	"I am Bevis of Hampton.
	Me fader was ther th'erl Gii;	My father was the Earl Guy.
	Th'emperur for is levedi	For his lady the emperor of Germany
	Out of Almaine com and him slough;	Came and murdered him.
3500	Ichave wreke him wel inough;	I have avenged him well enough.
	Ich bidde before your barnage,	I plead before your baronage
	That ye me graunte min eritage!"	That you will grant me my heritage."
	"Bletheliche," a seide, "sone min,	"With pleasure, my son," he said.
	Ich graunte thee, be Sein Martin!"	"I endow you, by Saint Martin!"
	His marchal he gan beholde:	He looked at his constable.
	"Fet me," a seide, "me yerde of golde!	"Bring me," he ordered, "my staff of gold.
	Gii, is fader, was me marchal,	Guy, his father, was my marshal,
	Also Bevis, is sone, schal."	Just as Bevis, his son, shall be."
	His yerd he gan him ther take:	He gave him his staff there,
3510	So thai atonede withoute sake.	And so they were reconciled without strife.
	. . . . .	. . . . . [68]
	[Several episodes occur. Arondel kills the king's son and Bevis and Josanne go to Armenia in exile. Ascopard allies with Yvor and kidnaps Josanne as she gives birth to twins, Guy and Miles. Saber finds and kills Ascopard and reunites Josanne with Bevis. Terry is found and marries a princess. Ermine dies and makes Bevis' son Guy his heir. Bevis and Guy convert Armenia. Bevis defeats Yvor and returns to England where King Edgar's jealous steward raises a street battle against him. Bevis defeats the London rebels and reconciles with Edgar, who gives his daughter and kingdom to Miles. Bevis moves with Josanne to Mombrant to rule as king.]	
	. . . . .	. . . . .
4587	With him wente Josian, is quene,	[Bevis ruled with] Josanne, his queen,
	And levede withoute treie and tene	And they lived without trial or sadness
	Twenti yer, so saith the bok.	For twenty years, so says the book.

[68] Lines 3511-4586 form nearly a separate and complete narrative. Mills seems to agree with my division in calling this section the "second move" of the poem, using folklorist Vladimir Propp's terminology. Maldwyn Mills, "Structure and Meaning in *Guy of Warwick*," in *From Medieval To Medievalism*, ed. John Simons (London: MacMillan, 1992), 57.

4590	Thanne swiche siknesse the levedi tok,	Then the lady was taken by such sickness
	Out of this world she moste wende;	That she had to leave this world.
	Gii, hire sone, she gan ofsende,	She sent for Guy, her son,
	And Terry, the riche king,	And Terry, the rich king,
	For to ben at here parting.	To be with her at her passing.
	And whan thai were alle thare,	And when they were all there,
	To his stable Beves gan fare;	Bevis walked to his stable
	Arondel a fond thar ded,	And found Arondel dead,
	That ever hadde be gode at nede;	Who had always been there in need.
	Tharfore him was swithe wo,	For this he had such great sadness.
4600	In to his chaumber he gan go	He began to go into his chamber
	And segh Josian drawe to dede.	And saw Josanne also nearing death.
	Him was wo a moste nede,	He could not contain his sorrow;
	And er her body began to colde,	And before her body began to chill,
	In is armes he gan hire folde,	He embraced her in his arms
	And thar hii deide bothe ifere.	And there the both of them died together.
	Here sone ne wolde in non manere,	Their son wished to by all means
	That hii in erthe beried were.	Have them buried in the earth.
	Of Sein Lauarauns he let arere	To honor Saint Lawrence he had[69]
	A faire chapel of marbel fin,	A majestic chapel of fine marble built,
4610	That was ikast with queint engin;	Which was finished with skilful artifice.
	Of gold he made an high cornere	He made a high recess with gold
	And leide them thar in bothe ifere.	And laid both of them there together.
	An hous he made of riligioun,	He established a monastic house
	For to singe for Sire Bevoun	To sing prayers for Sir Bevis
	And ek for Josian the fre:	And also for Josanne the gracious.
	God on here saules have pité!	May God have pity on their souls,
	And also for Arondel,	And also for Arondel,
	Yif men for eni hors bidde schel,	If men should pray for any horse.
	Thus endeth Beves of Hamtoun.	Thus the end of Bevis of Hampton.
4620	God yeve us alle Is benesoun!	May God give us all His blessing!
4621	Amen.	Amen.

[69] *Sein Lauarauns*: Saint Lawrence of Rome (c. 225-258) was martyred under the Valerian persecution and was widely venerated.

Bad Animals and Faithful Beasts in *Bevis of Hampton*

Bevis of Hampton and *Guy of Warwick* were two similar and very popular romances of the late English medieval period as evinced by their continued printing into the seventeenth century and the fulminations against them by humanists and Puritans.[1] Analogues of the story in different languages were scattered throughout Europe. Yet *Bevis of Hampton* now has few readers and receives minimal scholarly attention, and even for medievalists the text, at 4621 lines, has an eat-your-broccoli feeling about it. The unrepentant, cringeworthy Christian triumphalism of the poem does not age well, and recent criticism has been largely limited to examinations of Bevis' proto-English nationalism or feminist readings of Josian and her meanings as a Muslim woman. Part of the glamor of the non-European world in texts such as *The Wonders of the East* were the fantastic creatures of the orient, and Bevis equally abounds with boars, snakes, dragons, lions, fish, and references to numerous other beasts. A recent Kalamazoo session dealt with Bevis' horse,[2] but little attention has been paid otherwise to the poem's four-footed and crawling denizens and their symbolic functions.

Most medieval Europeans lived close alongside animals in a way modern city-dwellers do not, and unsurprisingly the literature features animals in debate poems and fabliaux. They even receive their own literary subgenre, the bestiary, where different animals are associated with religious meanings. The poet sometimes gives the beasts of *Bevis* natural motivations—lions get hungry—yet also gives them moral agency and

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[1] Jennifer Fellows and Ivana Djordjevic, ed., introduction to *Sir Bevis of Hampton in Literary Tradition* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), 1.

[2] Gary Lim, "'My horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!': Valuing Arondel in *Bevis of Hampton*," conference paper, 44th International Congress on Medieval Studies, May 2009, Kalamazoo, MI.

otherworldly significances, personifying and endowing them with fantastic and deadly powers. Dragons are "real" in the story and live for centuries without aging and fly between countries as a matter of course. Finlayson makes the comment that romance marvels are "a necessary component of the narrative and the character of the 'historical' hero."[3] Beyond having narrative functions, the animals symbolize the themes of the poem and the spiritual choices and trials which Bevis repeatedly faces. Although Bevis is not presented as historical, the marvelous natures and abilities of the animals do reflect and indicate his character.

Romances such as *Guy of Warwick* and *Bevis of Hampton* have the "heathen" world as their setting, and the Christian-Islam binary is a charged one. Whatever *jus ad bellum*—justification to wage war—the medieval church had in defending Europe from Muslim colonization had been stained by its armies' *jus in bello*—conduct during war—let alone by the military failure of the crusades. Wilcox suggests that such texts attempt to work out English anxieties over these unpleasant historical events through an idealized depiction.[4] Said's famous statement that "we need not look for correspondence between the language used to depict the Orient and the Orient itself, not so much because the language is inaccurate but because it is not even trying to be accurate"[5] can easily be applied to medieval romance. The genre makes no pretense of historical factuality, instead using an imagined construct of the Muslim world to depict English concerns and

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[3] John Finlayson, "The Marvellous in Middle English Romance," *Chaucer Review* 33:4 (1999): 382.

[4] Rebecca Wilcox, "Romancing the East: Greeks and Saracens in *Guy of Warwick*," in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 217-40.

[5] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 71.

to set its Christian virtues into greater contrast. This binary of Saracen-bad / Christian-good also underlies *Bevis* and the animals form a corresponding dual characterization. Most of the poem's creatures fall quite neatly into either moral category based on their symbolic significance.

Bad Animals

Boars

Boars were hunted but not domesticated, and so the poet's insistence on saying "wilde bor" (183) is telling; all boars were wild. The adjective emphasizes the dangerous and voracious nature of the boar and functions in the poem as a symbol of betrayal. One of the paired oppositions of *Bevis* is the virtuous wife and the evil wife, comprised by Bevis' murderous mother and loyal Josian. As "the antithesis of the idealized wife,"[6] the mother's treason shocks the audience with its callous selfishness. Usually romance stepmothers and stewards and not biological mothers turn on their own children, and this Clytemnestra-figure would fit perfectly into Janekyn's "book of wicked wives" in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*.[7] Functionally, the mother both portrays a type and highlights Josian's loving fidelity. As a Scottish wife, she may also have reflected contemporary anxieties over the foreign spouses of English kings, such the French Isabella who arranged Edward II's overthrow in 1327, nearing the time-frame of the Auchinleck

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[6] Corinne Saunders, "Gender, Virtue, and Wisdom in *Sir Bevis of Hampton*," in Fellows and Djordjevic, 164.

[7] Saunders, 164.

manuscript's composition.[8] Edward warred with the Scots and similarly described the people in vilifying terms.[9]

The mother's untamed desire and temper finds expression in the wild swine that she sends her husband out to find for her as a "boute for / al of the fevre" (184). The *boute* is a remedy—or does it feed and encourage her fever, as the MED definition suggests? She then reminds the audience of her sexual lust and connects herself with the boar by referring to their breeding place (192). Rather than a wild boar, Sir Guy meets with a wild boor, the German emperor who disgracefully beheads him. Once Guy is dead, no more is heard about the boar remedy, yet the animal finds a reprise in the swine that Saber kills to spread blood on Bevis' clothing (350). Bevis, who now realizes he is literally a "houre sone" (410), finds himself stained and dirtied by his mother's betrayal and her fleshly wantonness.

The second boar which Bevis later faces in Armenia displays the same untamed hunger, and the poet piles on descriptions of the boar's rapacious hunger for the flesh of the men "the bor hadde slawe in the wode" (779) with such oral imagery as its feral bristles, and the wild foam streaming from its mouth (809). The boar leers at Bevis "with eien holwe / also a wolde him have aswolwe" (785-6), stressing the boar's gluttony. The swine is animal but more than animal, being a "corsede gast" (781). The scene structurally fulfills the first boar-hunting episode. In destroying the boar, Bevis repudiates and defeats his mother's selfish desire, accomplishing what his father could not. Signally,

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[8] Siobhain Bly Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity: The Auchinleck Manuscript* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 64.

[9] Calkin, 95.

Bevis sees the boar as a challenge for him alone, as he plans at night how "a wolde kethen is might / upon that swin himself one" ("how he would prove his might alone against that swine," 752-3). The boar's death both demonstrates Bevis' valor and leads to the steward's jealous attack, yet another betrayal by fellow retainers in Ermine's household which Bevis remedies.

Dogs

In my experience in developing nations, dogs have jobs. They guard homes and dispose of food rubbish, and are otherwise considered pests. In medieval England, where living standards were also generally low and food precious, having pet dogs equally had a suggestion of wasteful foolishness as seen in the Prioress' feeding of her hounds with milk and expensive bread (*CT* I.147). Scripture has the unpleasant analogy of the dog returning to its vomit (Prov. 26:11), and scavenging dogs have the typical taint of being dirty, debased and possibly wolfish. The *Havelock* poet repeatedly equates the thieves and outlaws of Ubbe's realm with "dogges that weren henged" (1922). Bevis' antagonists call him a "yonge Cristene hounde" (621) at Christmastime, and after routing them, Bevis angrily scorns the messenger knights and Josian, refusing to speak to a "hethene hounde" (692). His outrageous metaphor insults all members of her faith as unclean, and Josian's inner grace shines when she defends the knights' deaths to her father as self-defense and wins back Bevis; but she does not question the insult's presumption that her religious beliefs are impure or inferior.

Later, after another lover's quarrel Josain wins back Bevis by promising to "min false godes al forsake / and Cristendom for thee love take" (1195-6). Josian's willingness and ability to discard the creeds of her ancestors seems improbable if not offensive to

modern readers but conforms to the world of the poem. Her submission to Bevis "is both gendered and religious."[10] Josian has court refinements but "of Cristene lawe she kouthe naught" (526), suggesting that her Muslim beliefs are merely a disadvantage which education and obedience will rectify.[11] Some feminist critics stress Josian's assertiveness and her rhetorical ability to manipulate the males of the poem, suggesting that her Christianity is cleverly performative rather than a transformative spiritual change.[12] Nevertheless, after her conversion Josian is no longer a part of the Saracen grouping, and Bevis limits his "heathen hounde" epithets to the Muslim warriors he confronts (1006, 1803). The canine comparison suggests spiritual dirtiness, but apparently one which Josian can be cleansed of if she has the inborn will to desire it.

Snakes

No animal in scripture bears the connotations of deceit, temptation, and sin attached to snakes and serpents, which are explicitly linked to Satan in scripture (Rev. 12:9, 20:2) and tradition. When the poet indicates that Bevis has a club "fram wormes, that in prisoun were" (1430), the audience needs little homiletic explanation. Romance snakes are naturally assumed to be hostile in disposition but these reptiles are "foule fendes" (1567) with additionally hellish attributes. Their leader, a female adder who is "for elde blak ase eni cole" (1548), has a particularly diabolical nature like the Edenic snake who is "more crafty than any of the wild animals" (Gen. 3:1). Arondel (1000) is the

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[10] Calkin, 72.

[11] Myra Seaman, "Engendering Genre in Middle English Romance: Performing the Feminine in *Sir Beves of Hamtoun*," *Studies in Philology* 98:1 (2001): 58.

[12] Calkin, 82.

only other animal that the poet reports as thinking (1550), and Bevis defeats the adder's feint to sting his forehead (1550) only with a club-stroke to her skull—"he will crush your head" (Gen. 3:15).

Beyond the scriptural significations for the poem's medieval audience, the snakes also have a wider meaning in symbolizing the temptation into spiritual death which Bevis faces at this point in the story. For the world of the poet and his audience, a simple medieval dichotomy prevails with Christian belief leading to Heaven and pagan belief ending in perdition or damnation. The crusades lend some historical clarification on the nature of Bevis' temptation. Much European rhetoric held that Islam was not categorically a different faith but a Christian heresy, and a perennial worry for Christendom was crusaders who became too comfortable in the Saracen world and eased into their beliefs. The concern in effect was that the practices of Islam were precariously close to those of Christianity, and regulations were passed to prevent fraternization and sexual relations with Muslims.[13]

Josian's spiritual identity is not essential to her but mutable by choice or grace, in keeping with medieval Augustinian teachings concerning free will. The dangerous corollary of free will was that people could also choose wrongly. Romance tends to depict Saracens either as black and bestial, "justifying attacks on them"[14] as they are unconvertible, or with a chivalric and courtly culture dangerously parallel to that of Christendom. The giant Amourant in *Guy of Warwick* is "as blac he is as brodes brend" (742), and Ascopard similarly has a "lotheliche semlaunt" ("loathly appearance," 2506).

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[13] Calkin, 81.

[14] Calkin, 40.

Conversely, Ermine raises Bevis, treats him well in his court, and protects and knights him. The poet echoes historical worries about Christian crusaders "going Saracen"[15] by having a key scene in which Bevis meets Terry and seems to desert his English identity and homeland by privileging his loyalty and duty to Ermine, stating "he that me tok this letter an honde / he ne wolde love me non other / han ich were is owene brother" ("He who put this letter into my hand could not have more love for me than if I were his own brother," 1330-2).

In the scene following his meeting with Terry, Bevis perhaps struggles with these conflicting desires as he savagely attacks worshippers exiting a mosque and then offers to Brademond the blessings of "Mahoun, that is god thin / Tervagaunt and Apolin" (1379-80). Bevis then comes to face his physical and spiritual depths in Brademond's dungeon, additionally symbolized by the evil serpents. If Bevis needs to rehabilitate his soul, the temptation he needs to subjugate is perhaps both spiritual and feminine in its otherness, as the chief snake is appropriately female (1549). Bevis himself veers toward bestiality himself in his physical appearance as his hair grows to his feet. Even after conquering the adder, his spiritual condition is compromised and tenuous. He prays for God's mercy but can only exit the prison by imitating the guard's voice and language. As Fellows notes, "if this act of verbal impersonation is all that is required for a Christian knight to masquerade as a Saracen, then the difference between Bevis and the Saracen Other is narrow and complex indeed."[16]

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[15] Calkin, 55.

[16] Robert Allen Rouse, "For King and Country? The Tension between National and Regional Identities in *Sir Bevis of Hampton*," in Fellows and Djordjevic, 121.

Dragons

The "great dragon" of Rev. 12:9 is also Satan, indicating a shared scriptural symbolism between serpents and dragons. Literature and folklore also conflated the physical and moral attributes of dragons with that of snakes, and when Chickering comments that "no serpent in Western literature means well,"[17] he is also speaking about the *Beowulf* dragon. Yet dragons are especially problematic in medieval culture, not least because of the perennial question of whether people believed in them. As sober a document as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that in the year 793 "wæron geseowene fyrene dracan on þam lyfte fleogende" ("fiery dragons were seen flying through the air") in Northumbria. Chroniclers note that Harold Hardrada killed at least two,[18] and dragon sightings in England are recorded from as late as 1408.[19] The *Beowulf* manuscript sits in Cotton Vitellius A. xv alongside *The Wonders of the East*, another text featuring dragons which the author reports having seen in India.[20]

Although in *Beowulf* the dragon has symbolic meanings, the poet seemingly stresses in realistic touches that the dragon is not a psychological abstraction but a real, breathing, eating animal. *Bevis* similarly allows the marvelous and depicts it as mundane. The poet mentions matter-of-factly that two warriors descend to Hell and become immortal dragons who will live "til hit come Domes Dai" (2644). Weiss suggests that the

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[17] Howell D. Chickering, Jr., ed. and trans., *Beowulf* (Toronto: Anchor Books, 1977), 256.

[18] W.P. Ker, *Epic and Romance* (1908) (New York: Dover Publications, 1957), 168.

[19] Finlayson, 384.

[20] Jordanus, *The Wonders of the East*, trans. Henry Yule (London: Hakluyt Society, 1843), 41.

dragon represents English post-crusade hostility to Rome,[21] but more probably it carries the same evil signification as other medieval dragons. "Sin is literally written on the dragon"[22] in the form of the hellish warring kings. Beowulf worries that he has "ecean dryhtne / bitre gebulge" ("bitterly offended the eternal ruler," 2330-1), and the *Bevis* dragon may similarly be the foul result of Bevis' sin in failing to serve God. The dragon might also embody the sins of the faithless community, and in legend Saint George follows the dragon's defeat by converting the local people.

The dragon scene is unique to the English texts, and the poet's invocation of Saint George, found only in Auchinleck,[23] is particularly interesting. Bevis' killing of the dragon, again a solitary act with no Wiglaf to aid him, represents his reclamation of his "Englishness" after his drift into Saracen apostasy. This English virtue emphatically contrasts against both the Romans' inability to quell the dragon and the heathen Ascopard's spiritually enervated cowardice. The national dimension dovetails into the religious, for in killing the *wyrm* Bevis undergoes a sort of baptism.

Whan overgon was his smerte	When the pain had diminished
And rekevred was of is hertte,	And his courage was renewed,
Beves sette him up anon;	Bevis raised himself up at once.
The venim was awei igon;	The venom had faded away;
He was ase hol a man	He was as whole a man
Ase he was whan he theder cam.	As he was when he came there.
On is knes he gan to falle,	He fell on his knees
To Jesu Crist he gan to calle (2853-60)	And began to call on Jesus Christ.

[21] Judith Weiss, "The Major Interpolations in *Sir Beues of Hamtoun*," *Medium Aevum* 48 (1979): 72.

[22] Saunders, 168.

[23] Rouse, 115.

In Auchinleck Bevis' venomous skin is likened to a leper's (2830) with its suggestion of moral corruption and disease. The comparison "suggests an equation between the healing waters of the well and the purifying water of baptism."[24] Auchinleck also uniquely cements the baptismal connection by having the water sanctified by a virgin who bathed in it, frightening away the dragon (2804-9).[25]

Lions

The symbolism of the lions is also difficult to interpret. As in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, they at first want to eat Josian, "grennand on hur with muche grame" ("snarling on her with great savagery," 2389), and only desist because of her virginal innocence, as she is a "kinges doughter, quene and maide both" (2393), just as the lion who lunges at Una feels "asswagèd with remorse" (I.iii.44).[26] In Spenser the lion symbolizes female chastity, and the English manuscripts of *Bevis* seem to "emphasize the need for Josian's Saracen body to conform to Christian-required norms."[27] Both Chrétien de Troyes' *Yvain* and *Guy of Warwick* feature lions with Christian or nationalist significations such as those attributed to Richard the Lionhearted. Yet in *Bevis* the lions are less abstract and more animal. They kill Boniface, eat a horse, and feel no qualms about attacking Bevis. The poet may have realized the conflicting need to demonstrate Josian's purity and have Bevis perform a heroic exploit, to defend her from lions who cannot harm her. Josian

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[24] Jennifer Fellows, "Middle English and Renaissance *Bevis*: A Textual Survey," in Fellows and Djordjevic, 83.

[25] Weiss, 72.

[26] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, The Sixteenth Century and Early Seventeenth Century Vol. B eighth ed.*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).

[27] Calkin, 75.

thus functions more as a spiritual guide and aide to Bevis than a damsel-in-distress, and throughout the poem she defends her chastity with deft skill, diplomacy, and force when necessary. Her willingness to help Bevis is in keeping with her character but cannot be allowed to cheapen his valor.

The poet thus emphasizes the lions' rapacity to enhance Bevis' justification in killing them. Narratively, he must slaughter the lions in self-defense, and symbolically, he may be proving himself as fit to take Josian's virginity by overcoming them. Two signals which suggest such a reading are the lack of evil attributions to the lions and the hints of their identification with Josian. The poet speaks of "beestes felle" (2426) but does not stress their hideousness or impute any sort of diabolical hellishness on the animals as he does with the boar and the serpents. They do what lions do, and Bevis' task is to overcome them. The lions also have an odd sympathy with Josian. The second is a lioness (2429), and Bevis at one point collapses the two, scolding Josian that "boute she lete that lioun be / a wolde hire sle in that destresse / ase fain ase the liounesse" ("unless she left that lion alone, he would slay her as willingly as the lioness," 2476-8). The lions may additionally represent a trace of heathen unruliness in Josian which Bevis must purge, and the scene appropriately segues to her baptism.

Good Animals

Fish

The fish are scaly relatives of the serpents, but in *Bevis* they have the normal scriptural identification with Christians. Christ blesses loaves and fishes and promises to make his disciples "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). Tertullian writes that "we, being little

fishes, as Jesus Christ is our great Fish, begin our life in the water."[28] In the medieval *Bestiary* whales deceive and consume fish, just as the devil misleads weak men. As Bevis reaches the shore he makes a beautiful prayer contrasting the innocence of fish to the perfidy of mankind: "thow madest fisch ase wel alse man / that nothing of senne ne can / ne nought of fisches kenne / never yet ne dede senne" (1709-1802). After Bevis' physical and spiritual torpidity in Damascus, his sea journey among the fish symbolizes a cleansing separation from its culture and values and a return to Christian lands. Trenchefis, though a "gode stede" (1818), is still a 'Saracen' horse and shucks Bevis off as now irretrievably foreign.

Horses

The poem could easily have been titled *Bevis and Arondel*, as the loyal horse fully completes and supports Bevis' knightly character. From childhood Bevis expresses the desire that "ich mowe an horse ride" (550) to avenge his father, and Arondel becomes an integral part of Bevis' identity. Arondel carries Bevis through his first test of honor when mocked by Saracen warriors at Christmas (589), and the two are so faithful that Bevis leaves England in angry exile rather than see his horse unjustly killed. Arondel, like Josian, receives a sort of redemptive conversion through Bevis that makes the horse his own, and Arondel refuses to let the alien Yvor ride him. Both are captured only after a heroic struggle. When Bevis is at his knightly and Christian nadir, he is equally deprived of Arondel as Ermine separates them when sending him to Brademond (1251-5). Later Bevis laments not having "Arondel, me gode palfray" (1608) in the depths of prison, and

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[28] "Sed nos pisciculi secundum ιχθύν in nostrum Iesum Christum in aqua nascimur…," Tertullian, *De Baptismo* Cap. 1.3, in *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism*, trans. Ernest Evans (London: S.P.C.K., 1964).

Arondel correspondingly suffers seven years of torpidity until their joyful reunion, chained and alone.

Thematically, if Josian functions as a sort of spiritual guide to Bevis as a virtuous wife, like Amoraunt in *Amis and Amiloun*, Arondel connects the two as an incarnation of their love. Bevis' angry rejection of Josian concludes with him sundering the connection, shouting "Thow yeve me an hors: lo it her!" (1131). Upon his liberation from prison, he has more faith in his horse than in Josian, exclaiming "'wer Josiane,' a thoughte, 'ase lele / alse is me stede Arondel'" (2033-4).[29] Arondel reconciles the two by showing proof of Bevis' identity to Josian in letting Bevis ride him, and then by providing transportation for the couple to leave. The three form a sort of loving trinity at the end of the poem where faithful Arondel, his duty complete, dies at the same moment as Josian (4597-4601). The poet has such high regard for Arondel's selfless service to the two that after inviting prayers for Bevis and Josian's souls he hints at the same for Arondel, "yif men for eni hors bidde schel" ("if men should pray for any horse," 4618).

Bevis of Hampton is often compared to its Auchinleck companion *Guy of Warwick*. Yet to sum up this section the poem also shares a correspondence with *Amis and Amiloun* and *Athelston* as stories featuring estrangement and reconciliation aided by a third character who lovingly heals the separation. Oddly, in *Bevis* this role is played by a horse. Yet the poem uses animals with marvelous characteristics to interact with its heroes and to symbolize their problems and choices. The tempting and malevolent serpents and dragons embody Bevis' imperiled faith and Englishness. Lions play out

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[29] Seaman, 63.

obstacles between Bevis and Josian which must be surmounted. The beastly boars point to the selfish gluttony of Bevis' mother and Josian's virtue. Dogs suggest the dirtiness of pagan ignorance. Josian ultimately becomes an ideal wife and mother herself, exacerbating the shame of faithless Christian women.[30] In answer to the criticism that romances lack psychological shading, Hanna argues that "romance shows interiority allusively."[31] In *Bevis* as well, the animals do not need to talk to interact and harmonize with what the humans experience.

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[30] Joanne Charbonneau and Désirée Cromwell, "Gender and Identity in the Popular Romance," in *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance*, ed. Raluca L. Radulescue and Cory James Rushton, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009), 101.

[31] Ralph Hanna, *London Literature 1300-1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 109.

CHAPTER 4

Floris and Blancheflor

The English *Floris and Blancheflor* survives in four manuscripts: Auchinleck (c. 1330), Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.iv.27.2 (c. 1300), Egerton 2862 (c. 1400), and MS Cotton Vitellius D.iii. (c. 1275). It take as my text source Erik Koope, ed. *Floris and Blancheflour*. *Sentimental and Humorous Romances.* Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2006. http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/ekfbfrm.htm. Other editions include Walter Hoyt French and Charles Brockway Hale, eds., *Middle English Metrical Romances* (1930). As a text source for the French excerpt I use Édélestand Du Méril, ed. *Floire et Blanceflor, Poèmes du 13è Siècle.* Paris: 1856. http://www.archive.org/details/floireetblancefl00floiuoft. Du Méril uses National Library of France (Fonds Français) MS 375, 1447, and 12562 (c. 1200).

F1	Oyez, signor, tout li amant,	Listen, lords, and all the lovers[1]
	Cil qui d'amors se vont penant,	Whose hearts have felt suffering,
	Li chevalier et les puceles,	The knights and the women,
	Li damoisel, les demoiselles:	The young maids, and noble ladies.
	Se mon conte volez entendre,	Whoever wishes to hear my tale
	Moult i porrez d'amors aprendre.	Will be able to learn much about love!
	Cou est du roi Floire l'enfant	The story is of the royal child Floris
	Et de Blanceflor la vaillant,	And of Blancheflor the brave
	De qui Berte as-grans-piés fu née;	To whom Berta Goosefeet was later born,[2]
10	Puis fu mere Charlemaine,	Herself the mother of Charlemagne,
	Qui puis tint et France et le Maine;	Who later held France and the Maine.

[1] No existing English manuscript has the beginning of the story, and so I have used the first 192 lines of *Floire et Blanceflor*.

[2] *Berte as-grans-piés*: Bertrada of Laon (720-783), wife of Pepin the Short and Charlemagne's mother, whose unfortunate nickname possibly refers to misshapen feet. One of the earliest manuscripts of the poem, Paris BN 1447, also has Adenot le Roi's *Berte aus Grans Piés* (c. 1270). For a discussion of the French sources, see Patricia E. Grieve, *Floire and Blancheflor and the European Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chapter 1.

	Floire, son pere, que vous di,	Floris, their forefather whom I speak about,
	Uns rois payens l'engenuï;	Was fathered by a pagan king,
	Et Blanceflor, que tant ama,	And Blancheflor, who was loved by many,
	Uns cuens crestïens l'engendra:	Was fathered by a Christian earl.[3]
	Floire fut tout nés de payens,	And so Floris was born to heathens,
	Et Blanceflor de crestïens.	And Blancheflor to Christians.
	Bauptizier se fist en sa vie	Floris had himself baptized in his life
	Floire, por Blanceflor s'amie:	Because of the love he had for Blancheflor,
20	Car en un biau jor furent né	For on one joyful day they were born,
	Et en une nuit engender.	And on the same night conceived.
	Puisque Floire fu crestïens	Because Floris was later a Christian,
	Li avint grans honors et biens.	He became a king of great honor and riches.
30	Or sivrai mon proposement:	Now to continue with our story,
	Si parlerai avenanment.	If I might come to speak about it.
	En une chambre entrai l'autr'ier,	Not long ago on a Friday
	Un venredi apres mangier,	I entered a room after supper
	Por deporter as demoiseles,	To have some conversation with some ladies
	Don't en la chambre avoit de beles.	Who were having a chat there.
43	Illoec m'assis por escouter	There I seated myself
	Deus puceles qu'oï parler:	To listen to what the two women were saying.
	Eles estoient doi serors;	They were two sisters;
	Ensamble parloient d'amors.	They spoke together about love.
	L'aisnée d'une amor contoit	The older one told a story
	A sa seror que moult amoit,	Which the younger one enjoyed very much,
	Qui fa ja entre deus enfans,	And it was about two children
50	Bien avoit passé deus cens ans;	Who were well over two years old.
	Mais a un clerc dire l'oït	But they had heard it recited by a clerk
	Qui l'avoit léu en escrit.	Who had written it down.
	El commenca avenanment:	The story is pleasant,
	Or oyez son commencement.	And so now listen to its beginning.
	Uns rois estoit issus d'Espaigne;	A king came from Spain
	De chevaliers ot grant compaigne:	With a large company of knights.
	En sa nef ot la mer passée;	He passed over the sea in his ship
	En Galisse fu arivée.	And arrived in Galicia.
	Felis ot non; si fu payens:	Felix had no faith and so he was pagan;
60	Mer ot passé sor crestïens,	He passed over the sea to Christendom.
	Por ou païs la praie prendre,	Wherever he went, he ravaged the land
	Et la viles torner en cendre.	And turned the villages into ashes.
	Un mois entier et quinze dis	For an entire month and a half
	Sejorna li rois ou païs.	The king stayed in that country.
	Ains ne fu jors qu'o sa maisniée	There was no day in that time when the king
	Ne féist li rois chevauciée;	Did not campaign with his army.
	Viles reuboit, avoirs praoit	He despoiled villages, preying on them,
	Et a ses nes tout conduisoit:	And had everyone driven away.
	De quinze liues el rivache,	Within the limit of fifteen miles
70	Ne remanoit ne bués ne vache,	No cattle or oxen remained;
	Ne castel ne vile en estant:	No castle or village was standing.
	Vilains n'i va son boef querant.	Peasants could find no beef.
	Es-vos le païs tout destruit;	The countryside was totally destroyed,

[3] The ostensibly historical Blanche Fleur de Laon (died c. 720) was the daughter of the Merovingian king Dagobert III (699-715) and a Saxon princess.

	Payen en ont joie et deduit.	While the pagans rejoiced and celebrated.
91	En la compaigne ot un Francois:	Among the locals was a Frenchman.
	Chevaliers ert, preu et cortois	He was a knight, virtuous and courteous,
	Qui au baron saint Jaque aloit.	On pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint James.[4]
	Une soie fille i menoit,	He was escorting a woman
	Qui a l'Apostle s'ert vouée	Who had devoted herself to the apostle
	Ains qu'ele issist de sa contrée,	And who was from the region.
	Por son mari qui mors estoit,	For her husband had died,
	De qui remise enceinte estoit.	The man whose baby she was pregnant with.
	Li chevaliers se veut deffendre;	The knight resolved to defend them,
100	Ne chaut a aus de lui vif prendre,	But he was not able to save his life,
	Ains l'ocient; s'el laissent mort,	And the plunderers left him for dead
	Et sa fille mainent au port.	And took his lady to the port.
	Au roi Felis l'ont presentée,	They presented her to King Felix
	Et il l'a forment esgardée:	And he carefully studied her,
	Bien apercoit a son visage	Closely perceiving her appearance
	Que ele estoit de haut parage,	And that she was of noble peerage.
	Et dist, s'il puet, qu'a la roïne	He said, if it would please the queen,
	Fera present de la meschine:	He would make her a slave as a present
	Car de tel chose li préa	Since he valued such things
110	Quant il por reuber mer passa.	When he crossed the sea from plundering.
	Atant s'en-entrent tout es nes,	Then all of them boarded,
	Amont traient tres-tout lor tres:	And they traveled upstream expertly.
	Or ont boin vent et bien portent;	They were carried well by the wind
	Si repairent lié et joiant.	So that they returned safely and easily.
	Il n'orent pas deus jor erré.	They had not sailed two days
	Qu'en lor païs sont arrive.	When they arrived in their country.
127	Es-vos le roi en la cite	Then the king was in the city
	Son barnage a tres-tout mandé:	And all of his baronage was summoned.
	Son eschec lor depart li rois,	The king divided up the booty,
130	Bien largement, comme cortois,	Very generously and with courteousy,
	Et, por sa part, a la roïne	And as for the queen,
	Donc de gaaing la meschine.	She was rewarded with the slave.
	La roïne s'en fait moult liée;	The queen herself was very happy.
	En sa chambre l'a envoyée.	The slave was sent to her chamber.
	Sa loi li laisse bien garder;	She obeyed the queen's rules well,
	Servir la fait et honorer;	And served and honored her;
	O li sovent jue et parole,	They often amused themselves and talked
	Et francois aprent de s'escole.	And schooled themselves in French.
	La meschine ert cortoise et prous;	The slave was courteous and virtuous;
140	Moult se faisoit amer a tous:	She was loved by all
	La roïne moult bien servoit,	And was of good service to the queen,
	Comme cele cui ele estoit.	Who was also expecting a child.
161	Le jor de le la Pasque-florie,	On the day of Palm Sunday,
	Si com le reconte lor vie,	As the story of their life is told,
	Vint li terme qu'eles devoient	The term came to a close
	Enfanter cou que pris avoient.	Of this child who was so priceless.
	Travail orent et paine grant	Great labor pains came to the mothers

[4] The French version relates that a group of pilgrims travels to the shrine of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, northern Spain. The path is called "The Way of Saint James" and Felix, a pagan Spanish king, attacks and robs the pilgrims in his depredations.

	Ains que né fussent li enfant:	And later the children were born:
	Valles fu nés de la payene,	The pagan gave birth to a boy,
	Et meschine ot la crestïene.	And the slave had a Christian girl.
	Li doi enfant, quant furent né,	When the two children were born,
170	De la feste furent nomé:	They were named for the festival:
	La crestïene, por l'honor	The Christian, to honor the day,
	De la feste, ot nom Blancheflor;	Was named Blancheflor;
	Li rois noma son chier fil Floire;	The king named his dear son Floris;[5]
	Aprende le fist a Montoire.	His schooling was taken at Montargis.[6]
	Li pere ama moult son enfant;	The father had great love for his child;
	La mere plus ou autretant.	The mother loved him equally or more.
	Livré l'ont a la damoisele,	They were entrusted to the slave,
	Por cou qu'ele estoit sage et bele,	For she was wise and beautiful,
	A norrir et a maistroier,	To raise and to teach,
180	Fors seulement de l'alaitier:	Excepting only their nursing.
	Une payene l'alaitoit,	A pagan woman nursed them
	Si com lor lois le commandoit.	As was commanded by their laws.[7]
	Moult le norrissoit doucement	She cared for him with kindness
	Et gardoit ententivement	And guarded him attentively
	Plus que sa fille, et ne savoit	Just as much as her daughter, and no one knew
	Lequel des deus plus chier avoit:	Which of the two were dearer to her.
	Onques ne lor sevra mangier	They never ate or drank separately,
	Ne boire, fors seul l'alaitier:	Only excepting their nursing.
	En un lit tout seul les couchoit;	They slept only in one bed;
190	Andeus passoit et abevroit.	Together they grew and were raised.[8]
	Quant cinq ans orent li enfant,	When the children were five years old,
	Moult furent bel et gent et grant:	They were very tall, beautiful, and noble.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
1	Ne thurst men never in londe	No one in the land would ever need[9]
	After feirer children fonde.	To try to find fairer children.
	The Cristen woman fedde hem thoo;	The Christian woman cared for them at the time.
	Ful wel she lovyd hem both twoo.	She loved the two of them very deeply.
	So longe she fedde hem in feere	She reared them together
	That they were of elde of seven yere.	Until they were seven years of age.
	The king behelde his sone dere,	The king beheld his dear son
	And seyde to him on this manere	And said to him on this occasion
	That harme it were muche more	That it would be a great loss
10	But his son were sette to lore	Unless his son were sent
	On the book, letters to know,	To study books and to know letters,

[5] The two children are given "flowery" names—Floris ("Belonging to the flower") and Blancheflor ("White flower")—as they are both born on Palm Sunday, also called *Paske Flourie*.

[6] *Montoire*: The French MS has Montoro, Spain, near Cordoba. The English MSS have Montargis, France, near Orleans instead. TEAMS notes that *Montargis* derives from Odysseus' faithful dog Argos, and suggests that the choice of place name may symbolize Floris' loyalty.

[7] One Spanish version of the story states that the mother's milk transferred the spirit of Christianity to Floris, perhaps explaining such a prohibition (Grieve, 162).

[8] *Passoit*: Some MSS seem to have *pessoit*, which suggests "they drank and ate," rather than passing time.

[9] At line 193 the surviving English text begins. TEAMS uses the London Egerton 2862 MS until 367, where Auchinleck begins.

	As men don both hye and lowe.	As men do, both high and low.
	"Feire sone," he seide, "thow shalt lerne,	"Fair son," he said, "you will learn.
	Lo, that thow do ful yerne."	Now see that you do it very intently."
	Florys answerd with wepyng,	Floris answered in tears,
	As he stood byfore the kyng;	As he stood before the king.
	Al wepyng seide he:	As he wept he said,
	"Ne shal not Blancheflour lerne with me?	"Blancheflor will not learn with me?
	Ne can y noght to scole goon	I cannot go to school
20	Without Blauncheflour," he seide than.	Without Blancheflour," he added.
	"Ne can y in no scole syng ne rede	I cannot sing or read in any school
	Without Blauncheflour," he seide.	Without Blancheflour," he pleaded.
	The king seide to his soon:	The king said to his son,
	"She shal lerne for thy love."	"Because of your love, she will learn."
	To scole they were put.	They were sent to school,
	Both they were good of wytte;	And both of them had good wits.
	Wonder it was of hur lore,	It was a wonder to see their studies
	And of her love wel the more.	And their love even more so.
	The children lovyd togeder soo,	The children were so devoted to each other
30	They myght never parte atwoo.	That they could never be parted.
	When they had five yere to scoole goon,	When they had gone to school five years,
	So wel they had lerned thoo,	They had been taught so well
	Inowgh they couth of Latyne,	That they knew Latin fluently enough
	And wel wryte on parchemyn.	And could write expertly on parchment.
	The kyng understood the grete amoure	The king perceived the great affection
	Bytwene his son and Blanchefloure,	Between his son and Blancheflour,
	And thought, when they were of age,	And thought, when they were of age,
	That her love wolde noght swage;	That her love would not weaken.
	Nor he myght noght her love withdrawe,	Nor might he prevent her emotions
40	When Florys shuld wyfe after the lawe.	When Floris could marry according to law.[10]
	The king to the queene seide thoo,	The king then spoke to the queen,
	And tolde hur of his woo,	And told her of his distress,
	Of his thought and of his care,	Of his thoughts and of his worries
	How it wolde of Floreys fare.	About how things might go with Floris.
	"Dame," he seide, "y tel thee my reed:	"My lady," he said, "I will tell you my plans.
	I wyl that Blauncheflour be do to deed.	I would prefer to put Blancheflour to death.
	When that maide is yslawe	When that maid is dead,
	And brought of her lyf dawe,	And her life's days brought to an end,
	As sone as Florys may it underyete,	As soon as Floris discovers it
50	Rathe he wylle hur forgete.	He will soon forget her.
	Than may he wyfe after reed."	Then he may marry more advisedly."
	The queene answerd then and seid	The queen answered and spoke,
	(And thought with hur reed	And hoped with her advice
	Save the mayde fro the deed):	To save the maiden from death,
	"Sir," she seide, "we aught to fond	"Sire," she said, "we ought to ensure
	That Florens lyf with menske in lond,	That Floris lives with honor in the land,
	And that he lese not his honour	And that he not lose his reputation
	For the mayden Blauncheflour.	Because of the virgin Blancheflour.
	Whoso myght take that mayde clene	If someone were to take that maiden away
60	That she nere brought to deth bydene,	So that she was not put to death,

[10] Felix likely worries that his son will take a wife who is not only socially disadvantaged but a Christian, and that when Floris becomes of age the king will have difficulty preventing their marriage.

	Hit were muche more honour	It would be much more respectable
	Than slee that mayde Blancheflour."	Than to slay that innocent girl."
	Unnethes the king graunt that it be soo:	Reluctantly, the king granted that it be so.
	"Dame, rede us what is to doo."	"Madam, advise me what should be done."
	"Sir, we shul oure soon Florys	"Sire, we will send our son Floris
	Sende into the londe of Mountargis.	Into the land of Montargis.
	Blythe wyl my suster be,	My sister, the lady of that country,
	That is lady of that contree.	Will be pleased.
	And when she woot for whoom	And when she knows for whom
70	That we have sent him us froom,	We have sent him away from us,
	She wyl doo al hur myght,	She will do all her might,
	Both by day and by nyght,	Both by day and by night,
	To make hur love so undoo	To make their love so distant
	As it had never ben soo."	As if it had never been.
	"And, sir," she seide, "y rede eke	And sire," she continued, "I also advise
	That the maydens moder make hur seek.	That the maiden's mother feign illness.
	That may be that other resoun	That can be another reason
	For that ylk encheson,	For the same action,
	That she may not fro hur moder goo."	That she may not go from her mother."
80	Now ben these children swyth woo,	Now these children were in great sorrow,
	Now they may not goo in fere,	For they could not go together.
	Drewryer thinges never noon were.	There was never a sadder sight!
	Florys wept byfore the kyng,	Floris wept before the king
	And seide: "Sir, without lesyng,	And said, "Sire, without lying,
	For my harme out ye me sende,	You send me away to my harm
	Now she ne myght with me wende.	If she may not go with me.
	Now we ne mot togeder goo,	Now that we cannot be together,
	Al my wele is turned to woo."	All my happiness is turned to despair."
	The king seide to his soon aplyght:	The king said to his son in earnest,
90	"Sone, withynne this fourtenyght,	"Son, within this fortnight,
	Be her moder quykke or deed,	Whether her mother be alive or dead,
	Sekerly," he him seide,	For sure," he said to him,
	"That mayde shal com thee too."	"That maid will come to you."
	"Ye, sir," he seid, "y pray yow it be soo.	"Yes, sire," he answered, "I beg of you
	Yif that ye me hur sende,	That it be so. If you send her to me,
	I rekke never wheder y wende."	I don't mind at all where I go."
	That the child graunted, the kyng was fayn	Having the child's consent, the king was eased
	And him betaught his chamburlayn.	And entrusted him to his chamberlain.
	With muche honoure they theder coom,	With much honor they traveled forth,
100	As fel to a ryche kynges soon.	As was fitting for a rich king's son.
	Wel feire him receyvyd the Duke, Orgas,	The duke, Orgas, who was king of that castle,
	That king of that castel was,	Received him graciously,
	And his aunt, with muche honour,	As did his aunt, with great honor.
	But ever he thought on Blanchefloure.	But he forever thought about Blancheflour.
	Glad and blythe they ben him withe;	They were glad and merry with him.
	But for no joy that he seith	But there was no joy that he found
	Ne myght him glade, game ne gle,	In sports or amusement, nor could they cheer him,
	For he myght not his lyf see.	For he could not see his sweetheart.
	His aunt set him to lore	His aunt set him to study
110	There as other children wore,	Where the other children were,
	Both maydons and grom;	Both maidens and boys.
	To lerne mony theder coom.	Many came there to learn.
	Inowgh he sykes, but noght he lernes;	He sighed often, but learned nothing;
	For Blauncheflour ever he mornes.	He continually mourned for Blancheflour.

	Yf eny man to him speke,	If any man spoke to him,
	Love is on his hert steke.	Only love stuck to his heart.
	Love is at his hert roote,	Love was at his heart's root,
	That nothing is so soote;	And nothing was so sweet;
	Galyngale ne lycorys	Neither spice nor licorice[11]
120	Is not so soote as hur love is,	Was as sweet as her love was,
	Ne nothing ne non other flour.	Nor anything of any other flower.
	So much he thenketh on Blancheflour,	He thought so much about Blancheflour
	Of oo day him thynketh thre,	That one day seemed like three,
	For he ne may his love see.	For he could not see his love.
	Thus he abydeth with muche woo	Thus he waited with great sadness
	Tyl the fourtenyght were goo.	Until the fourteenth night had passed.
	When he saw she was nought ycoom,	When he saw she had not come,
	So muche sorow he hath noom,	He was taken by so much grief
	That he loveth mete ne drynke,	That he wanted neither food nor drink,
130	Ne may noon in his body synke.	And neither would go into his body.
	The chamberleyn sent the king to wete	The chamberlain sent word to inform the king
	His sones state, al ywrete.	Of his son's state in writing.
	The king ful sone the waxe tobrake	The king very quickly broke the wax
	For to wete what it spake.	In order to know what the letter said.
	He begynneth to chaunge his mood,	His mood began to change,
	And wel sone he understode,	And very soon he understood,
	And with wreth he cleped the queene,	And with anger he called the queen,
	And tolde hur alle his teene,	And told her all his vexation,
	And with wrath spake and sayde:	And spoke in wrath and said,
140	"Let do bryng forth that mayde!	"Have that maiden sent for!
	Fro the body the heved shal goo."	Her head will go from her body!"
	Thenne was the quene ful woo.	The queen was very distressed then.
	Than spake the quene, that good lady:	The queen, that good lady, answered,
	"For Goddes love, sir, mercy!	"For God's love, sir, have mercy!
	At the next haven that here is	At the nearest harbor
	Ther ben chapmen ryche ywys,	There are rich traders, certainly,
	Marchaundes of Babyloyn ful ryche,	Wealthy merchants from Persia,[12]
	That wol hur bye blethelyche.	Who will gladly buy her.
	Than may ye for that lovely foode	Then you will have for that lovely girl
150	Have muche catell and goode.	A great deal of property and goods.
	And soo she may fro us be brought,	And so she will be gotten rid of
	Soo that we slee hur nought."	In such a way that we do not slay her."
	Unnethes the king graunted this,	Reluctantly, the king granted this,
	But forsoth, so it is.	But truly, it happened in that way.
	The king let sende after the burgeise,	The king sent for the agent,
	That was hende and curtayse,	Who was able and courteous,
	And welle selle and bygge couth,	And knew how to buy and sell well,
	And moony langages had in his mouth.	And had many languages at his tongue.
	Wel sone that mayde was him betaught,	Very soon the maiden was given to him,

[11] *Galyngale*: Galingal is an Asian spice related to ginger which would have been very exotic to a medieval English audience. It is commonly used in Thai Tom Yum soup.

[12] *Babyloyn*: The poet may simply mean a romantic idea of Persia, and the French MS also has *Babiloine*. Reiss argues that this is *Bab-al-yun*, a district of old Cairo (TEAMS). E. Reiss, "Symbolic Detail in Medieval Narrative: *Floris & Blancheflour*," *Papers on Language & Literature* 7 (1971): 346. But the land area of the emir's palace complex seems too massive to fit inside a suburb.

160	An to the haven was she brought.	And she was brought to the harbor.
	Ther have they for that maide yolde	There the traders paid for that maid
	Twenté mark of reed golde,	Twenty marks of red gold,[13]
	And a coupe good and ryche,	And a cup, splendid and costly;
	In al the world was non it lyche;	In all the world there was none like it.
	Ther was never noon so wel grave,	There was never one so finely engraved.
	He that it made was no knave.	He who crafted it was no apprentice.
	Ther was purtrayd on, y weene,	There was a depiction on it, as I am told,
	How Paryse ledde awey the queene,	Of how Paris led away Queen Helen,
	And on the covercle above	And on the lid above it
170	Purtrayde was ther both her love;	Their love for each other was portrayed.
	And in the pomel theron	And on the round knob on top
	Stood a charbuncle stoon.	Stood a carbuncle stone.
	In the world was not so depe soler	In all the world there was no cellar so deep
	That it nold lyght the botelere,	That it would not give light to a butler
	To fylle both ale and wyne;	To fill it with either ale or wine.
	Of sylver and gold both good and fyne.	It was of silver and gold, good and fine.
	Enneas the king, that nobel man,	Aeneas the king, that valiant man,
	At Troye in batayle he it wan,	Won it at Troy in battle,
	And brought it into Lumbardy,	And brought it to Lombardy,
180	And gaf it his lemman, his amy.	And gave it to his beloved, his Lavinia.[14]
	The coupe was stoole fro King Cesar;	The cup was stolen from the Caesar;
	A theef out of his tresour hous it bar.	A thief carried it out of his treasure house.
	And sethe that ilke same theef	And afterward that same thief
	For Blauncheflour he it geef.	Gave it in trade for Blancheflour.
	For he wyst to wynne suche three,	For he expected to gain such a profit
	Myght he hur bryng to his contree.	If he could bring her to his country.
	Now these marchaundes saylen over the see	Now these merchants sailed over the sea
	With this mayde to her contree.	With this maid to their land.
	So longe they han undernome	They journeyed so far
190	That to Babyloyn they ben coom.	Until they arrived in Babylon.
	To the Amyral of Babyloyn	Very quickly, they sold the girl
	They solde that mayde swythe soon;	To the emir of the city.
	Rath and soone they were at oon.	Hastily, they soon agreed on the sale.
	The Amyral hur bought anoon,	The emir bought her at once,
	And gafe for hur, as she stood upryght,	And paid for her, as she stood upright,
	Sevyn sythes of gold her wyght,	Seven times her weight in gold.
	For he thought, without weene,	For he thought, without a doubt,
	That faire mayde have to queene.	To have that fair maid as queen.
	Among his maydons in his bour	He had her placed, with great honor,
200	He hur dide with muche honour.	Among the maidens in his harem.
	Now these merchaundes that may belete,	Now the merchants left the maid behind,
	And ben glad of hur byyete.	And were pleased with their earnings.
	Now let we of Blancheflour be	Now we will let Blancheflour be,
	And speke of Florys in his contree.	And speak of Floris in his country.
	Now is the burgays to the king coom	The agent returned to the king

[13] *Twente mark*: A mark was 2/3 of a pound in England, or 13s 4p. According to the UK National Archives website, 20 marks in today's money would be about US$10,000 (http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/). As with many romances, this may be as fanciful as paying seven times her weight in gold (196).

[14] *Amy*: Lavinia, Aneas' love and Latinus' daughter in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

	With the golde and his garyson,	With the gold and the payment,
	And hath take the king to wolde	And remitted the silver and cup of gold
	The selver and the coupe of golde.	For the king to keep.
	They lete make in a chirche	They had a shrine made
210	A swithe feire grave wyrche,	And a very beautiful grave fashioned,
	And lete ley ther uppon	And placed on there
	A new feire peynted ston,	A new and finely painted gravestone,
	With letters al aboute wryte	With letters written all about,
	With ful muche worshipp.	With a lavish dedication.
	Whoso couth the letters rede,	For whoever could read the letters
	Thus they spoken and thus thei seide:	They spoke thus and read,
	"Here lyth swete Blauncheflour	"Here lies sweet Blancheflour,
	That Florys lovyd par amoure."	Who loved Floris with passion."[15]
	Now Florys hath undernome,	Floris was undertaking the journey,
220	And to his fader he is coome.	And he came to his father.
	In his fader halle he is lyght.	He dismounted in his father's hall.
	His fader he grette anoonryght,	He greeted the king right away,
	And his moder, the queene, also.	And his mother, the queen, as well.
	But unnethes myght he that doo	But he had scarcely done so
	That he ne asked where his leman bee.	When he asked where his beloved was,
	Nonskyns answere chargeth hee.	Not even waiting for any kind of answer.
	So longe he is forth noom,	And so he was brought forth
	Into chamber he is coom.	Until he arrived in a chamber.
	The maydenys moder he asked ryght:	He asked the maiden's mother at once,
230	"Where is Blauncheflour, my swete wyght?"	"Where is Blancheflour, my sweet lass?"
	"Sir," she seide, "forsothe, ywys,	"Sir," she said, "in truth, in fact,
	I ne woot where she is."	I do not know where she is."
	She bethought hur on that lesyng	She was mindful of the deception
	That was ordeyned byfore the king.	Which was ordered by the king.
	"Thow gabbest me," he seyde thoo,	"You're teasing me," he replied.
	"Thy gabbyng doth me muche woo.	"Your gabbing does me great hurt.
	Tel me where my leman be."	Tell me where my sweetheart is!"
	Al wepyng seide thenne shee:	She then replied, in tears,
	"Sir," shee seide, "deed." "Deed?" seide he.	"Sir," she said, "she is dead." "Dead?" he cried.
240	"Sir," she seide, "forsothe, yee!"	"Sir," she said, "in truth, yes."
	"Allas, when died that swete wyght?"	"Alas! When did that sweet creature die?"
	"Sir, withynne this fourtenyght	"Sir, within this fortnight
	The erth was leide hur above,	The earth was laid above her,
	And deed she was for thy love."	And she was dead for your love."
	Flores, that was so feire and gent,	Floris, who was so fair and gentle,
	Sownyd there verament.	Was overcome there, in truth.
	The Cristen woman began to crye	The Christian woman began to call
	To Jhesu Crist and Seynt Marye.	On Jesus Christ and sainted Mary.
	The king and the queene herde that crye;	The king and queen heard that cry.
250	Into the chamber they ronne on hye,	They ran into the chamber in haste,
	And the queene sawe her byforn	And the queen saw before her
	On sowne the childe that she had born.	The child that she had bore in a faint.
	The kinges hert was al in care,	The king's heart was all distraught
	That sawe his son for love so fare.	To see what had happened to his son for love.

[15] *That Florys lovyd par amoure*: TEAMS notes that who loved who is not clear in the ME line, and perhaps the ambiguity intentionally emphasizes that their feelings were mutual.

	When he awooke and speke myght,	When he awoke and could speak,
	Sore he wept and sore he syght,	He wept and sighed bitterly,
	And seide to his moder ywys:	And said to his mother in earnest,
	"Lede me there that mayde is."	"Take me to where that maid is."
	Theder they him brought on hyghe;	They brought him there in haste,
260	For care and sorow he wold dyye.	For he was dying of anguish and sorrow.
	As sone as he to the grave com,	As soon as he came to the grave,
	Sone there behelde he then,	He beheld it at once
	And the letters began to rede	And began to read the letters
	That thus spake and thus seide:	So that he spoke and said thus,[16]
	"Here lyth swete Blauncheflour,	"Here lies sweet Blancheflour,
	That Florys lovyd par amoure."	Who loved Floris with passion."
	Thre sithes Florys sownydde nouth,	Floris swooned three times;
	Ne speke he myght not with mouth.	Nor could he speak with his mouth.
	As sone as he awoke and speke myght,	As soon as he awoke and could talk,
270	Sore he wept and sore he syght.	He wept and sighed bitterly.
	"Blauncheflour," he seide, "Blauncheflour!	"Blancheflour," he said, "Blancheflour!
	So swete a thing was never in boure;	There was never so sweet a thing in any bower.
	Of Blauncheflour is that y meene,	I mourn for Blancheflour,
	For she was com of good kyn.	For she came from a worthy family.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
Vit	Vor in worlde nes nere non	There was no one in the world
--	Þine imake of no wimmon;	Your equal among women!
--	Inouȝ þu cuþest of clergie	You were well-learned in faith
--	And of alle curteysie.	And in all courtesy.[17]
	. . . . .	. . . . .
275	Lytel and muche loveden thee	High and low loved you
	For thy goodnesse and thy beauté.	For your goodness and your beauty.
	Yif deth were dalt aryght,	If death were dealt out fairly,
	We shuld be deed both on oo nyght.	We would both be dead the same night.
	On oo day born we were,	We were born on one day;
280	We shul be ded both in feere.	We will both be dead together.
	Deeth," he seide, "ful of envye,	Death," he cried, "full of envy
	And of alle trechorye,	And of all treachery!
	Refte thow hast me my leman.	You have robbed me of my beloved.
	Forsoth," he seide, "thow art to blame.	Truly," he said, "you are to blame.
	She wolde have levyd, and thow noldest,	She would have lived had you not interfered,
	And fayn wolde y dye, and thow woldest.	And I would have gladly died had you permitted it.
	After deeth clepe no more y nylle,	I will no longer cry for death
	But slee myself now y wille."	But will slay myself right now!"
	His knyf he braide out of his sheth,	He drew his knife out of its sheath.
290	Himself he wolde have doo to deth,	He would have put himself to death
	And to hert he had it smeten,	And struck at his own heart
	Ne had his moder it underyeten.	Had his mother not realized it.
	Then the queene fel him uppon,	Then the queen fell upon him
	And the knyf fro him noom.	And seized the knife from him.
	She reft him of his lytel knyf,	She took away his little knife,

[16] *That thus spake*: Floris is reading out loud. It was considered unusual to read silently until the modern era. There is a famous story of St. Augustine's curiosity at seeing Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (d. 397), reading without vocalizing.

[17] Four lines from the London Vitellius MS, not in Auchinleck.

	And savyd there the childes lyf.	And there she saved the child's life.
	Forth the queene ranne, al wepyng,	The queen ran away in tears
	Tyl she com to the kyng.	Until she came to the king.
	Than seide the good lady:	Then the good lady said,
300	"For Goddes love, sir, mercy!	"For God's love, sir, have mercy!
	Of twelve children have we noon	From twelve children we have
	On lyve now but this oon.	None alive now but this one!
	And better it were she were his make	It would be better if she were his wife
	Than he were deed for hur sake."	Than for him to be dead for her sake."
	"Dame, thow seist soth," seide he.	"Madam, you speak the truth," he sighed.
	"Sen it may noon other be,	"Since it cannot not be otherwise,
	Lever me were she were his wyf	I would rather she were his wife
	Than y lost my sonnes lyf."	Than to lose my son's life."
	Of this word the quene was fayn,	With these words the queen was calmed,
310	And to her soon she ran agayn.	And she ran back to her son.
	"Floryes, soon, glad make thee,	"Floris, my son, cheer yourself.
	Thy lef thow shalt on lyve see.	You will see your sweetheart alive.
	Florys, son, through engynne	Floris, son, through a deceitful trick
	Of thy faders reed and myne,	Of your father's and my design,
	This grave let we make,	We had this grave made,
	Leve son, for thy sake;	Dear son, for your sake.
	Yif thow that maide forgete woldest,	If you had forgotten that girl,
	After oure reed wyf thow sholdest."	You would marry according to our wishes."
	Now every word she hath him tolde	She told him every word
320	How that they that mayden solde.	About how they sold that maiden.
	"Is this soth, my moder dere?"	"Is this the truth, my dear mother?"
	"Forsoth," she seide, "she is not here."	"In truth," she answered, "she is not here."
	The rowgh stoon adoun they leyde,	They laid aside the rough stone
	And sawe that there was not the mayde.	And saw that the maid was not there.
	"Now, moder, y think that y leve may.	"Now, mother, I think that I can live.
	Ne shal y rest nyght ne day,	I will not rest night or day,
	Nyght ne day ne no stound,	Night, day, or one hour,
	Tyl y have my lemmon found.	Until I have found my beloved.
	Hur to seken y woll wend,	I will go to seek her,
330	Thaugh it were to the worldes ende."	Even to the ends of the earth."
	To the king he goth to take his leve,	He went to the king to take his leave,
	And his fader bade him byleve.	And his father asked him to stay.
	"Sir, y wyl let for no wynne,	"Sire, I won't desist for any gain.
	Me to bydden it were grete synne."	To demand that of me would be a great sin."
	Than seid the king: "Seth it is soo,	Then the king answered, "Since it is so,
	Seth thow wylt noon other doo,	Since you will not have it any other way,
	Al that thee nedeth we shul thee fynde.	We will provide you with all you need.
	Jhesu thee of care unbynde."	May Christ deliver you from distress!"[18]
	"Leve fader," he seide, "y telle thee	"Dear father," he said, "I will tell you
340	Al that thow shalt fynde me.	All that you will supply me with.
	Thow mast me fynde, at my devyse,	You may equip me, at my request,
	Seven horses al of prys:	With seven horses, all of value:

[18] *Jhesu thee of care unbynde*: To have the king entrust his son to Christ is either a scribal mistake or another example of the slipshod depiction of non-Christians. See also the note for *Bevis* (500). Felix's faith is ambiguous as the text never explicitly says that he is Muslim and the descriptor 'pagan' (F59) could mean any non-Christian or pre-Christian belief. Yet later Floris prays to God (899-900).

	And twoo ycharged, uppon the molde,	With two loaded, to the earth,
	Both with selver and wyth golde;	With both silver and gold,
	And twoo ycharged with moonay	And two laden with money
	For to spenden by the way;	To spend along the way,
	And three with clothes ryche,	And three with rich clothes,
	The best of al the kyngryche.	The best in all the kingdom.
	Seven horses and sevyn men,	Seven horses and seven men,
350	And thre knaves without hem,	And three servants in addition to them,
	And thyn own chamburlayn,	And my own chamberlain.
	That is a wel nobel swayn.	He is a very dedicated servant;
	He can us both wyssh and reede,	He can both guide and advise us.
	As marchaundes we shull us lede."	We will conduct ourselves as merchants."
	His fader was an hynde king,	His father was a gracious king.
	The coupe of golde he dide him bryng,	He gave the cup of gold to him,
	That ilke self coupe of golde	The same golden cup itself
	That was Blauncheflour foryolde.	That had been given for Blancheflour.
	"Have this, soon," seide the king,	"Take this, son," said the king,
360	"Herewith thow may that swete thing	"With it you might win back
	Wynne, so may betyde,	That sweet girl, if it may so happen,
	Blauncheflour with the white syde,	Blancheflour with the light complexion,[19]
	Blauncheflour, that faire may."	Blancheflour, that fair maid."
	The king let sadel a palfray,	The king had a palfrey saddled,
	The oon half white so mylke,	With one side as white as milk,
	And that other reed so sylk.	And the other as red as silk.
	I ne kan telle you nowt	I cannot begin to describe
	Hou richeliche the sadel was wrout.	How richly the saddle was made.
	The arsouns were gold pur and fin,	The saddlebows were gold, pure and fine,
370	Stones of vertu set therin,	With stones of quality set inside,
	Bigon abouten with orfreis.	Surrounded about with gold embroidery.
	The Quen was hende and curteis.	The queen was graceful and considerate.
	She cast her hond to hire fingre,	She put her hand to her finger
	And drough therof a riche ringe.	And drew off a magnificent ring.
	"Have nou, sone, here this ring.	"Take this ring here now, son.
	While thou hit hast, doute thee nothing,	While you have it, fear nothing.
	Ne fir thee brenne, ne drenchen in se,	You will not burn in fire, or drown in the sea.
	Ne iren ne stel schal derie thee;	Neither iron nor steel will harm you.
	And be hit erli and be hit late,	Whether it be early or late,
380	To thi wille thou schalt have whate."	You will have what is your will."
	Weping thai departed nouthe	Weeping, they parted then,
	And kiste hem with softe mouthe.	And kissed each other softly.
	Thai made for him non other chere	They behaved for him no differently
	Than thai seye him ligge on bere.	Than if they saw him lying on a funeral bier.
	Nou forht thai nime with alle main,	Now he and his chamberlain
	Himself and his chaumberlain.	Went forth with all might.
	So longe thai han undernome	They traveled a long time
	To the havene thai beth icome	Until they came to the place

[19] *White syde*: A puzzling line. TEAMS has *side*, suggesting a light aspect, where Bennett and Smithers render *syde* as long or flowing, i.e. blonde hair. The medieval sense that light hair or skin complexion was purer or more beautiful is evidently operant here, as Blancheflor is the daughter of a Saxon noble. See also Walter Clyde Curry, *The Middle English Ideal of Personal Beauty* (Baltimore: J.H. Furst, 1916), 11-21 and 80-86.

	Ther Blauncheflour lai anight.	Where Blancheflour slept at night.
390	Richeliche thai were idight.	They were provided for lavishly.
	The loverd of the hous was wel hende;	The lord of the house was very hospitable;
	The child he sette next his hende,	He sat the young man next to him,
	In the altherfairest sete.	In the finest of all chairs.
	Gladliche thai dronke and ete,	All those who were in there
	Al that therinne were.	Ate and drank happily.
	Al thai made glade chere,	They all made a cheerful mood
	And ete and dronke echon with other.	And ate and drank with each other.
	Ac Florice thoughte al an other.	But Floris' thoughts were all on another.
	Ete ne drinke mighte he nought;	He could not eat or drink.
400	On Blauncheflour was al his thought.	All his thoughts were on Blancheflour.
	The levedi of the hous underyat	The lady of the house noticed
	Hou this child mourning sat,	How this child sat mourning,
	And seide here loverd with stille dreme:	And said to her lord in a low voice,
	"Sire," she saide, "nimstou no yeme	"Sir," she said, "haven't you noticed
	Hou this child mourning sit?	How this boy sits gloomily?
	Mete and drynk he forgit,	He takes no notice of food and drink.
	Litel he eteth and lasse he drinketh.	He eats little and drinks less.
	He nis no marchaunt, as me thinketh."	It seems to me he is no merchant."
	To Florice than spak she:	She then said to Floris,
410	"Child, ful of mourning I thee se.	"Child, I see you full of mourning,[20]
	Thous sat herinne this ender dai	The same way that Blancheflour,
	Blauncheflour, that faire mai.	That fair maid, sat here the other day.
	Herinne was that maiden bowght,	That girl was delivered here
	And over the se she was ibrowght.	And was sold from over the sea.
	Herinne thai boughte that maden swete.	Here they bought that sweet maiden,
	And wille here eft selle to biyete.	And they will trade her again for a profit.
	To Babiloyne thai wille hire bring,	They have sent her to Babylon
	And selle hire to kaiser other to king.	And will sell her to an emperor or a king.
	Thou art ilich here of alle thinge,	You are like her in every way,
420	Of semblant and of mourning,	In appearance and in mood,
	But thou art a man and she is a maide."	Except that you are a man and she is a maid."
	Thous the wif to Florice saide.	This is what the wife spoke to Floris.
	Tho Florice herde his lemman nevene,	When Floris heard his lover's name,
	So blithe he was of that stevene	He was so glad to hear that sound
	That his herte bigan al light.	That his heart was all lit up.
	A coupe of gold he let fulle right.	He had the cup of gold filled straightaway.
	"Dame," he saide, "this hail is thin,	"Madam," he said, "this toast is yours,
	Bothe the gold and the win,	And both the gold and the wine—
	Bothe the gold and the win eke,	Both the gold and the wine as well,
430	For thou of mi lemman speke.	For you spoke of my beloved.
	On hir I thought, for here I sight,	For her I thought, for her I sighed.
	And wist ich wher hire finde might,	And now I know where I might find her.
	Ne scholde no weder me assoine	No bad weather will hinder me
	That I ne schal here seche at Babiloine."	From seeking her in Babylon!"
	Florice rest him there al night.	Floris rested there all night.
	Amorewe, whan hit was dailight,	In the morning, when it was daylight,
	He dide him in the salte flod,	He set out on the salty sea.

[20] *Child* may formally denote a knight-in-training, but Floris is an eastern prince and is nowhere mentioned as becoming a knight. The poet is likely sentimentally emphasizing his youth.

	Wind and weder he hadde ful god.	He had favorable wind and weather.
	To the mariners he gaf largeliche	He paid the mariners generously
440	That broughten him over bletheliche	Who gladly brought him across
	To the londe thar he wold lende,	To the land where he wished to go
	For thai founden him so hende.	For they found him so gracious.
	Sone so Florice com to londe,	As soon as Floris came ashore,
	Wel yerne he thankede Godes sonde	He fervently thanked God for bringing him
	To the lond ther his lemman is;	To the land where his beloved was.
	Him thoughte he was in paradis.	It seemed to him he was in paradise.
	Wel sone men Florice tidingges told	Very soon men told Floris the news
	The Amerail wolde feste hold,	That the emir planned to hold a feast,
	And kinges an dukes to him come scholde,	And that kings and dukes were to come to him,
450	Al that of him holde wolde,	All that hold land from him,
	For to honure his heghe feste,	To honor his high feast
	And also for to heren his heste.	And also to hear his commands.
	Tho Florice herde this tiding,	When Floris heard this report,
	Than gan him glade in alle thing,	He was cheered in every way,
	And in his herte thoughte he	And in his heart he resolved
	That he wolde at that feste be,	That he would be at that feast,
	For wel he hopede in the halle	For he was confident he would see
	His leman sen among hem alle.	His lover among them all in the hall.
	So longe Florice hath undernome	Floris undertook his journey
460	To a fair cité he is icome.	Until he came to a fair city.
	Wel faire men hath his in inome,	Men lodged him comfortably,
	Ase men scholde to a kinges sone,	As one should for a king's son,
	At a palais - was non hit iliche.	In a palatial house; there was none like it.
	The louerd of the hous was wel riche,	The master of the inn was prosperous,
	And gold inow him com to honde,	And gold in plenty came into his hand,
	Bothe bi water and be londe.	Both by water and by land.
	Florice ne sparede for no fe,	Floris did not spare any expense,
	Inow that there ne scholde be	Lest there should not be enough
	Of fissc, of flessch, of tendre bred,	Of fish, of meat, of fresh bread,
470	Bothe of whit win and of red.	Or of wine, both white and red.
	The louerd hadde ben wel wide;	The lord was wise in the world's ways;
	The child he sette bi his side,	He set the youth by his side,
	In the altherferste sete.	In the best seat of all.
	Gladliche thai dronke and ete.	They ate and drank happily.
	Ac Florice et an drank right nowt,	But Floris ate and drank almost nothing;
	On Blauncheflour was al his thought.	All of his thoughts were on Blancheflour.
	Than bispak the bourgeis,	Then the host spoke,
	That hende was, fre and curteys:	A gracious man, dignified and courteous:
	"Child, me thinkketh swithe wel	"Young man, it seems clear to me
480	Thi thought is mochel on thi catel."	Your mind is very much on your goods."
	"Nai, on mi catel is hit nowt,	"No, not at all on my property.
	On other thing is al mi thought.	My thoughts are all on something else.
	Mi thought is on alle wise	My mind, in every way,
	Mochel on mi marchaundise;	Is on recovering my merchandise.[21]
	And yit that is mi meste wo,	And it will be my greatest sorrow
	Yif ich hit finde and schal forgo."	If I find it and must lose it."
	Thanne spak the louerd of that inne:	Then the master of that inn mused,

[21] British Library Egerton 2862 MS has *For to fynde my marchaundise* (464).

	"Thous sat this other dai herinne	"It is the same way that Blancheflour,
	That faire maide Blauncheflour.	That fair maid, sat here the other day.
490	Bothe in halle and ek in bour,	Both in the hall and in her chamber,
	Evere she made mourning chere,	She always had a look of mourning
	And biment Florice, here leve fere.	And grieved for Floris, her dear companion.
	Joie ne blisse ne hadde she none,	She had no joy or ease,
	Ac on Florice was al here mone."	But all her lamenting was for Floris."
	Florice het nime a coppe of silver whight,	Floris ordered a cup of white silver brought,
	And a mantel of scarlet,	And a cloak of scarlet,
	Ipaned al with meniver,	All lined with fur,
	And gaf his hoste ther.	And gave it to his host.
	"Have this," he saide, "to thine honour,	"Have this," he said, "for your honor,
500	And thou hit mighte thonke Blauncheflour.	And you may thank Blancheflour for it.
	Stolen she was out mine countreie;	She was stolen from my country.
	Here ich here seche bi the waie.	I seek her here by these roads.
	He mighte make min herte glad	The man would make my heart glad
	That couthe me telle whider she was lad."	Who could tell me where she was taken."
	"Child, to Babiloyne she is ibrought,	"Boy, she has been brought to Babylon,
	And Ameral hire hath ibought.	And the emir has bought her.
	He gaf for hire, ase she stod upright,	He paid for her, as she stood upright,
	Seven sithes of gold here wight.	Seven times her weight in gold!
	For hire faired and for hire schere	For her beauty and her bearing
510	The Ameral hire boughte so dere,	The emir has paid so dearly for her,
	For he thenketh withouten wene	For he thinks, beyond a doubt,
	That faire mai to haven to quene.	To have that fair maid as queen.
	Amang other maidenes in his tour	He has placed her with great honor
	He hath hire ido with mochel honour."	Among the other maidens in his tower."
	Nou Florice rest him there al night.	Then Floris rested there all night.
	On morewe, whan hit was dailight,	In the morning when it was daylight,
	He aros up in the moreweninge,	He rose up early
	And gaf his hoste an hondred schillinge,	And gave his host a hundred shillings,[22]
	To his hoste and to his hostesse,	To him and to his hostess,
520	And nam his leve and gan hem kesse.	And took his leave and kissed them.
	And yerne he hath his oste bisought,	And he earnestly asked his host
	That he him helpe, yif he mought,	If he would help him, if he could,
	Hou he mighte with sum ginne,	How he might with some ruse
	The faire maiden to him awinne.	Win the fair maiden for himself.
	"Child, to one brigge thou schalt come;	"Young man, you will come to a bridge.
	A burgeis thou findest ate frome.	You will meet the toll keeper right away.
	His paleis is ate brigges ende,	His house is at the bridge's end.
	Curteis man he his and hende.	He is a gracious man and gentle.
	We beth wed brethren and trewthe iplight.	We are sworn brothers pledged by oath.
530	He thee can wissen and reden aright.	He can counsel and advise you rightly.
	Thou schalt beren him a ring	You will give to him a ring,
	Fram miselve to tokning,	From myself as a token,
	That he thee helpe in eche helve	And he will help you in every way
	So hit were bifalle miselve."	As if it had happened to me."
	Florice tok the ring and nam his leve,	Floris took the ring and made his goodbye,

[22] *An hondred schillinge*: about £2590 or $US4100 in modern money (UK National Archives), rather an expensive hotel bill but in keeping with Floris' aristocratic refinement. The sentiment also emphasizes by extension Blancheflor's value to Floris. See also line 736.

	For there no leng wolde he bileve.	For he would not linger any longer.
	Bi that hit was undren hegh	By the time it was high noon
	The brigge he was swithe negh.	He was very near the bridge.
	When he was to the brigge inome,	When he came to the bridge,
540	The burges he fond ate frome,	The first thing he saw was the bridgekeeper,
	Sittende on a marbelston.	Sitting on a marble stone.
	Fair man and hende he was on.	He was a fair and gracious man.
	The burgeis was ihote Dayre.	The townsman was named Dary.
	Florice him grette swithe faire,	Floris greeted him courteously
	And hath him the ring irawt	And handed him the ring
	And wel faire him bitawt.	And entrusted it to him in good faith.
	Thourgh tokning of that ilke ring	Through the token of that ring
	Florice hadde ther god gestning	Floris had a good welcome there
	Of fichss, of flessch, of tendre bred,	Of fish, of meat, of fresh bread,
550	Bothe of whit win and of red.	And wine, both white and red.
	Ac evere Florice sighte ful cold,	But Floris continually sighed distractedly,
	And Darys gan him bihold:	And Dary observed him.
	"Leve child, what mai the be,	"Dear boy, what is the matter with you,
	Thous carfoul ase I thee se?	To be as sorrowful as I see you?
	I wene thou nart nowt al fer,	I guess that you are not feeling well
	That thou makest thous doelful cher.	So that you have such a doleful look.
	Other thee liketh nowt thin in?"	Or do you not like your lodging?"
	Nou Florice answered him:	Then Floris answered him,
	"Yis, sire, bi Godes ore,	"No, sir, by God's mercy,[23]
560	So god I ne hadde yore.	I never had so good a one before!
	God late me bide thilke dai	May God let me live to see the day
	That ich thee yelde mai.	That I may repay you.
	Ac I thenke in alle wise	But I am thinking in every way
	Upon min owen marchaundise,	About my own property,
	Wherfore ich am hider come,	Which is why I have come here,
	Lest I ne finde hit nowt ate frome.	Lest I not find it at the outset.
	And yit is that mi meste wo,	And yet it will be my greatest sorrow
	Yif ich hit finde and sschal forgo."	If I find it and must lose it."
	"Child, woldest thou tel me thi gref?	"Child, will you not tell me your heart?
570	To helpe thee me were ful lef."	I would be very pleased to help you."
	Nou everich word he hath him told,	Then he told him every word,
	Hou the maide was fram him sold,	How the maid was sold from him
	And hou he was of Speyne a kinges sone,	And how he was a king's son from Spain,
	And for hire love thider icome,	Who had come here for love of her,
	For to fonde with som ginne	In order to devise some stratagem
	That faire maide to biwinne.	To win that fair maid.
	Daris now that child bihalt,	Dary observed the boy then
	And for a fol he him halt:	And took him for a fool.
	"Child," he seith, "I se hou goth:	"Boy," he said, "I know how it will go.
580	Iwis, thou yernest thin owen deth.	Truly, you desire your own death!
	Th'Ameral hath to his justening	The emir has invited to his tournament
	Other half hondred of riche king.	A hundred and fifty rich kings.[24]

[23] *Yis, sire*: The tendency of PDE with negative questions, so frustrating for many learners of English, is to say 'no,' i.e. I disagree with what you said, rather than 'yes,' i.e. I do like the lodgings. At least here, ME does the latter.

	That altherrichchest kyng	The most powerful king among them
	Ne dorste beginne swich a thing;	Would not dare attempt such a thing.
	For mighte th'Ameral hit underyete,	For if the emir discovered it,
	Sone thou were of live quite.	You would soon lose your life.
	Abouten Babiloine, withouten wene,	Around Babylon, without a doubt,
	Sexti longe milen and tene	It's seventy miles long!
	And ate walle thar beth ate	And on the walls there are gates—
590	Seven sithe twente gate.	Seven times twenty!
	Twente toures ther beth inne,	There are twenty towers inside
	That everich dai cheping is inne;	Where there is trading every day.
	Nis no dai thourg the yer	There isn't a day throughout the year
	That scheping nis therinne plener.	That the markets aren't going strong.
	An hondred toures also therto	There's a hundred towers to go with them
	Beth in the borewe, and somdel mo.	In the district, and several more.
	That alderest feblest tour	The weakest tower of them all
	Wolde kepe an emperour	Would keep an emperor
	To comen al ther withinne,	From coming inside there,
600	Noither with strengthe ne with ginne.	Whatever strength or ingenuity they had.
	And thei alle the men that beth ibore	Even if all the men who are born
	Adden hit up here deth iswore,	Swore to fight to their death,
	Thai scholde winne the mai so sone	They would as soon win the maid
	As fram the hevene hegh the sonne and mone.	As win the sun and moon from the heavens!
	And in the bourh, amide the right,	And in the castle, right in the middle,
	Ther stant a riche tour, I thee aplight.	There is a splendid tower, I assure you;
	A thousand taisen he his heighe,	Its height is a thousand fathoms tall
	Woso it bihalt, wid, fer, and neghe.	To whoever beholds it, near or far.
	And an hondred taises he is wid,	And it is a hundred fathoms wide,
610	And imaked with mochel prid	And built with extravagant pride,
	Of lim and of marbelston;	Of lime and marble stone.
	In Cristienté nis swich non.	There is nothing like it in Christendom.
	And the morter is maked so wel,	And the mortar is so well-built
	Ne mai no man hit breke with no stel.	That no man could break it with any steel.
	And the pomel above the led	And the globe on top of the roof
	Is iwrout with so moche red,	Was created with so much skill
	That men ne dorfen anight berne	That men do not need to burn at night
	Neither torche ne lanterne;	Either a torch or a lantern.
	Swich a pomel was never bigonne,	Such a globe was never made before!
620	Hit schineth anight so adai doth the sonne.	It shines at night like the sun by day.
	Nou beth ther inne that riche toure	Inside that rich tower there is
	Four and twenty maidenes boure.	A chamber for twenty-four maidens.
	So wel were that ilke man	The man would be doing well
	That mighte wonen in that an.	Who could live in that place!
	Now thourt him nevere, ful iwis,	He would never need, for sure,
	Willen after more blisse.	To ask for more bliss.
	Nou beth ther seriaunts in the stage	There are servants on the upper floor
	To serven the maidenes of parage.	To serve the maidens of high birth.

[24] *Other half hondred*: Another confusing expression which TEAMS interprets as "half of a second hundred," 150 in total.

	Ne mai no seriaunt be therinne	No servant may go in there
630	That in his brech bereth the ginne,	Who has his manhood in his pants,[25]
	Neither bi dai ne bi night,	Neither by day or by night,
	But he be ase capoun dight.	Unless he is fixed like a rooster!
	And at the gate is a gateward,	And at the entrance is a gatekeeper.
	He nis no fol ne no coward;	He is no fool or coward.
	Yif ther cometh ani man	If any man enters
	Withinne that ilche barbican,	Within that same fortress
	But hit be bi his leve	Unless by his permission,
	He wille him bothe bete and reve.	He will both beat and emasculate him.
	The porter is proud withalle,	The porter is proud, to add.
640	Everich dai he goth in palle.	Every day he walks in fine clothes.
	And the Amerail is so wonder a gome	And the emir is so incredible a man
	That everich yer hit is his wone	That every year it is his practice
	To chesen him a newe wif.	To choose himself a new wife.[26]
	And whan he a newe wif underfo,	And when he takes a new wife,
	He knaweth hou hit schal be do.	He knows how it will be done.
	Thanne scholle men fechche doun of the stage	Men will bring down from upstairs
	Alle the maidenes of parage,	All the maidens of high birth
	An brenge hem into on orchard,	And bring them into the orchard.
	The fairest of al middelhard;	It is the fairest on all earth;
650	Ther is foulen song,	There are the songs of birds.
	Men mighte libben ther among.	Men might live long there!
	Aboute the orchard goth a wal,	Around the orchard there is a wall,
	The werste ston is cristal.	And the cheapest stone is crystal.
	Ther man mai sen on the ston	A man might see on the stone
	Mochel of this werldes wisdom.	Much of this world's wisdom.[27]
	And a welle ther springeth inne	And a well springs in there
	That is wrowt with mochel ginne.	Which was crafted with great ingenuity.
	The welle is of mochel pris,	The well is of great magnificence;
	The strem com fram Paradis.	The stream came from Paradise!
660	The gravel in the grounde of preciouse stone,	The gravel in the ground is precious stone,
	And of vertu iwis echone,	And each one has special virtues—
	Of saphires and of sardoines,	Sapphires and sardonyx stone,
	Of oneches and of calsidoines.	Onyx and clear quartz.
	Nou is the welle of so mochel eye,	The well is held in such awe;
	Yif ther cometh ani maiden that is forleie,	For if any maid approaches who is not a virgin,
	And hi bowe to the grounde	And she bows to the ground
	For to waschen here honde,	In order to wash her hands,
	The water wille yelle als hit ware wod,	The water will cry out as if it were angry
	And bicome on hire so red so blod.	And become on her as red as blood.
670	Wich maiden the water fareth on so,	Whichever maiden the water reacts so with
	Hi schal sone be fordo.	Will soon be put to death.

[25] *That in his brech bereth the ginne*: An amusing euphemism: 'Who has the engine/equipment in his pants.' A *capon* (632) is a castrated rooster. Eunuchs were indispensible for guarding harems in fiction.

[26] In the French version the emir repudiates and executes his ex-wives annually, making Blancheflor like Scheherezade in *One Thousand and One Nights*. But the English text does not state this, suggesting that the emir is perhaps polygamous.

[27] The observer might see the mason's craftsmanship and attention, or as TEAMS suggests, the lines are literal: sage texts are inscribed on the stones.

	And thilke that beth maidenes clene,	But those maidens who are pure
	Thai mai hem wassche of the rene.	May wash themselves from the stream.
	The water wille erne stille and cler,	The water will run still and clear
	Nelle hit hem make no daunger.	And will give them no danger.
	At the welle heved ther stant a tre,	At the head of the well there is a tree,
	The fairest that mai in erthe be.	The fairest that may be on earth.
	Hit is icleped the Tre of Love,	They call it the Tree of Love,
	For floures and blosmes beth ever above.	As flowers and blossoms are always about.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
C	So sone so þe olde beoþ idon	As soon as an old one falls down,
--	Þer springeþ niwe riȝt anon	A new one springs up at once.[28]
	. . . . .	. . . . .
680	And thilke that clene maidenes be,	And for those who are pure maidens,
	Men schal hem bringe under that tre.	Men bring them under the tree.
	And wichso falleth on that flour,	And whoever the flower falls on
	Hi schal ben chosen quen with honour.	Will be chosen queen with honor.
	And yif ther ani maiden is	And if there is any maiden
	That th'Amerail halt of mest pris,	Whom the emir thinks the most excellent,
	The flour schal on here be went	The flower will be steered toward her
	Thourh art and thourgh enchantement.	Through artifice and through enchantment.
	Thous he cheseth thourgh the flour,	In this way he chooses through the petal,
689	And evere we herkneth when hit be	And all expect it will be
	Blauncheflour."	Blancheflour."[29]
690	Thre sithes Florice swouned nouthe,	Floris fell faint three times then
	Er he mighte speke with mouthe.	Before he could speak with his tongue.
	Sone he awok and speke might,	As soon as he came to and could talk,
	Sore he wep, and sore he sight.	He wept sorely, and sighed bitterly.
	"Darie," he saide, "ich worht ded,	"Dary," he said, "I will be finished
	But ich have of thee help and red."	Unless I have your help and advice."
	"Leve child, ful wel I se	"Dear boy, I can see full well
	That thou wilt to dethe te;	That you are walking into death.
	The beste red that I can	Here is the best guidance I know.
	(Other red I ne can):	I know no other course!
700	Wende tomorewe to the tour,	Go tomorrow to the tower
	Ase thou were a god ginour,	As if you were an expert craftsman
	And nim in thin hond squir and scantiloun;	And carry in your hand a square and ruler.
	Als thai thou were a masoun	As if you were a stonemason,
	Bihold the tour up and doun.	Examine the tower up and down.
	The porter is colvard and feloun;	The porter is a scoundrel and criminal.
	Wel sone he wil come to thee,	Very soon he will come up to you
	And aske what mister man thou be,	And ask what kind of craftsman you are,
	And ber upon thee felonie,	And accuse you of some offense
	And saie thou art comen the tour aspie.	And claim you came to spy on the tower.
710	Thou schalt answeren him swetelich	You will answer him pleasantly
	And speke to him wel mildelich,	And speak to him amiably,
	And sai thou art a ginour,	And say that you are an engineer
	To biheld that ilche tour,	And have come to observe that tower
	And for to lerne and for to fonde	In order to learn and attempt

[28] The Cambridge MS.

[29] Cambridge has *Alle weneþ hit schulle beo Blancheflour*, "Everyone thinks it will be Blancheflor." 689 is long and is printed here on two lines.

	To make another in thi londe.	To make another in your homeland.
	Wel sone he wil come thee ner,	Quite soon he will come near you
	And bidde thee plaien at the scheker.	And invite you to play at checkers.[30]
	To plaien he wil be wel fous,	He will be very keen to play,
	And to winnen of thin wel coveitous.	And greedily intent on beating you.
720	When thou art to the scheker brought,	When you are brought to the board,
	Withouten pans ne plai thou nowt.	You cannot play without any money.
	Thou schalt have redi mitte	You will have ready with you
	Thritti mark under thi slitte.	Thirty marks in your pocket.
	And yif he winne ought of thin	And if he wins anything from you,
	Al leve thou hit with him.	Be sure to give it to him.
	And yif thou winne ought of his,	And if you win anything from him,
	Thou lete therof ful litel pris.	Do not make too much of it.
	Wel yerne he wille thee bidde and praie	He will eagerly ask you and insist
	That thou come amorewe and plaie.	That you come back tomorrow and play.
730	Thou schalt sigge thou wilt so,	You will say that you will,
	And nim with thee amorewe swich two.	And take twice as much with you.
	And ever thou schalt in thin owen wolde	And you will always keep
	Thi gode cop with thee atholde,	At hand your fine cup,
	That ilke self coppe of golde	That very same cup of gold
	That was for Blauncheflour iyolde.	Which was given for Blancheflour.
	The thridde dai bere with thee an hondred pond	On the third day take a hundred pounds with you,[31]
	And thi coppe al hol and sond.	And your cup, safe and sound.
	Gif him markes and pans fale;	Give him marks and plenty of pennies.
	Of thi moné tel thou no tale.	Do not keep count of your money.
740	Wel yerne he thee wille bidde and praie	He will eagerly ask and insist
	That thou legge thi coupe to plaie.	That you stake your cup in the game.
	Thou schalt answeren him ate first	You will at first answer him
	No lenger plaie thou ne list.	That you don't feel like playing longer.
	Wel moche he wil for thi coupe bede,	He will make a high offer for your cup,
	Yif he mighte the better spede.	If he might have more luck for doing so.
	Thou schalt bletheliche given hit him,	You will give it to him cheerfully,
	Thai hit be gold pur and fin,	Though it is gold, pure and fine,
	And sai: 'Me thinketh hit wel bisemeth te,	And say, "To me it is fitting for you,
	Thai hit were worth swiche thre.'	Even if it were worth three times as much."
750	Sai also thee ne faille non,	Say also that you are not short of anything,
	Gold ne selver ne riche won.	Gold or silver or fine goods.
	And he wil thanne so mochel love thee,	And then he will love you so much,
	That thou hit schalt bothe ihere and see	And you will both hear and see it,
	That he wil falle to thi fot	That he will fall to your feet
	And bicome thi man, yif he mot.	And become your servant, if he may.
	His manred thou schalt afonge,	You will receive his homage,
	And the trewthe of his honde.	And an oath of loyalty from his hand.
	Yif thou might thous his love winne,	If you might be able to win him over so,
	He mai thee help with som ginne."	He might help you with some stratagem."
760	Nou also Florice hath iwrowt	Then Floris worked things

[30] The medieval English played backgammon and other board games but checkers was not commonly known until later centuries. As with the chess match in *Guy* (668), such games would have had an exotic eastern atmosphere to them.

[31] *An hondred pond*: Enormous stakes, US$75,000 in modern money (UK National Archives), though Floris is 'gambling' for Blancheflor.

	Also Darie him hath itawt,	Just as Dary instructed him to,
	That thourgh his gold and his garsome	So that through his gold and treasure
	The porter is his man bicome.	The porter became his man.
	"Nou," quath Florice, "Thou art mi man,	"Now," said Floris, "you are my man,
	And al mi trest is thee upan.	And all my trust is in you.
	Nou thou might wel ethe	Now you can easily
	Arede me fram the dethe."	Protect me from death."
	And everich word he hath him told	And he told him every word
	Hou Blauncheflour was fram him sold,	How Blancheflour was sold from him,
770	And hou he was of Spaine a kynges sone,	And how he was a prince of Spain
	And for hire love thider icome,	Who had come here for her love,
	To fonde with som ginne	To try with some ploy
	The maiden agen to him winne.	To win the maiden back to him.
	The porter that herde and sore sighte:	The porter listened and sighed sorely,
	"Ich am bitraied thourgh righte;	"I have been betrayed in full.
	Thourgh thi catel ich am bitraid,	Through your goods I am ensnared,
	And of mi lif ich am desmaid.	And I am in despair for my life.
	Nou ich wot, child, hou hit geth:	Now I know, boy, how matters stand.
	For thee ich drede to tholie deth.	For you I dread to suffer death!
780	And natheles ich ne schal thee nevere faile mo,	But nonetheless, I will never fail you,
	The whiles I mai ride or go.	As long as I can ride or walk.
	Thi foreward ich wil helden alle,	I will hold your conditions in full,
	Whatso wille bitide or falle.	Whatever happens or comes.
	Wende thou hom into thin in	Go back home to your inn
	Whiles I think of som ginne.	While I think of some plan.
	Bitwene this and the thridde dai	Between now and the third day
	Don ich wille that I mai."	I will do what I can."
	Florice spak and wep among,	Floris at times spoke and wept,
	That ilche terme him thoughte wel long.	Thinking the period of time very long.
790	The porter thoughte what to rede.	The porter decided what to do.
	He let floures gaderen in the mede,	He had flowers gathered from the meadow,
	He wiste hit was the maidenes wille.	Thinking it would be to the maiden's liking.
	Two coupen he let of floures fille;	He had two baskets of flowers filled,
	That was the rede that he thought tho:	And this was the trick he thought of then:
	Florice in that o coupe do.	Floris was put into one basket.
	Tweie gegges the coupe bere,	Two young women carried the basket,
	So hevi charged that wroth thai were.	Who were annoyed by the heavy weight.
	Thai bad God yif him evel fin	They asked God to give a nasty end
	That so mani floures dede therin.	To whoever put so many flowers in there!
800	Thider that thai weren ibede	When they were ordered to go up,
	Ne were thai nowt aright birede,	They were not directed correctly;
	Acc thai turned in hire left hond,	And so they turned to their left,
	Blauncheflourres bour around.	Bypassing Blancheflour's room.
	To Clarice bour the coupe thai bere	They carried the basket to Clarice's bower
	With the floures that therinne were.	With the flowers that were in there.
	There the couppe thai sette adoun,	There they set the basket down
	And gaf him here malisoun,	And muttered their curses on him
	That so fele floures embroughte on honde.	Who brought together so many flowers.
	Thai wenten forht and leten the coppe stonde.	They went out and left the basket standing.
810	Clarice to the coppe com and wolde	Clarice went to the basket, wanting
	The floures handlen and biholde.	To handle and look at the flowers.
	Florisse wende hit hadde ben his swet wight;	Floris thought it was his sweet lass;
	In the coupe he stod upright,	He stood upright in the basket,
	And the maide, al for drede,	And the maid, out of fear,

	Bigan to schrichen an to grede.	Began to shriek and cry out.
	Tho he segh hit nas nowth she,	When he saw that it was not his beloved,
	Into the coupe he stirte aye,	He jumped back into the basket,
	And held him bitraied al clene;	Thinking himself betrayed in full.
	Of his deth he ne gaf nowt a bene.	He didn't count his life worth a bean.[32]
820	Ther come to Clarice maidenes lepe	Maidens came rushing to Clarice,
	Bi ten, be twenti, in one hepe,	By ten and twenty, in one crowd,
	And askede what here were	And asked her what was the matter
	That hi makede so loude bere.	That made her carry on so.
	Clarice hire understod anonright	Clarice realized right away that it was
	That hit was Blauncheflour, that swete wight,	Meant for Blancheflour, that sweet girl,
	For here boures negh were,	For their rooms were near each other
	And selden that thai neren ifere	And it was seldom that they were not together,
	And aither of other counseil thai wiste,	So that they knew each other's secrets
	And michel aither to other triste.	And had deep trust in each other.
830	Hii gaf hire maidenes answere anon	After a moment she told the maidens
	That into boure thai sscholden gon:	That they should return to their bowers.
	"To this coupe ich cam, and wolde	"I came to this basket, wanting
	The floures handli and biholde.	To handle the flowers and look at them.
	Ac er ich hit ever wiste	But before I knew what was happening
	A boterfleye togain me fluste.	A butterfly darted out toward me.
	Ich was so sor adrad of than,	I was so terribly startled by it
	That sschrichen and greden I bigan."	That I began to shriek and cry."
	The maidenes hadde therof gle	The maidens had a laugh over it
	And turnede agen, and let Clarisse be.	And went back out, and left Clarice alone.
840	So sone so the madenes weren agon,	As soon as the maidens were gone,
	To Blauncheflours bour Clarice wente anon	Clarice went at once to Blancheflour's room
	And saide leyende to Blauncheflour:	And said laughing to Blancheflour,
	"Wiltou sen a ful fair flour?	"Would you like to see a very nice flower?
	Swiche a flour that thee schal like,	It's a flower that you will like,
	Have thou sen hit a lite."	After you have seen it a little while."
	"Avoy, dameisele," quath Blauncheflour,	"Stop it, girl," said Blancheflour.
	"To scorne me is litel honour.	"There's little honor in teasing me.
C	[Ho that luveth par amur	She who marries for love and has joy for it
--	And hath therof ioye, mai luve flures.]	Can take pleasure in flowers.[33]
848	Ich ihere, Clarice, withoute gabbe,	I'm hearing, Clarice, it's no idle gab,
	The Ameral wil me to wive habbe.	That the emir will take me as his wife.
850	Ac thilke dai schal never be	But that day will never come
	That men schal atwite me	When men will condemn me
	That I schal ben of love untrewe,	For being untrue in love,
	Ne chaung I love for non newe,	Nor will I change my heart for someone new,
	For no love, ne for non eie;	For anyone's love, or for anyone else, ever,
	So doth Floris in his contreie.	Just as Floris would not in his country.
	Nou I schal swete Florice misse,	Now that I will lose sweet Floris,
	Schal non other of me have blisse."	No one else will have joy from me."
	Clarice stant and behalt that reuthe,	Clarice stood and beheld that sorrow,

[32] *Of his deth he ne gaf nowt a bene*: Egerton 2862 has *lyf*. ME often uses *straw*, *berry*, or *oyster* in such expressions to mean something almost worthless. PDE might use 'plugged nickel' or an obscenity. I take the translation from Taylor, who lists several related phrases. A.B. Taylor, *Floris and Blancheflor: A Middle English Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927), note to line 878.

[33] In Cambridge MS.

	And the treunesse of this treuthe.	And the faithfulness of her pledge.
860	Leighande sche saide to Blauncheflour:	Then, laughing, she said to Blancheflour,
	"Com nou se that ilche flour."	"Come now and see that flower!"
	To the coupe thai yeden tho.	They went to the basket.
	Wel blisful was Florisse tho,	Floris was very blissful
	For he had iherd al this.	For he had heard all this.
	Out of the coupe he stirte iwis.	He sprang out of the basket, in truth.
	Blauncheflour chaungede hewe;	Blancheflour changed her color;
	Wel sone aither other knewe.	At once they recognized each other.
	Withouten speche togidere thai lepe,	Without words they leaped together.
	Thai clepte and keste and eke wepe.	They embraced and kissed and wept as well.
870	Hire cussing laste a mile,	Their kissing lasted the time to walk a mile,
	And that hem thoughte litel while.	And it seemed to them too short a while.
	Clarice bihalt al this,	Clarice saw all this,
	Here contenaunce and here bliss,	Their emotions and their joy,
	And leighende saide to Blauncheflour:	And said to Blancheflour laughing,
	"Felawe, knouestou ought this flour?	"Sister, do you know this flower?
	Litel er noldest thou hit se,	A little earlier you would not see it,
	And nou thou ne might hit lete fro thee.	And now you cannot let it go from you.
	He moste conne wel mochel of art	He must know a lot of tricks
	That thou woldest gif therof ani part."	For you to give him any part of yourself!"
880	Bothe thise swete thinges for blis	Both of these sweet things, for their joy,
	Falleth doun, here fet to kis,	Fell down to kiss her feet
	And crieth hire merci, al weping,	And to beg for her mercy, in tears,
	That she hem biwraie nowt to the king,	That she would say nothing to the king,
	To the king that she hem nowt biwreie,	That she would not betray them to the king,
	Wher thourgh thai were siker to deye.	For which they would be sure to die.
	Tho spak Clarice to Blauncheflour	Clarice then spoke to Blancheflour
	Wordes ful of fin amour:	Words full of kind love:
	"Ne doute thou nammore withalle	"Have no more fear about all this
	Than to miself hit hadde bifalle.	Than if it had happened to me.
890	White ye wel, witerli,	You can be certain and be sure
	That hele ich wille youre bother druri."	That I will conceal your lovesickness."[34]
	To on bedde she hath hem ibrowt,	She brought them to a bed
	That was of silk and sendal wrought.	Which was crafted of fine silk and linen.
	Thai sette hem there wel softe adoun,	They laid themselves down quietly,
	And Clarice drowgh the courtyn roum.	And Clarice drew the curtain round.
	Tho bigan thai to clippe and kisse,	Then they began to embrace and kiss,
	And made joie and mochele blisse.	And had joy and great pleasure.
	Florice ferst speke bigan,	Floris first began to speak
	And saide: "Louerd that madest man,	And said, "Lord, who made man,
900	Thee I thanke, Godes sone,	I thank you, God's son.
	Nou al mi care ich have overcome.	For now I have overcome all my troubles.
	And nou ich have mi lef ifounde,	And now that I have found my beloved,
	Of al mi kare ich am unbounde."	I am delivered from all my pains."
	Nou hath aither other itold	Then each told the other
	Of mani a care foul cold,	About many hardships, foul and cold,
	And of mani pine stronge,	And about many strong torments

[34] *Hele ich wille youre bother druri*: TEAMS suggests that *heal* here means, "I will cure your lovesickness," but also gives a second meaning of *heal* as ME *helen*, hide or conceal, which is what Clarice does.

	That thai han ben atwo so longe.	Because they had been apart so long.
	Clarice hem servede al to wille,	Clarice served them to their liking,
	Bothe dernelich and stille,	Both discreetly and quietly,
910	But so ne mighte she hem longe iwite	But she could not protect them for long
	That hit ne sscholde ben underyete.	Without it being discovered.
	Nou hadde the Amerail swich a wone	Now the emir had such a custom
	That everi dai ther sscholde come	That every day two maidens
	Two maidenes ut of hire boure,	Had to come out of their room
	To serven him up in the toure,	To serve him up in the tower,
	With water and cloth and bacyn,	With water and a cloth and basin
	For to wasschen his hondes in;	For him to wash his hands in.
	That other scholde bringge comb and mirour,	The other was to bring a comb and mirror
	To serven him with gret honour.	To serve him with great honor.
920	And thai thai servede him never so faire,	Even though he was served ever so courteously,
	Amorewen scholde another paire;	The next morning another pair had to go.
	And mest was woned into the tour	And the two who went to the tower most often
	Therto Clarice and Blauncheflour.	Were Clarice and Blancheflour.
	So longe him servede the maidenes route	The rest of the maidens had served him
	That hire service was comen aboute:	So that their turn to serve was coming up.
	On the morewen that thider com Florice	In the morning after Floris came
	Hit fel to Blauncheflour and to Clarice.	It fell to Blancheflour and Clarice.
	Clarice - so wel hire mote bitide -	Clarice, the best of fortune to her,
	Aros up in the morewentide,	Rose up in the morning
930	And clepede after Blauncheflour,	And called for Blancheflour
	To wende with here into the tour.	To go with her into the tower.
	Blauncheflour saide: “Ich am comende,”	Blancheflour said, “I’m coming!”
	Ac here answere was al slepende.	But her answer was half-asleep.
	Clarice in the wai is nome,	Clarice took her way,
	And wende that Blauncheflour had come.	Thinking that Blancheflour was on her way.
	Sone so Clarice com in the tour	As soon as Clarice arrived in the tower
	The Ameral asked after Blauncheflour.	The Emir asked about Blancheflour.
	“Sire,” she saide anonright,	“Sire,” she answered at once,
	“She hath iwaked al this night,	“She has been awake all this night.
940	And ikneled and iloke,	She knelt, and watched,
	And irad upon hire boke,	And read her book,
	And bad to God here oreisoun,	And made her prayers to God
	That He thee give His benisoun	That He give His blessing to you
	And thee helde longe alive.	And keep you alive long.
	Nou sche slepeth al so swithe,	Now she is sleeping so soundly,
	Blauncheflour, that maiden swete,	That sweet maid, Blancheflour,
	That hii ne mai nowt comen yhete.”	That she is not able to come yet.”
	“Certe,” said the kyng,	“For certain,” said the king,
	“Nou is hi a swete thing.	“She is a sweet thing!
950	Wel aughte ich here yerne to wive,	I should very much want to marry her,
	Whenne she bit so for mi live.”	When she prays for my life so.”
	Another dai Clarice arist	Another day came and Clarice arose
	And hath Blauncheflour atwist	And asked Blancheflour scoldingly
	Whi hi made so longe demoere.	Why she made such a long delay.
	“Aris up, and go we ifere.”	“Get up, and we will go together.”
	Blauncheflour saide: “I come anan.”	Blancheflour said, “I’m coming soon.”
	And Florice here klippe bigan	But Floris pulled her close
	And felle aslepe on this wise;	And they fell asleep in this way.
	And after hem gan sore agrise.	Afterwards it would bring them terror.
960	Clarice to the piler cam;	Clarice came to the doorway.

	The bacyn of gold she nam,	She took the basin of gold
	And hath icleped after Blauncheflour,	And called for Blancheflour
	To wende with here into the tour.	To go with her into the tower.
	She ne answerede nai ne yo,	She did not answer yes or no,
	Tho wende Clarice she ware ago.	And so Clarice thought she had already gone.
	Sone so Clarice com into the tour,	As soon as Clarice arrived in the tower,
	The Ameral asked after Blauncheflour,	The Emir asked about Blancheflour,
	Whi and wharfore she ne come,	And why she did not come
	As hi was woned to done.	As she was accustomed to doing.
970	"She was arisen ar ich were,	"She was up before I was.
	Ich wende here haven ifonden here.	I thought that I would find her here."
	What, ne is she nowt comen yit?"	"What? She has not come yet!
	"Nou she me douteth al to lit."	Now she fears me all too little!"[35]
	Forht he clepeth his chaumberleyn,	He called his chamberlain forth,
	And bit him wende with alle main,	And ordered him to go with all his retinue,
	And wite wi that she ne come,	To find out why she did not come
	As hi was wone bifore to done.	As she was used to doing before.
	The chaumberleyn hath undernome,	The chamberlain took his way
	Into hir bour he his icome,	And arrived in her bedroom.
980	And stant bifore hire bed,	He stood before her bed
	And find thar twai, neb to neb,	To find two there, face to face,
	Neb to neb, an mouth to mouth:	Body to body, and mouth to mouth.
	Wel sone was that sorewe couth.	Very soon the disaster was known!
	Into the tour up he steigh,	He rushed into the tower
	And saide his louerd al that he seigh.	And told his lord all that he had seen.
	The Ameral het his swerd him bring,	The emir ordered him to bring his sword;
	Iwiten he wolde of that thinge.	He would find out about this affair!
	Forht he nimth with alle mayn,	He came forth with all his staff,
	Himself and his chaumberlayn,	Himself and his chamberlain,
990	Til thaie come thar thai two laie;	Until they arrived where the two lay.
	Yit was the slep fast in hire eye.	The sleep was still in their eyes.
	The Ameral het hire clothes keste	The emir had the covers thrown down
	A litel binethen here breste.	A little beneath their chests.
	Than segh he wel sone anon	Then he saw very quickly
	That on was a man, that other a womman.	That one was a man and the other a woman.
	He quok for anguisse ther he stod;	He quaked with anguish where he stood.
	Hem to quelle was his mod.	It was his urge to execute them.
	He him bithoughte, ar he wolde hem quelle,	He thought to himself that before he killed them,
	What thai were thai sscholde him telle,	They should tell him who they were,
1000	And sithen he thoughte hem of dawe don.	And later he would put them to death.
	The children awoken under thon.	The couple awoke in the meantime.
	Thai segh the swerd over hem idrawe;	They saw the sword drawn over them,
	Adrad thai ben to ben islawe.	And they were in terror of being slain.
	Tho bispak the Ameral bold	Then the bold emir thundered
	Wordes that scholde sone bi told:	Words that demanded a prompt answer:
	"Sai me now, thou bel ami,	"Tell me now, my pretty lover,
	Who made thee so hardi	Who made you so brave
	For to come into mi tour,	To come into my tower

[35] I am giving line 972 to the Emir, which makes more sense. No ME romance MS has quotation punctuation, but in British Library Egerton 2862 (880) Clarice does not speak and the line is clearly the Emir's.

	To ligge ther bi Blauncheflour?	And lie there by Blancheflour?
1010	To wrotherhale ware ye bore;	You were born for ill fortune,
	Ye schollen tholie deth therfore."	And you will suffer death for it."
	Thanne saide Florice to Blauncheflour:	Then Floris said to Blancheflour,
	"Of oure lif nis non socour."	"There is no help for our lives."
	And mercy thai cride on him so swithe,	They cried to him for mercy so intently
	That he gaf hem respit of here live	That he gave their lives postponement
	Til he hadde after his baronage sent,	Until he could send for his barons
	To awreken him thourgh jugement.	To avenge himself through judgment.
	Up he bad hem sitte bothe	He ordered them both to sit up
	And don on other clothe,	And put on their clothes,
1020	And siththe he let hem binde fast,	And then he had them bound fast
	And into prisoun hem he cast,	And cast into prison
	Til he had after his barenage sent	Until he had sent for his baronage
	To wreken him thourgh jugement.	To take punishment through a verdict.
	What helpeth hit longe tale to sschewe?	What good is it to tell a long tale?
	Ich wille you telle at wordes fewe.	I will tell you in a few words.
	Nou al his baronage hath undernome,	Now all his barons had arrived,
	And to the Amerail they beth icome.	And came to the emir.
	His halle, that was heighe ibult,	His hall, which was built high,
	Of kynges and dukes was ifult.	Was filled with kings and dukes.
1030	He stod up among hem alle,	He stood up among them all,
	Bi semblaunt swithe wroth withalle.	With his expression one of great anger.
	He saide: "Lordingges, of mochel honour	He said, "Lords, of great honor,
	Ye han herd speken of Blauncheflour,	You have heard Blancheflour spoken about,
	Hou ich hire bought dere aplight	How I bought her dearly and rightfully
	For seven sithes of gold hire wight.	For seven times her weight in gold.
	For hire faired and hire chere	For her fairness and her beauty,
	Ich hire boughte allinge so dere,	I bought her in full at such expense.
	For ich thoughte, withouten wene,	For I thought, without a doubt,
	Hire have ihad to mi quene.	To have her as my queen.
1040	Bifore hire bed miself I com,	I came myself to her bed
	And fond bi hire an naked grom.	And found with her a naked boy.
	Tho thai were me so lothe	At the time they were so detestable to me
	I thoughte to han iqueld hem bothe,	That I thought to kill them both,
	Ich was so wroth and so wod;	I was so enraged and so crazed.
	And yit ich withdrough mi mod.	And yet I held back my emotions.
	Fort ich have after you isent,	On that basis I have sent for you,
	To awreke me thourgh jugement.	To avenge me through your decision.
	Nou ye witen hou hit is agon,	Now that you know how it happened,
	Awreke me swithe of mi fon."	Avenge me swiftly on my foes!"
1050	Tho spak a kyng of on lond:	Then a king of one land spoke up:
	"We han iherd this schame and schonde,	"We have heard this shame and disgrace.
	Ac, er we hem to dethe wreke,	But, before we condemn them to death,
	We scholle heren tho children speke,	We will hear the children speak
	What thai wil speke and sigge,	Whatever they wish to say, to see
	Yif thai ought agein wil allegge.	If they have anything as a defense.
	Hit ner nowt right jugement	It would not be a just deliberation
	Withouten answere to acoupement."	Without an answer to the accusation."
	After the children nou men sendeth	Men now sent for the children,
	Hem to brenne fur men tendeth.	Intending for them to burn in fire.
1060	Twaie Sarazins forth hem bringe	Two Saracens brought them forth
	Toward here deth, sore wepinge.	Toward their death, as they wept bitterly.
	Dreri were this schildren two;	The two lovers were inconsolable;

	Nou aither biwepeth otheres wo.	Each wept for the other's grief.
	Florice saide to Blauncheflour:	Floris said to Blanchefour,
	"Of oure lif nis non socour.	"For our lives there is no help.
	Yif manken hit tholi might	If it were possible for a human being,
	Twies I scholde die with right:	I would rightfully die twice,
	One for miself, another for thee,	Once for myself, a second time for you,
	For this deth thou hast for me."	For your death is because of me!"
1070	Blauncheflour saide agen tho:	Blancheflour then answered,
	"The gelt is min of oure bother wo."	"The guilt is mine for both our woe."
	Florice drow forth the ring	Floris drew off the ring
	That his moder him gaf at his parting.	That his mother gave him at their parting.
	"Have nou this ring, lemman min,	"Take this ring, my beloved.
	Thou ne schalt nowt die whiles hit is thin."	You will not die while it is yours."
	Blauncheflour saide tho:	Blancheflour replied,
	"So ne schal hit never go,	"It will never happen so
	That this ring schal ared me;	That this ring will save me.
	Ne mai ihc no deth on thee se."	I will not see you put to death."
1080	Florice the ring here araught,	Floris handed the ring to her,
	And hi him agein hit bitaught.	And she passed it back to him.
	On hire he hath the ring ithrast,	He thrust the ring on her,
	And hi hit haveth awai ikast.	And she flung it away.
	A duk hit segh and begh to grounde,	A duke saw it and bent to the ground,
	An was glad that ring he founde.	And was glad to find that ring.
	On this maner the children come	In this manner the children came weeping,
	Weping to the fur and to hire dome.	To the fire and to their doom.
	Bifor al that folk thai ware ibrowt,	They were brought before all the people,
	Dreri was hire bother thought.	And both of them seemed so pitiable.
1090	Ther nas non so sterne man	There was no man so stern
	That thise children loked upan,	Who looked upon these children
	That thai ne wolde alle ful fawe	That he did not wish fervently
	Here jugement have withdrawe,	To have their judgment withdrawn,
	And with grete garisoun hem begge -	And to buy them with a great ransom,
	Yif thai dorste speke other sigge -	If they only dared to speak out or protest.
	For Florice was so fair a yongling,	For Floris was so fair a young man,
	And Blauncheflour so swete a thing.	And Blancheflour was so sweet a thing.
	Of men and wimmen that beth nouthe,	Of men and women who live now,
	That gon and riden and speketh with mouthe,	That walk and ride and speak with their mouths,
1100	Beth non so fair in hire gladnesse,	There are none so fair in their happiness
	Als thai ware in hire sorewenesse.	As they were in their sorrow.
	No man ne knewe hem that hem was wo	No man could see that they were full of grief
	Bi semblaunt that thai made tho,	By the bearing that they had
	But bi the teres that thai schadde,	Except by the tears that they shed
	And fillen adoun bi here nebbe.	Which fell down their faces.
	The Ameral was so wroth and wod	The emir was so furious and livid
	That he ne might withdraw his mod.	That he could not control his temper.
	He bad binde the children faste,	He ordered the couple bound fast
	Into the fir he hem caste.	And thrown into the fire.
1110	Thilke duk that the gold ryng hadde	The same duke who received the gold ring
	Nou to speke rewthe he hadde.	Was now moved by compassion to speak.
	Fain he wolde hem helpe to live	He was eager to help them to live
	And tolde hou thai for the ring strive.	And explained how they argued over the ring.
	The Ameral het hem agen clepe,	The emir had them called back,
	For he wolde tho schildren speke.	For he wanted the two to speak.
	He askede Florice what he hete,	He asked Floris what his name was,

	And he him told swithe skete.	And he told him very promptly.
	“Sire,” he saide, “Yif hit were thi wille,	“Sire,” he said, “If it is your will,
	Thou ne aughtest nowt this maiden spille.	You ought not to let this maiden die
1120	Ac, sire, lat aquelle me,	But, sire, to let me be executed,
	And lat that maiden alive be.”	And let the maiden go alive.”
	Blauncheflour saide tho:	Blancheflour then protested,
	“The gilt is min of oure bother wo.”	“The guilt is mine for both of our troubles.”
	And the Ameral saide tho:	The emir then thundered,
	“Iwis ye sculle die bo.	“For certain, both of you will die!
	With wreche ich wille me awreke,	I will have revenge in my anger.
	Ye ne scholle nevere go ne speke.”	You will never walk or speak again!”
	His swerd he braid out of his sschethe,	He drew his sword out of its sheath
	The children for to do to dethe.	To put the couple to death,
1130	And Blauncheflour pult forth hire swire,	And Blancheflour thrust forth her neck,
	And Florice gan hire agein tire.	And Floris began to pull her back.
	“Ich am a man, ich schal go bifore.	“I am a man, I will go before.
	Thou ne aughtest nought mi deth acore.”	You should not suffer my death.”
	Florice forht his swire pulte	Floris presented his neck forth
	And Blauncheflour agein hit brutte.	And Blancheflour drew it back.
	Al that iseyen this	All who saw this
	Therfore sori weren iwis,	Were sorry for it, I know,
	And saide: “Dreri mai we be	And said, “It is too much sadness
	Bi swiche children swich rewthe se.”	To see these youngsters in such anguish!”
1140	Th’Ameral, wroth thai he were,	The emir, as angry as he was,
	Bothe him chaungede mod and chere	Changed both his mood and his expression,
	For aither for other wolde die,	For each was ready to die for the other,
	And he segh so mani a weping eye.	And he saw so many weeping eyes.
	And for he hadde so mochel loved the mai,	And because he had loved the maid so much,
	Weping he turned his heved awai,	He turned his head away in tears
	And his swerd hit fil to grounde;	And his sword fell to the ground.
	He ne mighte hit holde in that stounde.	He could not hold it at that moment.
	Thilke duk that the ring found	The duke who had found the ring
	With th’Ameral spak and round,	Spoke and whispered with the emir,
1150	And ful wel therwith he spedde;	And fared successfully for it,
	The children therwith fram dethe he redde.	For he saved the couple from death.
	“Sire,” he saide, “hit is litel pris	“Sire,” he said, “There is little honor
	Thise children to slen, iwis.	In slaying these children, for sure.
	Hit is the wel more worsschipe	It would be much more commendable
	Florice conseile that thou wite,	For you to know Floris’ confidante,
	Who him taughte thilke gin	Who showed him the trick
	For to come thi tour within,	To come inside your tower,
	And who that him broughte thar,	And who brought him there,
	The bet of other thou might be war.”	So that you might be more aware of others.”
1160	Than saide th’Ameraile to Florice tho:	Then the emir said to Floris,
	“Tel me who thee taughte herto.”	“Tell me who taught you to do this.”
	“That,” quath Florice, “ne schal I nevere do,	“That,” replied Floris, “I will never do,
	But yif hit ben forgiven also	Unless there is also forgiveness
	That the gin me taughte therto;	For him who taught me the trick.
	Arst ne schal hit never bi do.”	Before that it will never be done.”
	Alle thai praied therfore iwis;	All there pleaded for this, for sure;
	The Ameral graunted this.	The emir granted it.
	Nou everi word Florice hath him told,	Then Floris told him every detail,
	Hou the made was fram him sold,	How the maid was sold from him,
1170	And hou he was of Speyne a kyngges sone,	And how he was a prince of the king of Spain,

	For hire love thider icome,	Who had come for her love
	To fonden with som gin	To try with some plan
	That faire maiden for to win.	To win that fair maiden;
	And hou thourgh his gold and his garisoun	And how, through his gold and treasures,
	The porter was his man bicom,	The porter had become his man,
	And hou he was in the coupe ibore;	And how he was carried in the basket.
	And alle this other lowen therfore.	All the others laughed over this.
	Nou the Amerail - wel him mote bitide -	Now the emir – may he fare well –
	Florice he sette next his side,	Set Floris by his side
1180	And made him stonde ther upright,	And made him stand there upright,
	And had idubbed him to knight,	And dubbed him a knight,
	And bad he scholde with him be	And asked if he would stay with him
	With the formast of his mené.	With the leaders of his retinue.
	Florice fallet to his fet,	Floris fell to his feet
	And bit him gif him his lef so swet.	And implored him to give him his love so sweet.
	The Ameral gaf him his lemman;	The emir granted him his beloved.
	Alle the othere him thanked than.	All the others thanked the emir.
	To one chirche he let hem bringge	He had them ushered to a church,
	And wedde here with here owene ringge.	And they were wedded there with their own ring.
1190	Nou bothe this children alle for bliss	Now both of these children, all for bliss,
	Fil the Amerales fot to kis;	Fell at the emir's feet to kiss them.
	And thourgh counseil of Blauncheflour	And through the encouragement of Blancheflour,
	Clarice was fet doun of the tour,	Clarice was fetched down from the tower,
	And the Amerale here wedded to quene.	And the emir wedded her as his queen.[36]
	There was feste swithe breme	There was a feast so sumptuous
	I ne can nowt tellen alle the sonde,	That I cannot describe all the courses,
	Ac the richest feste in londe.	But it was the richest feast in the land.
	Nas hit nowt longe after than	It was not long after then
	That Florice tidingge to cam	That the news came to Floris
1200	That his fader the king was ded.	That his father the king was dead.
	And al the barnage gaf him red	All of the baronage gave him advice
	That he scholde wenden hom	That he should go home
	And underfongen his kyndom.	And take charge of his kingdom.
	At Ameral he nom his leve,	He took his leave of the emir,
	And he him bad with him bileve.	Who asked him to stay with him.
	Thanne bispak the Ameral:	Then the emir said,
	"Yif thou wilt do, Florice, bi mi conseil,	"Floris, if you will follow my advice
	Dwelle here, and wend nowt hom.	And stay here, and not go home,
	Ich wille thee given a kyngdom	I will give you a kingdom
1210	Also longe and also brod,	As long and broad as well
	Als evere yit thi fader bod."	As anything your father offered."
	"I nel bileve for no winne;	"I will not stay for any pleasures.
	To bidde me hit were sinne."	To order me to would be a sin."
	Thai bitaught the Amerail oure Dright,	They commended the emir to our Lord,
	And thai com hom whan thai might,	And they came home at their leisure,
	And let croune him to king,	And Floris was crowned king,
	And hire to quene, that swete thing,	And she as queen, that sweet creature,
	And underfeng Cristendom of prestes honde,	And he received baptism by priests' hands,
	And thonkede God of alle His sonde.	And thanked God for all His works.

[36] In other versions the emir annually executes his wives and the French poet stresses that the emir gives up this practice for Clarice (Taylor, note to 1279). Taylor's lineation differs from that of TEAMS.

1220	Nou ben thai bothe ded; Crist of Hevene houre soules led. Nou is this tale browt to th'ende, Of Florice and of his lemman hende, Hou after bale hem com bote; So wil oure Louerd that ous mote. Amen siggeth also, And ich schal helpe you therto.	Now they are both dead, Their souls led by Christ to Heaven. Now this tale is brought to the end, Of Floris and his fair sweetheart, How after their troubles came relief. So may our Lord do also for us. Say 'Amen' as well, And I will join you in it.
1228	Explicit	The End

Growing Up in *Floris and Blancheflor*

The Middle English *Floris and Blancheflor* tests the argument that medieval romances are worth reading as literary texts. As Gertrude Stein said of Oakland, it has little "there" there. The story lacks any distinct didactic message in religious or courtly values. The characters are not particularly saintly—both histrionically threaten suicide over lost love—and Floris' perfunctory conversion at the close receives one line. The poem has little interest in Saracen-Christian issues, and *heathen* and *pagan* never appear in the text.[1] No character is English, precluding any possible nationalistic agenda. Floris does not engage in any heroic acts of martial prowess. Everyone he meets helps him and his enemies act honorably, even the emir's porter after being tricked.[2] Blancheflor's role is so nominal that she does not suggest any feminine ideal. Despite the exotic locales, the characters and plot border on banal, as neither hero really grows through adversity and no believable conflict or danger ever threatens in this "springtime idyll."[3] In *Guy of Warwick* the hero constantly swoons, but over graver matters and not in the style of Floris' boyish infatuation. Many romances have heroes who are children, but modern editions of *Floris* have been especially styled as sentimental juvenilia.[4]

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[1] Siobhain Bly Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity: The Auchinleck Manuscript* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 129. Floris converts but his prior faith is never specified.

[2] Norris J. Lacy, "The Flowering (And Misreading) of Romance: *Floire et Blancheflor*," *South Central Review* 9:2 (1992): 20. Lacy describes the longer French version and not the English, but the stories are almost corresponding in themes and content.

[3] Geraldine Barnes, "Cunning and Ingenuity in the Middle English *Floris and Blancheflur*," *Medium Aevum* 53 (1984): 10.

[4] For a particularly cloying example see Alice Leighton, *The Sweet and Touching Tale of Fleur & Blanchefleur* (London: D. O'Connor, 1922).

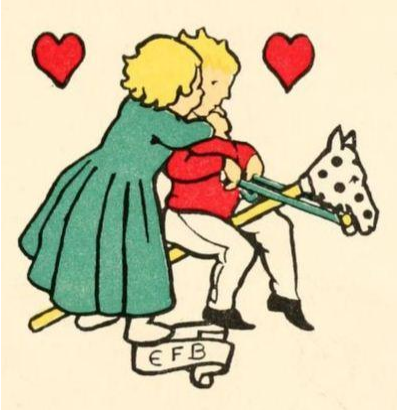

Fig. 1, image from *The Sweet and Touching Tale of Fleur & Blanchefleur*, 1922 (7).

Romance texts often telegraph their endings, but *Floris and Blancheflor* cuts off any possible tension by giving away the denouement at the text's introduction. The poet's design "admits only minor complications, never any serious doubts about the lovers' destiny."[5] Lacy calls the poem a '*roman rose*,' a conflict-less piece of entertainment rather than drama, which conveys "not event but the presentation of event."[6] Yet a narrative with no conflict, suspense, climax, or resolution is not much of a narrative. Unless *Floris and Blancheflor* simply comprises an image poem or dream vision, we are missing something. A reading which may have better utility sees the poem's didactic content as neither religious nor courtly but organically more similar to that of folktale. The poem has several connections to such genres: it has the stock motifs of the fickle step-parent (Felix) and the exotic "wonders of the east" setting; it has an opaque ancestry

[5] Lacy, 21.

[6] Lacy, 22.

in popular legend;[7] and its sentimental story has simple and stereotypical features. I do not intend a psychoanalytical reading of the sort that Bruno Bettelheim did for fairy tales, but the poem might be interpreted as exploring deeper themes of emotional, moral, and sexual development which might have appealed to a younger audience.

Segol suggests that Floris' pursuit of Blancheflor constitutes a "metaphorical pilgrimage"[8] which fulfills the journey of Blancheflor's mother to the shrine of Saint James of Compostela. But the poem lacks any transcendent symbolism in Floris' efforts to reclaim Blancheflor. He simply wants his girl back, and the poem is billed purely as a love story (F6)[9] with few spiritual significations; the children's Palm Sunday / *Pasque-florie* birthdate has little more religious meaning in the story than supplying their matching names. Calling Floris' actions a quest may even be too strong. For much of the poem he acts rather passively, relying on his father's money and the goodwill of others: "their pity achieves for him everything which he is incapable of doing for himself."[10] If Floris' conversion comprises the climactic fulfillment of the pilgrimage, the token report that Floris "underfeng Cristendom of prestes honde" (1218) seems bizarrely understated for the son of a pagan/Muslim warrior.

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[7] The likely French exemplar for the English poem dates to around 1200, and a Spanish analog from the ninth century has been put forth. Loomis lists a number of Arabic and Latinate legends and tales which may have influenced the poem, but none are definitive. Laura A. Hibbard Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1963), 184-94. The identification with Charlemagne is not in most versions and probably has no historical basis. See also Patricia E. Grieve, *Floire and Blancheflor and the European Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[8] Marla Segol, "*Floire and Blancheflor*: Courtly Hagiography or Radical Romance?" *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 23 (2003): 245. Segol also describes the French analog and not the English.

[9] I use *F* to indicate the French lines which replace the lost English beginning to the poem.

[10] Jane Gilbert, "Boys Will Be… What? Gender, Sexuality, and Childhood in *Floire et Blancheflor* and *Floris et Lyriope*." *Exemplaria* 9 (1997): 42. Again, Gilbert discusses the French version.

Yet each host that Floris encounters teaches him something and guides him toward a more mature and self-reliant character. The progress of the stopovers which Floris makes during his search for Blancheflor indicates increasing emotional independence. In his first stay at a lord's house Floris offers a gold cup in thanks for the lady's information on Blancheflor's whereabouts (427-9) but displays no further agency. The next day Floris's world grows to include Babylon, where he shows more assertiveness in communicating his wishes to the palace lord, first through gnomic statements about recovering "mi marchaundise" (484) and then by stating outright his intention to overcome the emir "with sum ginne" (523). His subsequent lodging with Dary results in concrete action as Floris now needs to operate alone without any paternal direction to navigate the hostile world of the emir's palace. As Floris nears Blancheflor, his horizons have geographically and psychologically expanded into greater empowerment. However automatic they are, the risks which Floris overcomes progressively swell. Floris' hosts can conceivably inform on him, and the porter can "bothe bete and reve" (638) him if his nerve fails.

Floris' alliance with Dary also demonstrates an emerging cognitive maturity, for Floris now plans out careful subterfuge to rescue Blancheflor to compensate for the military prowess he lacks. Barnes reads the poem as a series of dupings and tricks reminiscent of Greek New Comedy,[11] and Floris progresses from being a naïve victim of such ruses to having the ability to perform them and understand their psychology. Upon reaching the emir's palace, Floris manipulates the porter like another one of his chess

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[11] Geraldine Barnes, "Cunning and Ingenuity in the Middle English *Floris and Blancheflur*," *Medium Aevum* 53 (1984): 10-25.

pieces into his service. Each one of these encounters involves larger scope for intelligent action. Floris' reunion with Blancheflor in the harem rooms seems somewhat of a regression to childishness, and Floris must be carried into the tower passively as one more flower in a basket. The comic scene where Floris is deposited in the wrong room allows him to lament that his life is worth "nowt a bene" (819), but the audience knows this "stylistic detour"[12] will not prevent the preordained happy ending. It functions more as a minor backfire of the porter and Floris' ploy and leads to another entertaining trick in Clarice's quick thinking.

Yet Floris' act requires an increasingly nuanced moral awareness, as he now must incriminate and endanger Blancheflor in his artifice. The emir orders both beheaded and not the intruder alone. While the poet does overdo the pathos, the French is even more maudlin, whereas the English version has the court motivated by concern about how Floris entered.[13] Subsequently, Floris accepts full responsibility for his actions. He pleads to the emir to "lat aquelle me / and lat that maiden alive be" ("have me killed and let the maiden go alive," (1120-1). Romance conventionally presumes that its ethics are "so compelling that anyone who confronts the court inevitably becomes a part of it,"[14] and the emir partly melts because *amor vincit omnia*. But he chiefly relents after seeing that each will die for the other (1142). The emir may gauge that killing Blancheflor has the appearance of a jealousy undignified to his position but may also be impressed by Floris'

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[12] Peter Haidu, "Narrativity and Language in Some XIIth Century Romances," *Yale French Studies* 51 (1974): 145. Haidu also discusses the French version.

[13] Barnes, 20.

[14] Matthew Boyd Goldie, *Middle English Literature: A Historical Sourcebook* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 20.

audacity and moral precocity, as his readiness to undergo death for his actions gives him a depth beyond his years.

Roger Ascham complained that reading romances led to "baudrye,"[15] but the English texts seldom depict any real smut, despite the desires of modern critics to make romance seem more 'dangerous.' Much of *Floris and Blancheflor* feels especially puerile, and the pregnancy of the mothers supplies the only evidence of sex in the first half. The heroes have mirroring names and similar features, suggesting to a medieval audience that they are soulmates.[16] But their babyish courtship goes no further than reading stories of Ovid's lovers together, and only in the French;[17] the English merely has them learning Latin together (33), hardly an activity evincing romantic passion. Floris' later whine to his father that "ne can y noght to scole goon / without Blauncheflour" (19-20) has more the tone of a child pleading for his playmate than *eros*. Gilbert argues that effeminacy is "a common characteristic of boyhood in medieval literature,"[18] perhaps to accentuate the hero's later masculinity. In this poem the two children are barely differentiated by gender and do everything together but their nursing (F188).

Yet Floris undergoes a certain sexual maturing through the text. The first lord's wife notes that Floris is identical to Blancheflor, except that "thou art a man and she is a maide" (421). The next lord in Babylon states only a similarity in their emotions (488),

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[15] *Toxophilus* (1545), in *English Works*, ed. W.A. Wright (Cambridge, 1904), xiv, quoted in Nicola McDonald, *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England* (Manchester: University Press, 2004), 3.

[16] Gilbert, 44-5. In her note Gilbert lists other tales of identical and thus predestined pairs, such as *Piramus et Tisbé*, Chretien de Troyes's *Erec et Enide*, and *Amis and Amiloun*, albeit homosocially.

[17] Segol, 252.

[18] Gilbert, 43.

and no further comparisons occur as Floris' mentors switch from exclusively females to males. Clarice invites Blancheflor to "sen a ful fair flour" (843), but means a joke on the flower basket rather than on Floris's masculinity; the audience understands the irony of Floris/flower, but Clarice does not yet know his name. In the bedroom discovery scene the French manuscript has a moment of humor where the emir's chamberlain thinks that Floris *is* Clarice,[19] but the English has the emir throw down the covers and see "wel sone anon / that on was a man, that other a womman" (994-5). At least physically, the two children have become differentiated in gender.

Are Floris and Blancheflor having sex? I do not want to commit the same offense I criticized by torturing the text for dirty meanings it does not have. Yet no one in the story claims that Blancheflor has remained a virgin. The narrator states that "bigan thai to clippe and kisse / and made joie and mochele blisse" (896-7) in a private bed. In the mornings Floris "here klippe bigan" ("pulled her close," 957), and the chamberlain finds them "neb to neb, an mouth to mouth" ("body to body, and mouth to mouth," 982). After all this the narrator nowhere reassures the reader that the two were only practicing their Latin declensions, in comparison to the *Bevis of Hampton* poet's protest that "he dede nothing boute ones hire kiste!" (1213). The term *maiden* can simply refer to an unmarried woman in Middle English without reference to sexual experience. Neither Floris nor Blancheflor tries to protest innocence to the emir or to his barons, as presumably Blancheflor's lost virginity can be physically verified. Although Floris' journey has not

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[19] A.B. Taylor, *Floris and Blancheflor: A Middle English Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 21. See line 2889-90, "ge vos plevis / qu'eles dorment lui et Claris"—"I swear to you that they are sleeping, her and Claris." Reference from Édélestand Du Méril, ed., *Floire et Blanceflor, Poèmes du 13è Siècle* (Paris: 1856).

realistically been a long one in time passed, he has progressed towards a growing sexual maturity, or at least the awareness of such dynamics.

Psychological readings can be dangerous, but the poem's background characters suggest additional sexual meanings. Gilbert suggests that the story is about Floris' attempts to be taken seriously as an adult with sexual agency,[20] and such a poem might have appealed to gentle sons and daughters who historically did not usually marry as they wished.[21] Floris' precocious sexuality threatens parental authority, and Felix's primal male anger in attempting to eliminate Blancheflor perhaps enacts a denial of Floris' sexual autonomy, as the queen must consistently come to the pair's defense. Much as Felix earlier adds the Christian slave to his proto-harem, the emir possesses an outright sexual monopoly on his women. Segol calls the emir's garden a corrupted version of the heavenly paradise, but beyond its religious symbolism the garden is also "centered on male desire, erected around a giant phallus of a tower, imprisoning young and desirable women within it."[22] The garden is only paradise for him. Floris carries a cup depicting Helen being led away by Paris, and Blancheflor's sexual favors are similarly a zero-sum game. Either the emir will enjoy them or Floris will. Floris thwarts the intentions of both dominant males to deny adult sexual activity to him, and upon abandoning his claims the emir's sword falls to the ground impotently (1146).

Kelly argues that *Floris and Blancheflor* is a much darker text than the usual "charming," "sentimental," and "exotic far-east" adjectives applied to the poem mean,

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[20] Gilbert, 45.

[21] Taylor, 11.

[22] Segol, 256.

pointing out Blancheflor's reality as a powerless slave born to a mother taken in violence. Like Helen and the cup, she is a commodified and voiceless object of trade.[23] Yet the story seems too thin and naïve to support such grave themes. The fanciful plot and the lack of real suffering or loss rules out any such serious gloom, and Blancheflor functions more like a placeholder than a living character. She receives almost no lines, functioning more for Floris' purposes than her own. The poet interestingly lavishes a great deal of description on such physical props of the story as the tomb, the cup, and the palace, cultivating "an 'illusion of reality' only in regard to art objects created by the unlifelike characters."[24] Lacy suggests that the text emphasizes its fictionality in order to fully enable its playful stratagems and humor, noting that the narrator takes several lines to state how he heard it from two sisters who heard it from a cleric. The poet does not use present-tense interjections ("Damn him who cares!") or present the story as true history. The poem comprises "a literary work in the purest sense."[25]

Few romances attempt hyper-realism, but if the *Floris and Blancheflor* narrator appears especially bent on stressing the fictiveness of his story, its purposes—if any exist outside simple amusement—likely lie outside creating a sustained depicted world. At the narrative level, Floris wins back Blancheflor, and the poem's ending is hasty and automatic as the two are "hastily bundled into the structures of normative adult life—knighthood, marriage, inheritance, and Christianity."[26] At a richer symbolic level, *Floris*

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[23] Kathleen Coyne Kelly, "The Bartering of Blauncheflur in the Middle English *Floris and Blauncheflur*," *Studies in Philology* 91:2 (1994): 106.

[24] Lacy, 22.

[25] Lacy, 25.

[26] Gilbert, 48.

and Blancheflor plays out a boy's progression toward manhood as Floris learns, in idea-time if not realistic time, to take responsibility for himself in order to obtain love and an adult identity. In the medieval era the boundaries between childhood and adulthood were less marked, making the romance child more like "un petit homme."[27] The teenager as a developmental stage would not arrive until the twentieth century. A very wide audience might have seen their ideal selves reflected in Floris' passage into noble *amor* and kingship but also mature self-actualization. Although not a typical romance in its lack of monsters, armor, and battles, at the poem's close Floris does achieve, with the blessings of church and court, "a Lady and a fief."[28]

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[27] Philippe Ariès, *L'enfant et Lavie Familiale Sous L'ancien Regime* (Paris: Plon, 1960) 24, quoted in Gilbert, 39.

[28] Haidu, 134.

CHAPTER 5

Gamelyn

Gamleyn survives only in manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* in the *c* and *d* families, but twenty-five copies exist. I take as my text source Stephen Knight and Thomas H. Ohlgren, eds. *The Tale of Gamelyn*. *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales.* Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997. http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/gamelyn.htm. Other editions include Walter William Skeat, ed., *The Tale of Gamelyn* (1884) and Walter Hoyt French & Charles Brockway Hale, eds., *Middle English Metrical Romances* (1930). Skeat and French & Hale used as their base text MS Harley 7334 (c. 1410), whereas recent scholarship favors MS Petworth (c. 1420), the base text of the TEAMS edition.

	Fitt 1	Chapter 1
1	Lithes and listneth and harkeneth aright,	Pay attention, hear me, and listen closely,
	And ye shul here of a doughty knyght;	And you will hear about a sturdy knight.
	Sire John of Boundes was his name,	His name was Sir John of Boundes,[1]
	He coude of norture and of mochel game.	And he knew much about refinement and leisure.
	Thre sones the knyght had and with his body he wan,	The knight had three sons and fathered them all.
	The eldest was a moche schrewe and sone bygan.	The eldest was a wicked rogue and soon showed it;
	His brether loved wel her fader and of hym were agast,	His brothers loved their father well and were appalled by him.
	The eldest deserved his faders curs and had it atte last.	The eldest deserved his father's curse and ultimately had it.
	The good knight his fadere lyved so yore,	His father, the good knight, lived long,
10	That deth was comen hym to and handled hym ful sore.	Until death neared and tormented him sorely.
	The good knyght cared sore sik ther he lay,	The good knight worried himself sick where he lay
	How his children shuld lyven after his day.	About how his children would fare after his day.
	He had bene wide where but non husbonde he was,	He had traveled far and wide but was no farmer;
	Al the londe that he had it was purchas.	All the land he held was purchased.[2]
	Fayn he wold it were dressed amonge hem alle,	He was anxious to have it divided among them
	That eche of hem had his parte as it myght falle.	So that each would have his part as it might fall.
	Thoo sente he in to contrey after wise knyghtes	He sent out to the countryside for wise knights
	To helpen delen his londes and dressen hem to-rightes.	To help portion out his lands and divide them justly.
	He sent hem word by letters thei shul hie blyve,	He sent them word by letter that they should come quickly
20	If thei wolle speke with hym whilst he was alyve.	If they wanted to speak with him while he was alive.
	Whan the knyghtes harden sik that he lay,	When the knights heard that he lay sick,
	Had thei no rest neither nyght ne day,	They did not rest by night or day
	Til thei come to hym ther he lay stille	Until they had come to where he lay still
	On his dethes bedde to abide goddys wille.	On his death's bed to abide God's will.
	Than seide the good knyght seke ther he lay,	Then the good knight, as he lay sick, said:
	"Lordes, I you warne for soth, without nay,	"Lordings, I tell you in truth, with no denial,

[1] *Boundes*: This likely means no more than the 'boundaries' of some border, although Skeat asserts that the word is straight from Old French *bonne*, limit. The setting of the story is not specified, although there is a Gamlingay near Cambridge. Walter W. Skeat, *The Tale of Gamelyn* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884), viii, ix. The pejorative term 'bounder,' referring to an ill-bred opportunist such as Dickens' Josiah Bounderby, is Victorian.

[2] Sir John's land was bought *fee simple* as a freehold and thus he is entitled to distribute it as he wishes. Although his executors insist on awarding it to the eldest son under the contemporary practice of primogeniture, John's countermand has legal validity. See Edgar F. Shannon Jr., "Mediaeval Law in the *Tale of Gamelyn*," *Speculum* 26:3 (1951): 458-9.

	I may no lenger lyven here in this stounde;	I may no longer live here in this place.
	For thorgh goddis wille deth droueth me to grounde.”	For through God’s will, death draws me to the earth.”
	Ther nas noon of hem alle that herd hym aright,	There were none of them who heard him
30	That thei ne had routh of that ilk knyght,	Who did not have pity for that knight.
	And seide, “Sir, for goddes love dismay you nought;	They said, “Sir, for God’s love, do not despair.
	God may don boote of bale that is now ywrought.”	God may bring good out of ill fortune that has befallen.”
	Than speke the good knyght sik ther he lay,	The good knight, sick where he lay, replied:
	“Boote of bale God may sende I wote it is no nay;	“God may bring good from adversity; I know it can’t be denied.
	But I beseche you knyghtes for the love of me,	But I beg of you knights, for the sake of my love,
	Goth and dresseth my londes amonge my sones thre.	To go and divide my lands among my three sons.
	And for the love of God deleth not amyss,	And for the love of God do not deal wrongly,
	And forgeteth not Gamelyne my yonge sone that is.	And do not overlook Gamelyn, who is my young son.[3]
	Taketh hede to that oon as wel as to that other;	Take heed of that one as well as the others.
40	Seelde ye seen eny hier helpen his brother.”	You seldom see any heir help his own brother.”[4]
	Thoo lete thei the knyght lyen that was not in hele,	They left the knight lying there in his poor health,
	And wenten into counselle his londes for to dele;	And went into counsel to deal out his lands.
	For to delen hem alle to on that was her thought.	Their intentions were to deal them all to one,
	And for Gamelyn was yongest he shuld have nought.	And for Gamelyn, the youngest, to have nothing.
	All the londe that ther was thei dalten it in two,	They parceled out in two all the land that was there
	And lete Gamelyne the yonge without londe goo,	And let young Gamelyn go without land,
	And eche of hem seide to other ful loude,	And each of them said to the other plainly
	His bretheren myght yeve him londe whan he good cowde.	That his brothers might give him land when they were best able.
	And whan thei had deled the londe at her wille,	And when they had dealt out the land by their will,
50	They commen to the knyght ther he lay stille,	They returned to the knight where he lay still
	And tolde him anoon how thei had wrought;	And immediately told him what they had done.
	And the knight ther he lay liked it right nought.	The knight, where he lay, was not pleased at all.
	Than seide the knyght, “Be Seint Martyne,	The knight cried, “By Saint Martin,[5]
	For al that ye han done yit is the londe myne;	For all that you have done, it is still my land!
	For Goddis love, neighbours stondeth alle stille,	For God’s love, neighbors, stop all actions,

[3] Gamelyn is young at the story’s beginning, as he spends sixteen years under his brother (356). He was evidently born when Sir John was older. Skeat etymologizes the name as *gamel-ing*, “son of the old man” (viii).

[4] Proverbial. Compare the Old French proverb “A landmark is well-placed between the lands of two brothers.”

[5] St. Martin divided his cloak between himself and a beggar. See note for *Amis and Amiloun*, 2014.

	And I wil delen my londe after myn owne wille.	And I will deal out my land according to my own will.
	John, myne eldest sone shal have plowes fyve,	John, my eldest son, will have five plows.[6]
	That was my faders heritage whan he was alyve;	That was my father's heritage when he was alive.
	And my myddelest sone fyve plowes of londe,	And my middle son five plows of land
60	That I halpe forto gete with my right honde;	Which I helped to get with my right hand.
	And al myn other purchace of londes and ledes	And all my other holdings of lands and tenants
	That I biquethe Gamelyne and alle my good stedes.	I bequeath to Gamelyn with all my good horses.
	And I biseche you, good men that lawe conne of londe,	And I beseech you, good men who know the laws of the land,
	For Gamelynes love that my quest stonde."	That my will should stand for love of Gamelyn."
	Thus dalt the knyght his londe by his day,	Thus did the knight divide his land in his day,
	Right on his deth bed sik ther he lay;	Right on his deathbed where he lay sick.
	And sone afterward he lay stoon stille,	And soon afterward he lay as still as a stone
	And deide whan tyme come as it was Cristes wille.	And died when the time came, as it was Christ's will.
	Anoon as he was dede and under gras grave,	As soon as he was dead and under the grave's grass,
70	Sone the elder brother giled the yonge knave;	The elder brother swindled the young boy.
	He toke into his honde his londe and his lede,	He took in hand Gamelyn's land and tenants,
	And Gamelyne him selven to clothe and to fede.	And Gamelyn himself to clothe and feed.
	He clothed him and fedde him evell and eke wroth,	He clothed and fed him poorly and grudgingly,
	And lete his londes forfare and his houses bothe,	And let his lands and houses go to ruin,
	His parkes and his wodes and did no thing welle;	Along with his parks and woods, and did nothing well.
	And sithen he it abought on his owne felle.	Later he would pay for it with his own hide.
	So longe was Gamelyne in his brothers halle,	Gamelyn was in his brother's hall so long that
	For the strengest, of good will they douted hym alle;	Even the strongest were attentively cautious of him.[7]
	Ther was noon therinne neither yonge ne olde,	There was no one in there, young or old,
80	That wolde wroth Gamelyne were he never so bolde.	Who would anger Gamelyn, however bold he was.
	Gamelyne stood on a day in his brotheres yerde,	Gamelyn stood one day in his brother's yard
	And byganne with his hond to handel his berde;	And began to stroke his beard with his hand.
	He thought on his landes that lay unsowe,	He thought about his lands that lay fallow
	And his fare okes that doune were ydrawe;	And his fair oaks that were cut down.
	His parkes were broken and his deer reved;	His parks were broken into and his deer stolen.

[6] *Plowes fyve*: A plow was a legal unit of land in the Danelaw, and was said to be the amount of land a team of oxen could cultivate in a year. About 120 acres, it was similar to the English hide or carucate.

[7] *Of good will*: Not the modern sense of goodwill or fair play, but 'of their own accord,' i.e. with strong feeling or resolution. Skeat gives an example from the romance *Octovian Imperator* where sailors unsurprisingly run from a lioness "with good wylle" (37).

	Of alle his good stedes noon was hym byleved;	Out of all his fine horses, none were left for him.
	His hous were unhilled and ful evell dight;	His house was unroofed and in disrepair.
	Tho thought Gamelyne it went not aright.	Gamelyn resolved then that it was not right.
	Afterward come his brother walking thare,	Afterward his brother came walking there,
90	And seide to Gamelyne, "Is our mete yare?"	And said to Gamelyn, "Is supper ready?"
	Tho wrathed him Gamelyne and swore by Goddys boke,	This infuriated Gamelyn, who swore by the Bible,
	"Thow schalt go bake thi self I wil not be thi coke!"	"You can bake it yourself! I won't be your cook!"[8]
	"What? brother Gamelyne howe answerst thou nowe?	"What? Brother Gamelyn, what did you say to me?
	Thou spekest nevere such a worde as thou dost nowe."	You never spoke such words as you do now."
	"By feithe," seide Gamelyne "now me thenketh nede;	"In faith," said Gamelyn, "it now seems justified!
	Of al the harmes that I have I toke never yit hede.	Of all the injuries to me, I never took offense yet.
	My parkes bene broken and my dere reved,	My parks have been broken into and my deer stolen.
	Of myn armes ne my stedes nought is byleved;	Nothing is left of my arms and my horses.
	Alle that my fader me byquathe al goth to shame,	All that my father left to me has gone to shame.
100	And therfor have thou Goddes curs brother be thi name!"	And so may your name be cursed by God for it!"
	Than spake his brother that rape was and rees,	His brother, who was quick to anger, spoke:
	"Stond stille, gadlynge and holde thi pees;	"Stand still, you little beggar, and shut your mouth!
	Thou shalt be fayn to have thi mete and thi wede;	You'll be content to have your food and clothes.
	What spekest thow, gadelinge of londe or of lede?"	What can you tell me, you bastard, about land or tenants?"
	Than seide Gamelyne the child so yinge,	Then Gamelyn, the child so young, answered:
	"Cristes curs mote he have that me clepeth gadelinge!	"Christ's curse on him who calls me 'bastard'!
	I am no wors gadeling ne no wors wight,	I am no low beggar nor a common criminal,
	But born of a lady and gete of a knyght."	But born of a lady and fathered by a knight."
	Ne dorst he not to Gamelyn never a foot goo,	His brother did not dare step a foot toward Gamelyn,
110	But cleped to hym his men and seide to hem thoo,	But called to his men and then said to them,
	"Goth and beteth this boye and reveth hym his witte,	"Go and beat this boy out of his wits,
	And lat him lerne another tyme to answere me bette."	And teach him to answer me better next time."
	Than seide the childe yonge Gamelyne,	Then the young man Gamelyn said,
	"Cristes curs mote thou have brother art thou myne!	"Christ's curse on you, brother of mine!
	And if I shal algates be beten anoon,	And if I must be beaten today anyway,

[8] This Cinderella-type order to "get busy with those pots and pans" is answered with common address (*thou*) rather than polite address (*you*), a clear act of defiance on Gamelyn's part to his elder brother (TEAMS). Skeat notes that John evidently uses the royal *we* (*is our mete yare*?) in the previous line (37). In Thomas Lodge's *Euphues' Golden Legacy* (1592), which Skeat claims is partly based on *Gamelyn*, the villain here uses the condescending title *sirha*, sirrah (Skeat, xviii).

	Cristes curs mote thou have but thou be that oon!”	To Hell with you unless you are the one to do it!”[9]
	And anon his brother in that grete hete	Straightaway his brother, in his hot fury,
	Made his men to fette staves Gamelyn to bete.	Made his men fetch staves to beat Gamelyn.
	Whan every of hem had a staf ynomen,	When every one of them had taken a staff,
120	Gamelyn was werre whan he segh hem comen;	Gamelyn was aware when he saw them coming.
	Whan Gamelyne segh hem comen he loked overall,	When Gamelyn saw them nearing, he looked around
	And was ware of a pestel stode under the wall;	And noticed a large pestle under the wall.[10]
	Gamelyn was light and thider gan he lepe,	Gamelyn was light and leapt toward it,
	And droof alle his brotheres men right sone on an hepe	And very soon drove all his brother’s men onto a pile
	And loked as a wilde lyon and leide on good wone;	And looked as a wild lion as he laid into a good number.
	And whan his brother segh that he byganne to gon;	And when his brother saw that he began to run.
	He fley up into a loft and shette the door fast;	He flew up into a loft and shut the door fast.
	Thus Gamelyn with his pestel made hem al agast.	Thus Gamelyn terrified them all with his club.
	Some for Gamelyns love and some for eye,	Some loved Gamelyn and some feared him,
130	Alle they droughen hem to halves whan he gan to pleye.	And all of them took sides when he began to fight.
	“What now!” seyde Gamelyne “evel mot ye the!	“What now?” said Gamelyn. “Foul fortune to you![11]
	Wil ye bygynne contecte and so sone flee?”	Will you confront me and so soon run away?”
	Gamelyn sought his brother whider he was flowe,	Gamelyn looked to find where his brother had flown
	And seghe where he loked out a wyndowe.	And saw where he peeped out a window.
	“Brother,” sayde Gamelyne “com a litel nere,	“Brother,” said Gamelyn, “come a little nearer,
	And I wil teche thee a play at the bokelere.”	And I will teach you a lesson with my shield.”[12]
	His brother him answerde and seide by Seint Richere,	His brother answered and said, “By Saint Richard,[13]
	“The while that pestel is in thine honde I wil come no nere;	While that club is in your hand I will come no closer.
	Brother, I will make thi pees I swer by Cristes oore;	Brother, I swear by Christ’s grace I will make peace with you.
140	Cast away the pestel and wrethe the no more.”	Cast away the pestle and trouble yourself no more.”
	“I most nede,” seide Gamelyn, “wreth me at onys,	“I am justified in being angry now,” said Gamelyn,

[9] *But thou be that oon*: Interpreters disagree on this line. Gamelyn may also be saying “Christ’s curse on you unless you are the one beaten.”

[10] *Pestel*: In a kitchen, a grinding bat could be an imposing tool (TEAMS). Havelock also uses a kitchen weapon, in his case a door-beam (1794).

[11] *Evel mot ye the*: “May you thrive evilly.” This expletive, or variations, is common in ME but lacks bite in translation. Compare PDE “to hell with you.”

[12] *Bokelere*: A buckler was a small, round shield for hand-to-hand combat. As with his puns about beating priests later (512), Gamelyn is making a grim joke about playing martial sports with his pestel.

[13] *Seint Richere*: Probably St. Richard of Chichester, 1197-1253, revered for brotherly love.

	For thou wold make thi men to breke my bonys,	"For you would have had your men break my bones.
	Ne had I hadde mayn and myght in myn armes,	If I did not have power and strength in my arms
	To han hem fro me thei wold have done me harmes."	To keep them away, they would have done me harm."
	"Gamelyn," seide his brother, "be thou not wroth,	"Gamelyn," replied his brother, "don't be upset,
	For to sene the han harme me were right loth;	For it would be hateful for me to see you hurt.
	I ne did it not, brother, but for a fondinge,	I did not mean it, brother, as more than a test,
	For to loken wher thou art stronge and art so yenge."	To find out if you are strong while still so young."
	"Come adoune than to me and graunt me my bone	"Come down to me, then, and grant my wish.
150	Of oon thing I wil the axe and we shal saught sone."	I will ask one thing of you and we will be reconciled."
	Doune than come his brother that fikel was and felle,	Down came his brother, who was fickle and cruel,
	And was swith sore afeerd of the pestelle.	And sorely afraid of the club.
	He seide, "Brother Gamelyn axe me thi bone,	He said, "Brother Gamelyn, ask me your request,
	And loke thou me blame but I it graunte sone."	And see that you blame me if I do not grant it soon."
	Than seide Gamelyn "Brother, iwys,	Then Gamelyn said, "Brother, indeed,
	And we shul be at one thou most graunte me this:	For us to be at one you must grant me this:
	Alle that my fader me byquath whilst he was alyve,	You must turn over to me, if we are not to quarrel,
	Thow most do me it have if we shul not strive."	All that my father left to me while he was alive."
	"That shalt thou have, Gamelyn I swere be Cristes oore!	"You will have it, Gamelyn, I swear by God's mercy!
160	Al that thi fadere the byquathe, though thou wolde have more;	All that your father bequeathed you, even more if you wanted.
	Thy londe that lith ley wel it shal be sawe,	Your land that lies untilled will be sown,
	And thine houses reised up that bene leide ful lawe."	And your houses that lie fallen will be raised up."
	Thus seide the knyght to Gamelyn with mouthe,	The knight said these things to Gamelyn with his mouth,
	And thought on falsnes as he wel couthe.	But thought of treachery, which his mind knew well.
	The knyght thought on tresoun and Gamelyn on noon,	The knight planned treason though Gamelyn intended none,
	And wente and kissed his brother and whan thei were at oon	And he went and kissed his brother when they were reconciled.
	Alas, yonge Gamelyne no thinge he ne wist	Alas, young Gamelyn suspected nothing
	With such false tresoun his brother him kist!	When his brother kissed him with such false deceit.
	Fitt 2	**Part 2**
	Lytheneth, and listeneth, and holdeth your tonge,	Pay attention, and listen, and hold your tongue,
170	And ye shul here talking of Gamelyn the yonge.	And you will hear a story about Gamelyn the young.

	Ther was there bisiden cride a wrastelinge,	A wrestling match was announced nearby,
	And therfore ther was sette a ramme and a ringe;	And a ram and a ring were set for it.[14]
	And Gamelyn was in wille to wende therto,	Gamelyn wanted to go there
	Forto preven his myght what he coude doo.	To prove his prowess of what he could do.
	"Brothere," seide Gamelyn, "by Seint Richere,	"Brother," said Gamelyn, "by Saint Richard,
	Thow most lene me tonyght a litel coursere	Tonight you must lend me a fast horse
	That is fresshe for the spore on forto ride;	That is keen to ride under the spur.
	I moste on an erande a litel here beside."	I must go on an errand for a little while near here."
	"By god!" seide his brothere "of stedes in my stalle	"By God," said his brother, "from the steeds in my stall,
180	Goo and chese the the best spare noon of hem alle	Go and choose the best; spare none of them
	Of stedes and of coursers that stoden hem byside;	Out of the coursers and horses that stand by.[15]
	And telle me, good brother, whider thou wilt ride."	And tell me, good brother, where will you ride?"
	"Here beside, brother is cried a wrastelinge,	"A wrestling match has been called nearby,
	And therfore shal be sette a ram and a ringe;	And a ram and a ring have been set as prizes.
	Moche worschip it were brother to us alle,	It would bring great honor to us all, brother,
	Might I the ram and the ringe bringe home to this halle."	If I brought the ram and ring home to this hall."
	A stede ther was sadeled smertly and skete;	A steed was saddled handsomely and quickly.
	Gamelyn did a peire spores fast on his fete.	Gamelyn put a pair of spurs tightly on his feet.
	He sette his foote in the stirop the stede he bistrode,	He set his foot in the stirrup and mounted the horse,
190	And towardes the wrastelinge the yonge childe rode.	And the youngster rode toward the wrestling match.
	Whan Gamelyn the yonge was riden out atte gate,	When Gamelyn the youth had ridden past the gate,
	The fals knyght his brother loked yit after thate,	His brother the false knight continued to stare out at it
	And bysought Jesu Crist that is hevene kinge,	And implored Jesus Christ, who is Heaven's king,
	He myghte breke his necke in the wrestelinge.	That he might break his neck in the wrestling.
	As sone as Gamelyn come ther the place was,	As soon as Gamelyn arrived where the match was,
	He lighte doune of his stede and stood on the gras,	He dismounted his horse and stood on the grass.
	And ther he herde a frankeleyn "weiloway" singe,	And there he heard a landowner wail "Woe is me!"[16]

[14] Wrestling matches were a popular pastime in the countryside enjoyed by peasant and nobility, and a ram and ring would have been standard prizes. Chaucer's Miller "wolde have alwey the ram" (I.548). Some scholars claim that actually participating would have been undignified for the genteel, making Sir Thopas' unlikely plaudit that "of wrastlyng was ther noon his peer" (VII.740) additionally humorous.

[15] *Coursers*: coursers were very fast and light horses often used in battle.

[16] *Frankeleyn*: A franklin was a rural freeman who owned his own land but was not noble. Together with the urban merchant bourgeoisie they formed a nascent middle class, and thus the proverbial hard-working yeoman.

	And bygonne bitterly his hondes forto wringe.	As he started to bitterly wring his hands.
	"Good man," seide Gamelyn, "whi mast thou this fare?	"Good man," said Gamelyn, "why are you making this fuss?
200	Is ther no man that may you helpen out of care?"	Is there no man who can help you out of your troubles?"
	"Allas!" seide this frankeleyn, "that ever was I bore!	"Alas," said the franklin, "that I was ever born!
	For twey stalworth sones I wene that I have lore;	For I believe that I have lost two sturdy sons.
	A champion is in the place that hath wrought me sorowe,	There is a champion here who has brought me sorrow,
	For he hath sclayn my two sones but if God hem borowe.	For he will slay my two sons unless God will rescue them.
	I will yeve ten pound by Jesu Christ! and more,	I would give ten pounds, by Jesus Christ, and more[17]
	With the nones I fonde a man wolde handel hym sore."	On the spot if I found a man who would handle him roughly."
	"Good man," seide Gamelyn, "wilt thou wele doon,	"Good man," said Gamelyn, "if you will be so kind,
	Holde my hors the whiles my man drowe of my shoon,	Hold my horse while my man takes off my shoes,
	And helpe my man to kepe my clothes and my stede,	And help my man to keep my clothes and steed,
210	And I wil to place gon to loke if I may spede."	And I will go there to see if I might be successful!"
	"By God!" seide the frankleyn, "it shal be doon;	"By God," said the franklin, "It will be done!
	I wil myself be thi man to drowe of thi shoon,	I will myself be the man to take off your shoes
	And wende thou into place, Jesu Crist the spede,	And lead you to the place, Jesus Christ help you,
	And drede not of thi clothes ne of thi good stede."	And don't worry about your clothes or your fine steed!"
	Barefoot and ungirt Gamelyn inne came,	Gamelyn came in barefoot and unarmed.
	Alle that were in the place hede of him nam,	All that were in the place took notice of him,
	Howe he durst aventure him to doon his myght	How he dared to risk himself to show his might,
	That was so doghty a champion in wrasteling and in fight.	Against so rugged a champion in wrestling and in fighting.
	Up stert the championn rapely anon,	At once the champion started up in haste
220	And toward yonge Gamelyn byganne to gon,	And came toward young Gamelyn,
	And seide, "Who is thi fadere and who is thi sire?	And said, "Who is your father and who is your lord?
	For sothe thou art a grete fool that thou come hire!"	For certainly, you are a great fool to come here!"
	Gamelyn answerde the championn tho,	Gamelyn answered the challenger,
	"Thowe knewe wel my fadere while he myght goo,	"You knew my father well while he was still about,
	The whiles he was alyve, by seynt Martyn!	While he was alive, by Saint Martin!
	Sir John of Boundes was his name, and I am Gamelyne."	Sir John of Boundes was his name, and I am Gamelyn."
	"Felawe," sayde the champion, "so mot I thrive,	"Fellow," said the champion, "as I live and breathe,
	I knewe wel thi fadere the whiles he was alyve;	I knew your father well while he was alive!
	And thi silf, Gamelyn, I wil that thou it here,	And as for you, Gamelyn, I'd like you to hear it;
230	While thou were a yonge boy a moche shrewe thou were."	When you were a young boy you were a little rogue."

[17] *Ten pound*: About US$5500 in modern money, a large sum for the non-aristocratic franklin (UK National Archives).

	Than seide Gamelyn and swore by Cristes ore,	Then Gamelyn said, and swore by Christ's grace,
	"Now I am older wexe thou shalt finde me a more!"	"Now that I have grown older you will find me a bigger one."
	"By God!" seide the champion "welcome mote thou be!	"By God," said the champion, "you're welcome to try.
	Come thow onys in myn honde thou shalt nevere the."	Fall into my hands once and you will never last."
	It was wel within the nyght and the mone shone,	It was well into the night and the moon shone
	Whan Gamelyn and the championn togider gon gone.	When Gamelyn and the champion fell together.
	The champion cast turnes to Gamelyne that was prest,	The fighter tried feints on Gamelyn, who was ready,
	And Gamelyn stode and bad hym doon his best.	And Gamelyn stood and told him to give it his best.
	Than seide Gamelyn to the championn,	Then Gamelyn said to the champion,
240	"Thowe art fast aboute to bringe me adoun;	"You are eager to bring me down.
	Now I have proved mony tornes of thine,	Now that I've withstood many of your turns,
	Thow most," he seide, "oon or two of myne."	You must," he concluded, "stand one or two of mine!"
	Gamelyn to the championn yede smertely anoon,	At once Gamelyn rushed smartly up to the champion.
	Of all the turnes that he couthe he shewed him but oon,	Of all the plays he knew, he showed him only one
	And cast him on the lift side that thre ribbes to-brake,	And threw him on his left side so that three ribs broke,
	And therto his owne arme that yaf a grete crake.	And his arm gave out a great crack.
	Than seide Gamelyn smertly anon,	Straightaway, Gamelyn jibed sharply,
	"Shal it bi hold for a cast or ellis for non?"	"Shall it be counted as a throw, or else for nothing?"
	"By God!" seide the champion, "whedere it be,	"By God!" said the champion. "Whoever it is,
250	He that cometh ones in thi honde shal he never the!"	He who falls once into your hands will never last!"
	Than seide the frankeleyn that had the sones there,	Then the franklin, who had his sons there, said
	"Blessed be thou, Gamelyn, that ever thou bore were!"	"Blessed be you, Gamelyn, that you were ever born!"
	The frankleyn seide to the championn on hym stode hym noon eye,	The franklin said to the champion, no longer with fear,[18]
	"This is yonge Gamelyne that taught the this pleye."	"This is young Gamelyn who taught you these moves."
	Agein answerd the championn that liketh no thing wel,	The champion, who was very displeased, answered again:
	"He is alther maister and his pley is right felle;	"He is the master in every way and his play is very harsh.
	Sithen I wrasteled first it is goon yore,	It has been a long time since I first wrestled,
	But I was nevere in my lif handeled so sore."	But never in my life have I been handled so roughly."
	Gamelyn stode in the place anon without serk,	Gamelyn stood in that place without a shirt
260	And seide, "Yif ther be moo lat hem come to werk;	And said, "If there are more, let them come to play!
	The champion that pyned him to worch sore,	The champion was so anxious to work me over—
	It semeth by his countenance that he wil no more."	It seems by his appearance that he doesn't want any more."
	Gamelyn in the place stode stille as stone,	Gamelyn stood in the place as still as a stone

[18] *On hym stode hym noon eye*: *Eye* does not refer to vision here but to *awe*: "he no longer stood in awe of him."

	For to abide wrastelinge but ther come none;	To bear more wrestling, but none came up.
	Ther was noon with Gamelyn that wold wrastel more,	There was no one who would wrestle with Gamelyn,
	For he handeled the championn so wonderly sore.	For he handled the champion with such amazing ferocity.
	Two gentile men that yemed the place,	Two gentlemen who ran the place
	Come to Gamelyn -- God yeve him goode grace! --	Approached Gamelyn. God give them good grace!
	And seide to him, "Do on thi hosen and thi shoon,	They said to him, "Put on your hose and shoes,
270	For soth at this tyme this fare is doon."	For truly, at this moment the games are finished."
	And than seide Gamelyn, "So mot I wel fare,	Then Gamelyn said, "As I live and breathe,
	I have not yete halvendele sold my ware."	I have not yet sold off half my wares!"[19]
	Thoo seide the championn, "So broke I my swere,	The champion answered, "By the hairs on my head,[20]
	He is a fool that therof bieth thou selleth it so dere."	He is a fool who buys what you sell at such a high price!"
	Tho seide the frankeleyne that was in moche care,	The franklin, who had faced such troubles, answered,
	"Felawe," he saide "whi lackest thou this ware?	"Fellow," he said, "why are you finding fault with the sale?
	By seynt Jame of Gales that mony man hath sought,	By Saint James of Spain, whom many men have sought, [21]
	Yit is it to good chepe that thou hast bought."	What you have bought has been too good a deal!"
	Thoo that wardeynes were of that wrastelinge	Then the umpires of the wrestling match
280	Come and brought Gamelyn the ramme and the rynge,	Came and awarded Gamelyn the ram and the ring,
	And Gamelyn bithought him it was a faire thinge,	And Gamelyn thought it was a fair sight
	And wente with moche joye home in the mornynge.	And went home in the morning with great joy.
	His brother see wher he came with the grete route,	His brother saw him coming with a large company
	And bad shitt the gate and holde hym withoute.	And ordered the gate shut to hold him out.
	The porter of his lord was soor agaast,	The porter was sorely afraid of his lord
	And stert anoon to the gate and lokked it fast.	And ran at once to the gate and locked it fast.
	Fitt 3	**Part 3**
	Now lithenes and listneth both yonge and olde,	Now pay attention and listen, both young and old,
	And ye schul here gamen of Gamelyn the bolde.	And you will hear the adventures of Gamelyn the bold.

[19] Reminiscent of a medieval *flyting* (or possibly American rap music competitions), *Gamelyn* has many scenes of witty, stylized insults. The analogy is that Gamelyn is a merchant who is selling his goods (wrestling moves). The challenger gripes that he has paid too much for the 'merchandise.'

[20] *So broke I my swere:* 'As I have use of my neck.' A mild expletive with the sense of "As I live and breathe," or "While there's a head on my shoulders."

[21] The shrine of Saint James is at Santiago di Compostella in Galicia, the destination of the pilgrims at the beginning of *Floris and Blancheflor*. The exact same line appears in "Þe Simonie" (475) in Auchinleck. Line 760 is also a repeat. Skeat, xii-iii.

	Gamelyn come to the gate forto have come inne,	Gamelyn came to the gate in order to come in,
290	And it was shette faste with a stronge pynne;	And it was shut fast with a strong pin.
	Than seide Gamelyn, “Porter, undo the yate,	Gamelyn responded, “Porter, undo the gate,
	For good menys sones stonden ther ate.”	For good men’s sons are standing by waiting.”
	Than answerd the porter and swore by Goddys berd,	The porter answered and swore by God’s beard,
	“Thow ne shalt, Gamelyne, come into this yerde.”	“Gamelyn, you will not come into this yard!”
	“Thow lixt,” seide Gamelyne “so broke I my chyne!”	Gamelyn said, “By the hairs on my face, you’re a liar!”
	He smote the wikett with his foote and breke awaie the pyne.	He kicked the wicket with his foot and broke off the pin.
	The porter seie thoo it myght no better be,	The porter saw then there was nothing to do
	He sette foote on erth and bygan to flee.	And took to his feet and began to flee.
	“By my feye,” seide Gamelyn “that travaile is ylore,	“By my faith,” said Gamelyn, “that was a wasted effort,
300	For I am of fote as light as thou if thou haddest it swore.”	For I am as light of foot as you, even if you’d sworn the opposite.”
	Gamelyn overtoke the porter and his tene wrake,	Gamelyn overtook the porter and avenged his anger,
	And girt him in the nek that the boon to-brake,	And struck him in the neck so that the bone broke,
	And toke hym by that oon arme and threwe hym in a welle,	And took him by one arm and threw him in a well.
	Seven fadme it was depe as I have herde telle.	It was seven fathoms deep, as I’ve heard told.
	Whan Gamelyn the yonge thus had plaied his playe,	When Gamelyn the youngster had done his work,
	Alle that in the yerde were drowen hem awaye;	Everyone who was in the yard drew away from him.
	Thei dredden him ful sore for werk that he wrought,	They dreaded him sorely for what he had done,
	And for the faire company that he thider brought.	And for the fair company that he had brought there.
	Gamelyn yede to the gate and lete it up wide;	Gamelyn sauntered to the gate and opened it wide.
310	He lete inne alle that gone wolde or ride,	He let in all that were walking or riding,
	And seide, “Ye be welcome without eny greve,	And said, “You are welcome here without any grievance,
	For we wil be maisters here and axe no man leve.	For we will be masters here and ask no man’s permission.
	Yusterday I lefte,” seide yonge Gamelyne,	Yesterday I left,” young Gamelyn continued,
	“In my brothers seler fyve tonne of wyne;	“Five barrels of wine in my brother’s cellar.
	I wil not this company partyn atwynne,	I will not let this company part from each other,
	And ye wil done after me while sope is therinne;	If you do as I say, while there is still a mouthful left.
	And if my brother gruche or make foule chere,	And if my brother grouches or makes a sour face
	Either for spence of mete and drink that we spende here,	About the expense of food or drink that we consume here,
	I am oure catour and bere oure alther purs,	I am our host and carry the purse for it all,
320	He shal have for his grucchinge Seint Maries curs.	And he will have Saint Mary’s curse for his griping.
	My brother is a nigon, I swere be Cristes oore,	My brother is a stingy miser, I swear by Christ’s grace,
	And we wil spende largely that he hath spared yore;	And we will enjoy in full what he has hoarded before.
	And who that make grucchinge that we here dwelle,	And whoever complains that we are staying here
	He shal to the porter into the drowe-welle.”	Will follow the porter into the drawing well.”
	Seven daies and seven nyghtes Gamelyn helde his feest,	Gamelyn held his feast for seven days and seven nights.

	With moche solace was ther noon cheest;	No quarreling troubled the great merriment.
	In a litel torret his brother lay steke,	His brother hid lying in a little turret
	And see hem waast his good and dorst no worde speke.	And watched them squander his goods and dared not speak out.
	Erly on a mornynge on the eight day,	Early in the morning on the eighth day,
330	The gestes come to Gamelyn and wolde gone her way.	The guests came to Gamelyn and wished to leave.
	"Lordes," seide Gamelyn, "will ye so hie?	"Gentlemen," said Gamelyn, "must you rush off so?
	Al the wyne is not yit dronke so brouke I myn ye."	If my eyes can still see, all the wine isn't drunk yet."
	Gamelyn in his herte was ful woo,	Gamelyn was heavy at heart
	Whan his gestes toke her leve fro hym for to go;	When his guests took their leave to go home.
	He wolde thei had dwelled lenger and thei seide nay,	He wished they would stay longer but they said no,
	But bytaught Gamelyn, "God and good day."	Only telling Gamelyn, "Goodbye and God be with you!"
	Thus made Gamelyn his feest and brought wel to ende,	Thus Gamelyn had his feast and brought it to a good end
	And after his gestes toke leve to wende.	After his guests made their goodbyes and left.
	Fitt 4	**Part 4**
	Lithen and listen and holde your tunge,	Pay attention and listen, and hold your tongue,
340	And ye shal here game of Gamelyn the yonge;	And you will hear the adventures of Gamelyn the youngster.
	Harkeneth, lordingges and listeneth aright,	Hear me, lordings, and listen closely
	Whan alle gestis were goon how Gamelyn was dight.	To hear how Gamelyn was treated when his guests were gone.
	Alle the while that Gamelyn heeld his mangerye,	All the while that Gamelyn held his festivities,
	His brothere thought on hym be wroke with his trecherye.	His brother schemed treacherously how to be avenged.
	Whan Gamylyns gestes were riden and goon,	When Gamelyn's guests had left and ridden away,
	Gamelyn stood anon allone frend had he noon;	He suddenly stood alone, without one friend.
	Tho aftere felle sone within a litel stounde,	In one cruel moment within a short time,
	Gamelyn was taken and ful hard ybounde.	Gamelyn was seized and bound up tightly.
	Forth come the fals knyght out of the solere,	The false knight came forth out of the study[22]
350	To Gamelyn his brother he yede ful nere,	And went up close to his brother Gamelyn
	And saide to Gamelyn, "Who made the so bold	And said, "Who made you so bold
	For to stroien the stoor of myn household?"	To waste the supplies of my household?"
	"Brother," seide Gamelyn, "wreth the right nought,	"Brother," said Gamelyn, "you have no right to be angry,
	For it is many day gon sith it was bought;	For it is many days since it was paid for.

[22] *Solere*: A medieval *solar* often had sunshine for reading but etymologizes to French *seule*, alone. It was a separate room for privacy which would become in Victorian times a *drawing room* or *parlor*. Here it is evidently separate from the main house, in a *turret* (327).

	For, brother, thou hast had by Seint Richere,	For brother, by Saint Richard, you have had
	Of fiftene plowes of londe this sixtene yere,	Fifteen plows of land these sixteen years,
	And of alle the beestes thou hast forth bredde,	And you have bred all the animals
	That my fader me byquath on his dethes bedde;	That my father left me on his deathbed.
	Of al this sixtene yere I yeve the the prowe,	For the food and drink that we have spent now,
360	For the mete and the drink that we han spended nowe."	In all these sixteen years I have given you the profit."
	Than seide the fals knyght (evel mote he thee!)	Then the false knight answered—may he have foul fortune—
	"Harken, brothere Gamelyn what I wil yeve the;	"Pay attention, brother Gamelyn, to what I will give you.
	For of my body, brother here geten have I none,	Because I have no children of my own body, Gamelyn,
	I wil make the myn here I swere by Seint John."	I will make you my heir, I swear by Saint John.
	"Par fay!" seide Gamelyn "and if it so be,	"By my faith!" said Gamelyn. "If it be so,
	And thou thenk as thou seist God yeelde it the!"	And you do as you say, God reward you for it!"
	Nothinge wiste Gamelyn of his brother gile;	Gamelyn knew nothing of his brother's guile;
	Therfore he hym bygiled in a litel while.	Therefore he tricked him in a short while.
	"Gamelyn," seyde he, "oon thing I the telle;	"Gamelyn," he said, "one thing I must tell you.
370	Thoo thou threwe my porter in the drowe-welle,	When you threw my porter in the well,
	I swore in that wrethe and in that grete moote,	I swore in my rage and among those assembled,
	That thou shuldest be bounde bothe honde and fote;	That you should be tied both hand and foot.
	This most be fulfilled my men to dote,	This must be done in form to satisfy my men,
	For to holden myn avowe as I the bihote."	In order to hold my vow as I promised you."[23]
	"Brother," seide Gamelyn, "as mote I thee!	"Brother," said Gamelyn, "as I live and die,
	Thou shalt not be forswore for the love of me."	You will not be made a liar for my sake."
	Tho maden thei Gamelyn to sitte and not stonde,	Then they made Gamelyn to lie down and not stand,
	To thei had hym bounde both fote and honde.	Until they had him bound both hand and foot.
	The fals knyght his brother of Gamelyn was agast,	His brother the false knight was afraid of Gamelyn
380	And sente efter fetters to fetter hym fast.	And sent for fetters to shackle him fast.
	His brother made lesingges on him ther he stode,	His brother made up lies about him where he stood
	And tolde hem that commen inne that Gamelyn was wode.	And told those who came in that Gamelyn was mad.
	Gamelyn stode to a post bounden in the halle,	Gamelyn stood chained to a post in the hall.
	Thoo that commen inne loked on hym alle.	All those who came in looked at him.
	Ever stode Gamelyn even upright!	Gamelyn stood upright without end!

[23] John is claiming that he promised to bind Gamelyn in front of his men and must now do so perfunctorily to avoid appearing a liar. Although Gamelyn's naivety seems ridiculous, Skeat comments that it was not unusual for the terms of an oath to be literally fulfilled, using the example of the 'pound of flesh' codicil in Shylock's contract to Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*. In novelized versions of *Gamelyn* the brother simply ambushes him in his sleep (Skeat, 42).

	But mete and drink had he noon neither day ne nyght.	But he had no food or drink neither by day nor night.
	Than seide Gamelyn, “Brother, be myn hals,	Then Gamelyn said, “Brother, by my own neck,
	Now have I aspied thou art a party fals;	Now I see that you are a false dealer.
	Had I wist the tresoun that thou hast yfounde,	If I had known about the treason you planned,
390	I wold have yeve strokes or I had be bounde!”	I would have beaten you before I was bound!”
	Gamelyn stode bounde stille as eny stone;	Gamelyn stood tied as still as any stone.
	Two daies and two nyghtes mete had he none.	For two days and two nights he had no food.
	Than seide Gamelyn that stood ybounde stronge,	Then Gamelyn, who stood tightly bound, said,
	“Adam Spencere me thenketh I faste to longe;	“Adam Spencer, I think I’ve fasted long enough![24]
	Adam Spencere now I biseche the,	Adam Spencer, now I beg of you,
	For the moche love my fadere loved the,	For the great love my father showed you,
	If thou may come to the keys lese me out of bonde,	If you go to the keys and release me from my bonds,
	And I wil part with the of my free londe.”	I will divide up my free land with you.”
	Than seide Adam that was the spencere,	Adam, who was the master of provisions, answered,
400	“I have served thi brother this sixtene yere,	“I have served your brother these sixteen years.
	Yif I lete the gone out of his boure,	If I let you go out of his chamber,
	He wold saye afterwardes I were a traitour.”	He would say afterward that I am a traitor.”
	“Adam,” seide Gamelyn, “so brouke I myn hals!	“Adam,” said Gamelyn, “by the nose on my face,
	Thow schalt finde my brother at the last fals;	You will find my brother false in the end.
	Therfore brother Adam lose me out of bondes,	And so, brother Adam, free me from my chains,
	And I wil parte with the of my free londes.”	And I will share with you from my free lands.”
	“Up such forward,” seide Adam, “ywis,	“On those terms,” Adam answered, “certainly,
	I wil do therto al that in me is.”	I will do all that is in my power.”
	“Adam,” seide Gamelyn “as mote I the,	“Adam,” said Gamelyn, “as I have breath in my body,
410	I wil holde the covenaunt and thou wil me.”	I will hold the agreement if you do the same with me.”
	Anoon as Adams lord to bed was goon,	As soon as Adam’s lord was gone to bed,
	Adam toke the kayes and lete Gamelyn out anoon;	Adam took the keys and immediately freed Gamelyn.
	He unlocked Gamelyn both hondes and fete,	He unlocked both Gamelyn’s hands and feet
	In hope of avauncement that he hym byhete.	In hope of the advancement he was promised.
	Than seide Gamelyn, “Thonked be Goddis sonde!	Then Gamelyn said, “Thanks be to God’s providence!
	Nowe I am lose both fote and honde;	Now I am free in both hand and foot.
	Had I nowe eten and dronken aright,	If I could eat and drink my fill now,

[24] *Adam Spencere*: *Spencer* is here both a name and occupation; a spence was a room where provisions and wine were kept (Skeat, 42). There may also be a connection to another literary outlaw of the period, Adam Bell.

	Ther is noon in this hous shuld bynde me this nyght."	There is no one in this house who could bind me this night!"
	Adam toke Gamelyn as stille as eny stone,	Adam took Gamelyn as quietly as any stone
420	And ladde him into the spence raply anon,	And hurriedly led him into the pantry,
	And sette him to sopere right in a privey styde,	And gave him his supper in a private place.
	He bad him do gladly and so he dide.	He gladly encouraged him to eat and so he did.
	Anoon as Gamelyn had eten wel and fyne,	After Gamelyn had eaten finely and fully,
	And therto y-dronken wel of the rede wyne,	And had drunk the red wine deeply,
	"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "what is nowe thi rede?	"Adam," he said, "what is your advice now?
	Or I go to my brother and gerd of his heed?"	Shall I go to my brother and hack off his head?"
	"Gamelyn," seide Adam, "it shal not be so.	"Gamelyn," replied Adam, "it will not do.
	I can teche the a rede that is worth the twoo.	I can show you a plan that's worth two of yours.
	I wote wel for soth that this is no nay,	I know for a fact that this is no lie,
430	We shul have a mangerye right on Sonday;	We will have a banquet on this Sunday.
	Abbotes and priours mony here shul be,	There will be many abbots and priors here,
	And other men of holy chirch as I telle the;	And other high men of the holy church, I tell you.
	Thou shal stonde up by the post as thou were bounde fast,	You will stand up on the post as if you were chained fast,
	And I shal leve hem unloke that away thou may hem cast.	And I will leave them unlocked so that you can cast them off.
	Whan that thei han eten and wasshen her handes,	When they have eaten and washed their hands,
	Thow shalt biseche hem alle to bringe the oute of bondes;	You will plead with them all to bring you out of bondage.
	And if thei willen borowe the that were good game,	And if they pledged your release that would be best.[25]
	Than were thou out of prisoun and out of blame;	Then you would be out of prison and free of blame.
	And if ecche of hem saye to us nay,	And if each of them says 'no' to us,
440	I shal do another I swere by this day!	I'll take another course, I swear by this day.
	Thow shalt have a good staf and I wil have another,	You will have a good staff and I will have another
	And Cristes curs haf that on that failleth that other!"	And Christ's curse fall on him who fails the other!"
	"Ye for God," seide Gamelyn "I say it for me,	"Yes, by God!" said Gamelyn. "I say for myself,
	If I faille on my side evel mot I thee!	If I fail on my part, foul fortune to me.
	If we shul algate assoile hem of her synne,	If we are to absolve them of their sins,
	Warne me, brother Adam, whan we shul bygynne."	Warn me, brother Adam, when we are to begin."
	"Gamelyn," seid Adam, "by Seinte Charité,	"Gamelyn," said Adam, "by Saint Charity,[26]

[25] *Borowe*: As with *Amis and Amiloun* (870), a friend or interest could secure a prisoner's release, either by literally taking the risk of punishment on themselves if they abscond (as Gamelyn's brother Otis does later), or by being in a position of authority or trust to vouch for them. The practice later evolved into the modern bail system. Here Adam is hoping that the clerics will simply feel sorry for Gamelyn and clamor for his release.

	I wil warne the biforn whan it shal be;	I will warn you when it shall be.
	Whan I winke on the loke for to gone,	When I wink at you, be ready to move
450	And caste away thi fetters and come to me anone."	And cast off your fetters and come to me at once."
	"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "blessed be thi bonys!	"Adam," said Gamelyn, "bless your bones!
	That is a good counseill yeven for the nonys;	That is good advice you've given for this occasion.
	Yif thei warne the me to bringe out of bendes,	If they forbid you to release me from bondage,
	I wil sette good strokes right on her lendes."	I will give them a good beating on their sides."
	Whan the Sonday was comen and folk to the feest,	When Sunday arrived and people came to the feast,
	Faire thei were welcomed both leest and mest;	Both high and low were welcomed graciously.
	And ever as thei at the haldore come inne,	And as they all came through the hall door,
	They casten her yen on yonge Gamelyn.	They cast their eyes on young Gamelyn.
	The fals knyght his brother ful of trecherye,	His brother, the false knight, full of treachery,
460	Al the gestes that ther were at the mangerye,	Told all the guests who were there at the banquet
	Of Gamelyn his brother he tolde hem with mouthe	About his brother Gamelyn, making a show of telling them
	Al the harme and the shame that he telle couthe.	About all the harm and the shame that he could speak of.
	Whan they were yserved of messes two or thre,	When they had been served two or three courses,
	Than seide Gamelyn, "How serve ye me?	Then Gamelyn cried, "How am I taken care of?
	It is not wel served by God that alle made!	It is not good service to God, who made all,
	That I sitte fastinge and other men make glade."	That I sit fasting while other men make merriment."
	The fals knyght his brother ther as he stode,	As he stood there, his brother the false knight
	Told to all the gestes that Gamelyn was wode;	Told all the guests that Gamelyn was mad,
	And Gamelyn stode stille and answerde nought,	And Gamelyn stood still and did not answer.
470	But Adames wordes he helde in his thought.	But he held Adam's words in his thoughts.
	Thoo Gamelyn gan speke doolfully withalle	Then Gamelyn made a mournful address
	To the grete lordes that seton in the halle:	To all the great lords that sat in the hall.
	"Lordes," he seide "for Cristes passioun,	"Lordings," he said, "for the sake of Christ's passion,
	Helpe to bringe Gamelyn out of prisoun."	Help to bring Gamelyn out of prison."
	Than seide an abbot, sorowe on his cheke,	An abbot said, with a dour face,
	"He shal have Cristes curs and Seinte Maries eke,	"He will have Christ's curse and Saint Mary's also
	That the out of prison beggeth or borowe,	Who pleads or pledges to have you out of prison,
	And ever worth him wel that doth the moche sorowe."	And good fortune to him who does you more correction."
	After that abbot than speke another,	After that abbot another spoke:

[26] *Seinte Charité*: This may be the Charity martyred as a girl along with her sisters Faith and Hope under Hadrian in AD 137. Sometimes the choice of saint is meaningful and at other times is likely only there to form the rhyme. See the note to *Amis and Amiloun*, 785.

480	"I wold thine hede were of though thou were my brother!	"I wish your head were off even if you were my brother.
	Alle that the borowe foule mot hem falle!"	May evil befall all who secure your release!"
	Thus thei seiden alle that were in the halle.	So said all who were in the hall.
	Than seide a priour, evel mote he threve!	Then a prior spoke—may he fare foully!—
	"It is grete sorwe and care boy that thou art alyve."	"It is great sorrow and pity, boy, that you are still alive."
	"Ow!" seide Gamelyn, "so brouke I my bone!	"Oh!" said Gamelyn, "So much for my plea!
	Now have I spied that frendes have I none	Now I have seen that I have no friends.
	Cursed mote he worth both flesshe and blood,	May the man be cursed, in both flesh and blood,
	That ever doth priour or abbot eny good!"	Who ever does a prior or abbot any good!"
	Adam the spencere took up the clothe,	Adam the spencer lifted up the curtain,
490	And loked on Gamelyn and segh that he was wrothe;	And looked at Gamelyn and saw that he was angry.
	Adam on the pantry litel he thought,	Adam thought little of the kitchen
	And two good staves to the halle door he brought,	And brought two firm poles to the hall door.
	Adam loked on Gamelyn and he was warre anoon,	Adam winked at Gamelyn, and he was aware at once
	And cast away the fetters and bygan to goon;	And cast away the fetters and began to move.
	Whan he come to Adam he took that on staf,	When he came to Adam, he took one staff
	And bygan to worch and good strokes yaf.	And got down to work and gave strong blows.
	Gamelyn come into the halle and the spencer bothe,	Gamelyn came into the hall and the spencer as well
	And loked hem aboute as thei hadden be wrothe;	And they looked about in their fury.
	Gamelyn spreyeth holy watere with an oken spire,	Gamelyn sprinkled holy water with an oak rod[27]
500	That some that stode upright felle in the fire.	So that some standing upright fell into the fire.
	Ther was no lewe man that in the halle stode,	There was no low man who stood in the hall
	That wolde do Gamelyn enything but goode,	Who wanted to do Gamelyn anything but good.
	But stoden bisides and lete hem both wirche,	They stood aside and let both of them work,
	For thei had no rewthe of men of holy chirche;	For they had no sympathy for men of the holy church.
	Abbot or priour, monk or chanoun,	Abbot or prior, monk or canon,
	That Gamelyn overtoke anoon they yeden doun	All that Gamelyn overtook he knocked down at once.
	Ther was noon of alle that with his staf mette,	There were none of them who met with his staff
	That he ne made hem overthrowe to quyte hem his dette.	That he did not throw down to repay them their reward.
	"Gamelyn," seide Adam, "for Seinte Charité,	"Gamelyn," said Adam, "For Saint Charity,

[27] A series of blasphemous jokes follows which would have been enjoyed by the audience, where Gamelyn 'ordains' and 'absolves' the clerics with physical violence, making fun of the original church rituals. Here he 'blesses' the clerics with holy water by striking them with his staff. The churchmen here are mostly high-ranking and not Chaucer's humble parsons. Skeat points out that much anticlerical sentiment in medieval literature was caused by the Normans stacking the church leadership with their own men (43-4).

510	Pay good lyveré for the love of me,	Show no mercy for my sake,
	And I wil kepe the door so ever here I masse!	And I will guard the door, as sure as I hear mass!
	Er they bene assoilled ther shal non passe."	Until they have been 'absolved,' none shall pass."
	"Doute the not," seide Gamelyn "whil we ben ifere,	"Fear not!" said Gamelyn, "While we're together.
	Kepe thow wel the door and I wil wirche here;	Guard the door well and I will work here.
	Bystere the, good Adam, and lete none fle,	Brace yourself, good Adam, and let no one flee,
	And we shul telle largely how mony that ther be."	And we will count in full how many there are."
	"Gamelyn," seide Adam, "do hem but goode;	"Gamelyn," said Adam, "Do them only good.
	Thei bene men of holy churche drowe of hem no blode	As they are men of the holy church, draw no blood.
	Save wel the crownes and do hem no harmes,	Spare their tonsured heads and do them no harm,
520	But breke both her legges and sithen her armes."	But break both their legs and then their arms."
	Thus Gamelyn and Adam wroughte ryght faste,	Thus Gamelyn and Adam worked together tightly,
	And pleide with the monkes and made hem agaste.	And played with the monks and made them terrified.
	Thidere thei come ridinge joly with swaynes,	They had come to the feast riding merrily with servants,
	And home ayein thei were ladde in cartes and waynes.	And homeward they were laid in carts and wagons.
	Tho thei hadden al ydo than seide a grey frere,	When they were done, a Franciscan said to a fellow,[28]
	"Allas! sire abbot what did we nowe here?	"Alas, sir abbot! What are we doing here?
	Whan that we comen hidere it was a colde rede,	It was cold advice for us to come here.
	Us had be bet at home with water and breed."	We would have been better off at home with bread and water."
	While Gamelyn made orders of monke and frere,	While Gamelyn ordained new orders of monks and friars,
530	Evere stood his brother and made foule chere;	His brother continually stood by and made a sour face.
	Gamelyn up with his staf that he wel knewe,	Gamelyn took his staff, which his hand knew well,
	And girt him in the nek that he overthrewe;	And struck him in the neck, throwing him down,
	A litel above the girdel the rigge-boon he barst;	Breaking his backbone a little above the waist.
	And sette him in the fetters theras he sat arst.	He set him in the fetters where he himself sat earlier.
	"Sitte ther, brother," seide Gamelyn,	"Have a seat there, brother," said Gamelyn,
	"For to colen thi body as I did myn."	"To cool down your body as I did mine."
	As swith as thei had wroken hem on her foon,	As soon as they had avenged themselves on their foes,
	Thei asked water and wasshen anon,	They straightaway asked for water and washed.
	What some for her love and some for her awe,	All the servants waited on them in the best manner,
540	Alle the servantes served hem on the beste lawe.	Some out of love for them and some out of fear.
	The sherreve was thennes but fyve myle,	The sheriff was only five miles away,
	And alle was tolde him in a lytel while,	And in a little while he was told everything,

[28] *Grey frere*: The poet may simply mean an aged friar but probably refers to the Franciscans, who were known in England for wearing grey habits.

	Howe Gamelyn and Adam had ydo a sorye rees,	How Gamelyn and Adam had made a grievous assault
	Boundon and wounded men ayeinst the kingges pees;	Against the king's peace, binding and wounding men.
	Tho bygan sone strif for to wake,	Then strife soon began to rage,
	And the shereff about Gamelyn forto take.	And the sheriff came to arrest Gamelyn.
	Fitt 5	**Part 5**
	Now lithen and listen so God geve you good fyne!	Now pay attention and listen so God will give you a good end!
	And ye shul here good game of yonge Gamelyne.	And you will hear the adventures of young Gamelyn.
	Four and twenty yonge men that helde hem ful bolde,	Twenty-four young men, who considered themselves bold,
550	Come to the shiref and seide that thei wolde	Came to the sheriff and said that they would
	Gamelyn and Adam fette by her fay;	Seize Gamelyn and Adam, by their faith.
	The sheref gave hem leve soth for to say;	To tell the truth, the sheriff gave them permission.
	Thei hiden fast wold thei not lynne,	They hastened quickly and did not delay
	To thei come to the gate there Gamelyn was inne.	Until they came to the gate where Gamelyn was inside.
	They knocked on the gate the porter was nyghe,	As they knocked on the wood the porter was near,
	And loked out atte an hool as man that was scleghe.	And being a cautious man he peered out of a hole.[29]
	The porter hadde bihold hem a litel while,	The porter looked at them for a little while.
	He loved wel Gamelyn and was dradde of gyle,	Gamelyn was dear to him and he was fearful of foul play,
	And lete the wikett stonde ful stille,	And so he left the small window fastened
560	And asked hem without what was her wille.	And asked those outside what they wanted.
	For all the grete company speke but oon,	Only one spoke for all the great company,
	"Undo the gate, porter and lat us in goon."	"Undo the gate, porter, and let us go in!"
	Than seide the porter "So brouke I my chyn,	The porter answered, "By the hair on my chin,
	Ye shul saie youre erand er ye come inne."	You will state your business before you come in."
	"Sey to Gamelyn and Adam if theire wil be,	"Tell Gamelyn and Adam, if they please,
	We wil speke with hem two wordes or thre."	We will speak a few words with them!"
	"Felawe," seide the porter "stonde ther stille,	"Fellow," answered the porter, "stand there still,
	And I wil wende to Gamelyn to wete his wille."	And I will go to Gamelyn to know his will."
	Inne went the porter to Gamelyn anoon,	The porter went in to Gamelyn at once
570	And saide, "Sir, I warne you here ben comen youre foon;	And said, "Sir, I caution you that your foes have come.
	The shireves men bene at the gate,	The sheriff's men are at the gate

[29] *Scleghe*: *sly* did not always have a negative meaning in ME and could mean discreet or skillful. Here this second porter is simply cautious in his duties. See also *Bevis of Hampton* (579).

	Forto take you both ye shul not scape.”	To take you both before you can escape.”
	“Porter,” seide Gamelyn, “so mote I the!	“Porter,” said Gamelyn, “as I live and breathe,
	I wil alowe thi wordes whan I my tyme se.	I will reward your warning when I see a good time.
	Go ageyn to the gate and dwelle with hem a while,	Go back to the gate and delay them a while, porter,
	And thou shalt se right sone porter, a gile.”	And you will very soon see a trick.”
	“Adam,” seide Gamelyn, “hast the to goon;	“Adam,” said Gamelyn, “get ready to go.
	We han foo men mony and frendes never oon;	We have many men as enemies and not one friend.
	It bene the shireves men that hider bene comen,	It’s the sheriff’s men who have come here.
580	Thei ben swore togidere that we shal be nomen.”	They are sworn together that we should be taken.”
	“Gamelyn,” seide Adam, “hye the right blyve,	“Gamelyn,” answered Adam, “hasten quickly,
	And if I faile the this day evel mot I thrive!	And if I fail you this day may I fare evilly!
	And we shul so welcome the shyreves men,	And we will welcome the sheriff’s men in such a way
	That some of hem shal make her beddes in the fenne.”	That some of them will make their beds in the mud.”
	At a postern gate Gamelyn out went,	Gamelyn went out at the rear gate
	And a good cartstaf in his hondes hent;	And seized a rugged cart shaft in his hand.
	Adam hent sone another grete staff	Adam grabbed another great staff
	For to helpen Gamelyne and good strokes yaf.	To help Gamelyn to give painful blows.
	Adam felled tweyn and Gamelyn thre,	Adam took down twenty and Gamelyn three.
590	The other sette fete on erthe and bygan to flee.	The other took to his feet and began to flee.
	“What” seide Adam, “so evere here I masse!	“Where are you going?” said Adam. “As ever I hear mass,
	I have right good wyne drynk er ye passe!”	I have more fine wine for you to drink before you leave!”
	“Nay, by God!” seide thei, “thi drink is not goode,	“No, by God,” they answered. “your drink is not good.
	It wolde make a mannys brayn to lyen on his hode.”	It would make a man’s brain lie on its side.”[30]
	Gamelyn stode stille and loked hym aboute,	Gamelyn stood still and looked about him,
	And seide “The shyref cometh with a grete route.”	And said, “The sheriff is coming with a large company.
	“Adam,” seyde Gamelyn “what bene now thi redes?	Adam,” said Gamelyn, “what is your advice now?
	Here cometh the sheref and wil have our hedes.”	Here comes the sheriff and he will have our heads.”
	Adam seide to Gamelyn “My rede is now this,	Adam said to Gamelyn, “My counsel is this:
600	Abide we no lenger lest we fare amys:	We can stay no longer without coming to ruin.
	I rede we to wode gon er we be founde,	I advise that we go to the woods before we are found.
	Better is ther louse than in the toune bounde.”	Better to be free there than bound up in the town.”
	Adam toke by the honde yonge Gamelyn;	Adam took young Gamelyn’s hand,

[30] *A mannys brayn to lyen on his hode*: An idiom for a hangover (TEAMS). Here the joke is to compare the beatings to wine, and the sheriff’s men gripe that their heads hurt enough already from the ‘wine.’

	And every of hem dronk a draught of wyn,	And each of them drank a draft of wine,
	And after token her cours and wenten her way;	And then planned their course and went their way.
	Tho fonde the scherreve nyst but non aye.	The sheriff found the nest but no eggs.
	The shirrive light doune and went into halle,	He dismounted and went into the hall,
	And fonde the lord fetred faste withalle.	And found the lord bound up tightly in fetters.
	The shirreve unfetred hym right sone anoon,	The sheriff unchained him immediately
610	And sente aftere a leche to hele his rigge boon.	And sent for a doctor to treat his backbone.
	Lat we now the fals knyght lye in hys care,	For now we will let the false knight lie in his troubles,
	And talke we of Gamelyn and of his fare.	And talk about Gamelyn and how he fared.
	Gamelyn into the wode stalked stille,	Gamelyn paced cautiously into the woods
	And Adam Spensere liked right ille;	And Adam Spencer did not like it at all.
	Adam swore to Gamelyn, "By Seint Richere,	Adam swore to Gamelyn, "By Saint Richard,
	Now I see it is mery to be a spencere,	Now I see it is a merry life to be a provisioner!
	Yit lever me were kayes to bere,	I would rather carry keys
	Than walken in this wilde wode my clothes to tere."	Than walk in these wild woods and tear my clothes."
	"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "dismay the right nought;	"Adam," said Gamelyn, "don't be discouraged at all.
620	Mony good mannys child in care is brought."	Many a good man's child is reduced to sorrow."
	As thei stode talkinge bothen in fere,	As the both of them stood talking together,
	Adam herd talking of men and right nyghe hem thei were.	Adam heard the talking of men who were close nearby.
	Tho Gamelyn under wode loked aright,	When Gamelyn looked closely about the forest,
	Sevene score of yonge men he seye wel ydight;	He saw seven score of well-armed young men.
	Alle satte at the mete compas aboute.	All sat in a circle around their dinner.
	"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "now have I no doute,	"Adam," said Gamelyn, "now I have no doubt.
	Aftere bale cometh bote thorgh Goddis myght;	Help comes after trouble through God's might.
	Me think of mete and drynk I have a sight."	I think I have a sight of food and drink."
	Adam loked thoo under wode bough,	Adam peered under a tree bough,
630	And whan he segh mete was glad ynogh;	And when he saw food he was glad enough,
	For he hoped to God to have his dele,	For he hoped to God to have a share
	And he was sore alonged after a mele.	As he was sorely longing for a meal.
	As he seide that worde the mayster outlawe	As Gamelyn said those words, the master outlaw[31]
	Saugh Adam and Gamelyn under the wode shawe.	Saw Adam and him under the forest cover.

[31] *Mayster outlawe*: The 'master outlaw' is not named, although the obvious conclusion has been Robin Hood. In the seventeenth century ballad "Robin Hood and Will Scarlet" Robin Hood is Gamelyn's lost uncle. The popularity of Robin Hood folktales was attested by the early fifteenth century, but he is first named in literature only in *Piers Plowman* (B.V. 408). In early portrayals he is not noble (as in line 659) but a yeoman like the franklin.

	"Yonge men," seide the maistere "by the good Rode,	"Fellows," said the master, "by the holy Cross,
	I am ware of gestes God send us goode;	I am aware of guests; may God send us good ones.
	Yond ben twoo yonge men wel ydight,	Over there are two young men, well-armed,
	And parenture ther ben mo whoso loked right.	And perhaps whoever looked closer might see more.
	Ariseth up, yonge men and fette hem to me;	Rise up, lads, and bring them to me.
640	It is good that we weten what men thei be."	It would be best to know what men they are."
	Up ther sterten sevene from the dynere,	Seven of them got up from their dinner
	And metten with Gamelyn and Adam Spencere.	And confronted Gamelyn and Adam Spencer.
	Whan thei were nyghe hem than seide that oon,	When they were close to them one said,
	"Yeeldeth up, yonge men your bowes and your floon."	"Turn over your bows and arrows, lads."
	Than seide Gamelyn that yong was of elde,	Gamelyn answered, who was young in years,
	"Moche sorwe mote thei have that to you hem yelde!	"Great shame to anyone who yields them to you!
	I curs noon other but right mysilve;	I'd curse no one else but myself
	Thoo ye fette to you fyve than be ye twelve!"	Even if you brought five more to make you twelve!"
	Whan they harde by his word that myght was in his arme,	When they knew from his words that strength was in his arms,
650	Ther was noon of hem that wolde do hym harme,	There were none of them who would do him harm,
	But seide to Gamelyn myldely and stille,	But they said to Gamelyn mildly and quietly,
	"Cometh afore our maister and seith to hym your wille."	"Come to our master and tell him your will."
	"Yong men," seide Gamelyn, "be your lewté,	"Young man," replied Gamelyn, "by your loyalty,
	What man is youre maister that ye with be?"	Who is your master that you are with?"
	Alle thei answerd without lesing,	All of them answered without deceit,
	"Our maister is crowned of outlawe king."	"Our master is crowned king of the outlaws."
	"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "go we in Cristes name;	"Adam," said Gamelyn, "let's go in Christ's name.
	He may neither mete ne drink warne us for shame.	He won't deny us food or drink out of shame.
	If that he be hende and come of gentil blood,	If he is gracious and comes from noble blood,
660	He wil yeve us mete and drink and do us som gode."	He will give us meat and drink and do us some good."
	"By Seint Jame!" seide Adam, "what harme that I gete,	"By Saint James!" said Adam. "whatever harm I get,
	I wil aventure me that I had mete."	I will risk it to have food."
	Gamelyn and Adam went forth in fere,	Gamelyn and Adam went forth together,
	And thei grette the maister that thei fond there.	And they greeted the master that they met there.
	Than seide the maister king of outlawes,	Then the master, the king of outlaws, spoke:
	"What seche ye, yonge men, under the wode shawes?"	"What are you searching for, lads, under the forest cover?"
	Gamelyn answerde the king with his croune,	Gamelyn answered the king with his crown,
	"He most nedes walk in feeld that may not in toune.	"He must walk in the woods who can't do so in town!
	Sire, we walk not here no harme to doo,	Sir, we are out here not to do any harm
670	But yif we mete a deer to shete therto,	But to shoot a deer if we meet up with one,
	As men that bene hungry and mow no mete fynde,	Being men who are hungry and find no food,

	And bene harde bystad under wode lynde.”	And are in hard straits out in the forest branches.”
	Of Gamelyns wordes the maister had reuthe,	At hearing Gamelyn’s words the master felt pity,
	And seide, “Ye shul have ynow have God my trouth!”	And said, “I vow to God you will have enough!”
	He bad hem sitte doun for to take rest;	He invited them to sit down and take a rest,
	And bad hem ete and drink and that of the best.	And had them eat and drink of their best.
	As they eten and dronken wel and fyne,	As they ate and drank sumptuously and in full,
	Than seide on to another, “This is Gamelyne.”	One said to the other, “This is Gamelyn.”
	Tho was the maistere outlaw into counseile nome,	Then the master outlaw was taken into their confidence
680	And tolde howe it was Gamelyn that thider was come.	And was told how Gamelyn had come there.
	Anon as he herd how it was byfalle,	As soon as he heard how things had happened,
	He made him maister under hym over hem alle.	He made him second in command over them all.
	Withinne the thridde weke hym come tydinge,	Within the third week, news came to him,
	To the maistere outlawe that was her kinge,	To the master outlaw who was their king,
	That he shuld come home his pees was made;	That he should come home, as peace had been made.
	And of that good tydinge he was ful glade.	He was gladdened by that good news.
	Thoo seide he to his yonge men soth forto telle,	Then he said to his young men, to tell the truth,
	“Me bene comen tydinges I may no lenger dwelle.”	“News has come to me that I need not stay longer!”
	Tho was Gamelyn anoon withoute taryinge,	Soon after then without delay,
690	Made maister outlawe and crowned her kinge.	Gamelyn was made master outlaw and crowned their king.
	Whan Gamelyn was crowned king of outlawes,	When Gamelyn was crowned king of outlaws,
	And walked had a while under the wode shawes,	And had walked a while under the forest cover,
	The fals knyght his brother was sherif and sire,	His brother the false knight became sheriff and lord,
	And lete his brother endite for hate and for ire.	And had his brother indicted, in hate and anger.
	Thoo were his boond men sory and no thing glade,	His bonded tenants were sorry and had nothing to be glad of
	Whan Gamelyn her lord wolfeshede was made;	When a bounty was placed on Gamelyn, their lord.[32]
	And sente out of his men wher thei might hym fynde,	Some of his men were sent to where they might find him,
	For to go seke Gamelyne under the wode lynde,	To seek out Gamelyn in the cover of the woods,
	To telle hym tydinge the wynde was wente,	To tell him news of how the winds had changed
700	And al his good reved and al his men shente.	And how his goods were robbed and his men mistreated.
	Whan thei had hym founden on knees thei hem setten,	When they had found him, they set themselves on their knees
	And adoune with here hodes and her lord gretten;	And pulled down their hoods and greeted their lord:

[32] *Wolfeshede*: This is not actually a bounty but meant that an outlaw’s head was worth no more than a wolf’s, and anyone could hunt him unless he surrendered. The modern equivalent would be ‘Wanted dead or alive.’ The pronouncement also means that Gamelyn’s lands are forfeit, a highly convenient situation for his brother. See Shannon, 460.

	"Sire, wreth you not for the good Rode,	"Sir, for the holy Cross, do not be wrathful,
	For we han brought you tyddyngges but thei be not gode.	For we have brought news but it is not good.
	Now is thi brother sherreve and hath the bayly,	Your brother is now sheriff and rules the county,
	And hath endited the and wolfesheed doth the crye."	And has indicted you and placed a bounty on your head."
	"Allas!" seide Gamelyn, "that ever I was so sclak	"Alas!" cried Gamelyn, "That I was so slack
	That I ne had broke his nek whan I his rigge brak!	To spare his neck when I broke his back!
	Goth, greteth wel myn husbondes and wif,	Go, greet well my bondsmen and their wives.
710	I wil be at the nexte shyre have God my lif!"	I will be at the next shire meeting, God have my life!"
	Gamelyn come redy to the nexte shire,	Gamelyn came ready to the next gathering,
	And ther was his brother both lord and sire.	And there was his brother, both lord and sire.
	Gamelyn boldely come into the mote halle,	Gamelyn boldly came into the meeting hall,
	And putte adoun his hode amonge tho lordes alle;	And put down his hood among all the lords:
	"God save you, lordinggs that here be!	"God save you, lordings who are here!
	But broke bak sherreve evel mote thou thee!	But may you fare evilly, hunch-backed sheriff!
	Whi hast thou don me that shame and vilenye,	Why have you done me that shame and villainy
	For to lat endite me and wolfeshede do me crye?"	To indict me and put a bounty on me?"
	Thoo thoghte the fals knyght forto bene awreke,	Then the false knight thought he would be avenged,
720	And lette Gamelyn most he no thinge speke;	And prevented Gamelyn from saying anything.
	Might ther be no grace but Gamelyn atte last	There would be no grace, and in the end Gamelyn
	Was cast in prison and fettred faste.	Was thrown into prison and chained tightly.
	Gamelyn hath a brothere that highte Sir Ote,	Gamelyn had a brother who was named Sir Otis,
	Als good an knyght and hende as might gon on foote.	As good a knight and courteous as anyone on foot.
	Anoon yede a massager to that good knyght	A messenger soon went to that noble knight
	And tolde him altogidere how Gamelyn was dight.	And told him in full how Gamelyn was treated.
	Anoon whan Sire Ote herd howe Gamelyn was dight,	As soon as Sir Otis heard how Gamelyn had fared,
	He was right sory and no thing light,	He was very sorry and in no way light-hearted.
	And lete sadel a stede and the way name,	He had a steed saddled and took his way,
730	And to his tweyne bretheren right sone he came.	And came right away to his two brothers.
	"Sire," seide Sire Ote to the sherreve thoo,	"Sir," said Sir Otis to the sheriff,
	"We bene but three bretheren shul we never be mo;	"We are but three brothers, and we will never be more.
	And thou hast prisoned the best of us alle;	And you have imprisoned the best one of us.
	Such another brother evel mote hym byfalle!"	For such a brother as you, may evil befall him!"
	"Sire Ote," seide the fals knyght, "lat be thi cors;	"Sir Otis," said the false knight, "set aside your curse.
	By God, for thi wordes he shal fare the wors;	By God, for your words he will fare all the worse.
	To the kingges prisoun he is ynome,	He has been taken to the king's prison,
	And ther he shal abide to the justice come."	And there he will wait until justice is done."
	"Par de!" seide Sir Ote, "better it shal be;	"By God!" said Sir Otis. "it will be amended.

740	I bid hym to maynprise that thou graunte me	I demand his bail, that you secure him to me
	To the next sitting of delyveraunce,	For the next sitting of the court,
	And lat than Gamelyn stonde to his chaunce."	And then let Gamelyn stand the consequences."
	"Brother, in such a forward I take him to the;	"Brother, by such an agreement I commit him to you.
	And by thine fader soule that the bigate and me,	But by your father's soul that begot you and me,
	But he be redy whan the justice sitte,	If he is not ready when the justices sit,
	Thou shalt bere the juggement for al thi grete witte."	You will bear the judgment, for all your great wit."
	"I graunte wel," seide Sir Ote, "that it so be.	"I agree in full," said Sir Otis, "that it be so.
	Lat delyver him anoon and take hym to me."	Have him released at once and bring him to me."
	Tho was Gamelyn delyvered to Sire Ote, his brother;	Then Gamelyn was released to Sir Otis, his brother,
750	And that nyght dwelled the oon with the other.	And that night the one stayed with the other.
	On the morowe seide Gamelyn to Sire Ote the hende,	In the morning Gamelyn said to Sir Otis the gracious,
	"Brother," he seide, "I mote forsoth from you wende	"Brother," he said, "I must leave you, in truth,
	To loke howe my yonge men leden her liff,	To see how my young men are leading their lives,
	Whedere thei lyven in joie or ellis in striff."	Whether they live in joy or else in strife."
	"By God" seyde Sire Ote, "that is a colde rede,	"By God," said Sir Otis, "that is cold advice.
	Nowe I se that alle the carke schal fal on my hede;	Now I see that all the sentence will fall on my head.
	For whan the justice sitte and thou be not yfounde,	For when the justices sit and you are not found,
	I shal anoon be take and in thi stede ibounde."	I will be taken at once and bound in your place."
	"Brother," seide Gamelyn, "dismay you nought,	"Brother," said Gamelyn, "do not be disheartened,
760	For by saint Jame in Gales that mony men hath sought,	For by Saint James in Spain, who many men have sought,
	Yif that God almyghty holde my lif and witte,	So long as God Almighty holds my life and wits,
	I wil be redy whan the justice sitte."	I will be ready when the justices sit."
	Than seide Sir Ote to Gamelyn, "God shilde the fro shame;	Sir Otis replied to Gamelyn, "God shield you from shame.
	Come whan thou seest tyme and bringe us out of blame."	Come when you see the time and bring us out of blame."
	Fitt 6	**Part 6**
	Litheneth, and listeneth and holde you stille,	Pay attention, and listen, and hold yourself still,
	And ye shul here how Gamelyn had al his wille.	And you will hear how Gamelyn had all his will.
	Gamelyn went under the wode-ris,	Gamelyn went under the forest branches,
	And fonde ther pleying yenge men of pris.	And found men of excellence playing there.
	Tho was yonge Gamelyn right glad ynoughe,	Then young Gamelyn was cheered enough
770	Whan he fonde his men under wode boughe.	When he found his men under the wooden boughs.
	Gamelyn and his men talkeden in fere,	Gamelyn and his men talked together,
	And thei hadde good game her maister to here;	And they had exciting things for their master to hear.
	His men tolde him of aventures that they had founde,	His men told him of adventures they had found,

	And Gamelyn tolde hem agein howe he was fast bounde.	And Gamelyn told them again how he was bound tightly.
	While Gamelyn was outlawe had he no cors;	While Gamelyn was an outlaw he earned no curses;
	There was no man that for him ferde the wors,	There was no man who fared the worse for him,
	But abbots and priours, monk and chanoun;	Except for abbots and priors, monks and canons.
	On hem left he nought whan he myghte hem nome.	On them, he left nothing when he could capture them.
	While Gamelyn and his men made merthes ryve,	While Gamelyn and his men had great fun,
780	The fals knyght his brother evel mot he thryve!	His brother the false knight—may he have bad fortune!—
	For he was fast aboute both day and other,	Was out and about both day and night,
	For to hiren the quest to hongen his brother.	To pay off the inquest in order to hang his brother.
	Gamelyn stode on a day and byheeld	Gamelyn stood one day and beheld
	The wodes and the shawes and the wild feeld,	The woods and the groves and the wild field.
	He thoughte on his brothere how he hym byhette	He thought about his brother, how he promised Otis
	That he wolde be redy whan the justice sette;	That he would be ready when the justices sit.
	He thought wel he wold without delay,	He resolved that he would, without delay,
	Come tofore the justice to kepen his day,	Come before the justices to keep his day,
	And saide to his yonge men, “Dighteth you yare,	And he said to his young men, “Get yourselves ready,
790	For whan the justice sitte we most be thare,	For when the justices sit we must be there,
	For I am under borowe til that I come,	For I am under a guarantor until I arrive,
	And my brother for me to prison shal be nome.”	And my brother will be taken to prison for me.”
	“By Seint Jame!” seide his yonge men, “and thou rede therto,	“By Saint James,” said his young men, “if you counsel it,
	Ordeyn how it shal be and it shal be do.”	Give orders how it should be and it will be done.”
	While Gamelyn was comyng ther the justice satte,	While Gamelyn was traveling there the justices sat.
	The fals knyght his brother forgate he not that,	His brother the false knight did not overlook anything
	To hire the men of the quest to hangen his brother;	To bribe the men of the inquest to hang his brother;
	Thoughe thei had not that oon thei wolde have that other	If they did not have one, they would have the other.
	Tho come Gamelyn from under the wode-ris,	Gamelyn came from out of the forest cover
800	And brought with hym yonge men of pris	And brought with him young men of distinction.
	“I see wel,” seide Gamelyn, “the justice is sette;	“I see well,” said Gamelyn, “that the judge is sitting.
	Go aforn, Adam, and loke how it spette.”	Go before, Adam, and see what is happening.”
	Adam went into the halle and loked al aboute,	Adam went into the hall and looked about.
	He segh there stonde lordes grete and stoute,	He saw lords standing there, great and well-built,
	And Sir Ote his brother fetred ful fast;	And Sir Otis his brother fettered tightly.
	Thoo went Adam out of halle as he were agast.	Adam went out of the hall as if he were in dread.
	Adam seide to Gamelyn and to his felawes alle,	Adam said to Gamelyn and to all his company,
	“Sir Ote stont fetered in the mote halle.”	“Sir Otis stands chained in the meeting hall.”
	“Yonge men,” seide Gamelyn, “this ye heeren alle:	“Lads,” said Gamelyn, “hear you all this:
810	Sir Ote stont fetered in the mote halle.	Sir Otis stands fettered in the meeting hall.

	If God geve us grace well forto doo,	If God gives us grace to do our best,
	He shal it abigge that it broughte therto.”	He who brought things to this will pay for it.”
	Than seide Adam that lockes had hore,	Then Adam, with his locks of grey, said,[33]
	“Cristes curs mote he have that hym bonde so sore!	“Christ’s curse on him who bound him so sorely!
	And thou wilt, Gamelyn, do after my rede,	If you will, Gamelyn, do according to my plan,
	Ther is noon in the halle shal bere awey his hede.”	There is no one in the hall who will bear away his head.”
	“Adam,” seide Gamelyn, “we wil not do soo,	“Adam,” said Gamelyn, “we will not do so.
	We wil slee the giltif and lat the other go.	We will slay the guilty and let the others go.
	I wil into the halle and with the justice speke;	I will march into the hall and speak with the justices.
820	Of hem that bene giltif I wil ben awreke.	I will be avenged on those who are guilty.
	Lat no skape at the door take, yonge men, yeme;	Let no one escape by the door, men, take heed!
	For I wil be justice this day domes to deme.	For I will be the judge this day to hand down verdicts.
	God spede me this day at my newe werk!	God give me success today in my new work!
	Adam, com with me for thou shalt be my clerk.”	Adam, come with me, for you will be my clerk.”
	His men answereden hym and bad don his best,	His men answered and encouraged him to do his best:
	“And if thou to us have nede thou shalt finde us prest;	“If you are in need of us, you will find us ready.
	We wil stonde with the while that we may dure;	We will stand with you while we can go on.
	And but we worchen manly pay us none hure.”	If we don’t work like men, pay us no wages!”
	“Yonge men,” seid Gamelyn, “so mot I wel the!	“Lads,” said Gamelyn, “as I live or die,
830	A trusty maister ye shal fynde me.”	You will find me a trustworthy master.”
	Right there the justice satte in the halle,	Right where the justices sat in the hall,
	Inne went Gamelyn amonges hem alle.	In went Gamelyn among them all.
	Gamelyn lete unfetter his brother out of bende.	Gamelyn had his brother released from his bonds.
	Than seide Sire Ote his brother that was hende,	Then Sir Otis his brother graciously said,
	“Thow haddest almost, Gamelyn, dwelled to longe,	“Gamelyn, you had almost waited too long,
	For the quest is out on me that I shulde honge.”	For the verdict is out on me that I should hang.”
	“Brother,” seide Gamelyn, “so God yeve me good rest!	“Brother,” said Gamelyn, “God rest my soul,
	This day shul thei be honged that ben on the quest;	This day those who are on the jury will be hanged,
	And the justice both that is the juge man,	As well as the justices, both the judge
840	And the sherreve also thorgh hym it bigan.	And the sheriff, as this all began through him.”
	Than seide Gamelyn to the justise,	Then Gamelyn said to the judge,
	“Now is thi power don, the most nedes rise;	“Now your duties are finished and you must rise.

[33] *Lockes had hore*: This is the first indication of Adam’s age, and the suggestion of grey-haired wisdom explains Gamelyn’s usual willingness to follow his advice, excepting this situation.

	Thow hast yeven domes that bene evel dight,	You have given verdicts that were made in evil.
	I will sitten in thi sete and dressen hem aright."	I will sit in your chair and redress things rightly."
	The justice satte stille and roos not anon;	The justice sat still and would not rise,
	And Gamelyn cleved his chekebon;	And Gamelyn split his cheekbone.
	Gamelyn toke him in his armes and no more spake,	Gamelyn took him in his arms and said no more,
	But threwe hym over the barre and his arme brake.	But threw him over the rail and broke his arm.
	Dorst noon to Gamelyn seie but goode,	No one dared say anything but good to Gamelyn,
850	Forfeerd of the company that without stoode.	For dread of the company that stood outside.
	Gamelyn sette him doun in the justise sete,	Gamelyn sat himself down in the judge's seat,
	And Sire Ote his brother by him and Adam at his fete.	With Sir Otis his brother by him and Adam at his feet.
	Whan Gamelyn was sette in the justise stede,	When Gamelyn was set in the judge's place,
	Herken of a bourde that Gamelyn dede.	Listen to a jest that Gamelyn did!
	He lete fetter the justise and his fals brother,	He chained up the judge and his false brother,
	And did hem com to the barre that on with that other.	And had them come to the bar, the one with the other.
	Whan Gamelyn had thus ydon had he no rest,	When Gamelyn had done this, he had no rest
	Til he had enquered who was on his quest	Until he had found out who was on the jury
	Forto demen his brother Sir Ote for to honge;	That had ordered his brother, Sir Otis, to hang.
860	Er he wist what thei were hym thought ful longe.	Until he knew who they were he deliberated a long time.
	But as sone as Gamelyn wist where thei were,	But as soon as Gamelyn discovered where they were,
	He did hem everechon fetter in fere,	He had each of them fettered together
	And bringgen hem to the barre and setten in rewe;	And brought them to the bar and set in a row.[34]
	"By my feith!" seide the justise, "the sherrive is a shrewe!"	"By my faith!" pleaded the judge, "the sheriff is a crook!"
	Than seide Gamelyn to the justise,	Then Gamelyn said to the judge,
	"Thou hast yove domes of the worst assise;	"You have given judgments from the foulest court.
	And the twelve sesoures that weren on the quest,	And as for the twelve jurors that were on the inquest,
	Thei shul be honged this day so have I good rest!"	They will be hanged this day, before I can rest easily."
	Than seide the sheref to yonge Gamelyn,	Then the sheriff pleaded to young Gamelyn,
870	"Lord, I crie thee mercie brother art thou myn."	"Lord, I cry for mercy, for you are my brother."
	"Therfor," seide Gamelyn, "have thou Cristes curs,	"For that," answered Gamelyn, "may you have Christ's curse,
	For and thow were maister I shuld have wors."	For if you were my master I would have all the worse."
	For to make shorte tale and not to longe,	To make the story short and not prolong it,
	He ordeyned hym a quest of his men stronge;	He appointed a jury from his strong men.

[34] Chaining men together in a row seems to be a special form of medieval humiliation. Gamelyn's parody of the court is reminiscent of the *Summoner's Tale*, where the squire proposes that twelve friars be forced to line up with their noses in cartwheel spokes to equally share a burst of flatulence.

	The justice and the shirreve both honged hie,	The judge and the sheriff were both hanged high,
	To weyven with the ropes and the winde drye;	To wave with the ropes and the dry wind.
	And the twelve sisours (sorwe have that rekke!)	And as for the twelve jurors—curse anyone who cares!
	Alle thei were honged fast by the nekke.	All of them were hung by the neck.
	Thus endeth the fals knyght with his trecherye,	Thus ended the false knight with his treachery,
880	That ever had lad his lif in falsenesse and folye.	Who had led his entire life in deceit and perversity.
	He was honged by the nek and not by the purs,	He was hanged by the neck and not with a purse.
	That was the mede that he had for his faders curs.	That was the payment he had for his father's curse!
	Sire Ote was eldest and Gamelyn was yenge,	Sir Otis was now oldest and Gamelyn was young.
	Wenten to her frendes and passed to the kinge;	They went to their friends and met with the king.
	Thei maden pees with the king of the best sise.	They made peace with the king of the truest court.
	The king loved wel Sir Ote and made hym justise.	The king loved Sir Otis warmly and made him a justice.
	And after, the king made Gamelyn in est and in west,	And afterward, the king appointed Gamelyn
	The cheef justice of his free forest;	The chief justice of his free forest, from east to west.
	Alle his wight yonge men the king foryaf her gilt,	The king forgave the misdeeds of all his rugged young men,
890	And sithen in good office the king hath hem pilt,	And later put them in good offices.
	Thus wane Gamelyn his land and his lede,	In this way Gamelyn won back his land and his people,
	And wreke him on his enemyes and quytte hem her mede;	And had revenge on his enemies and gave them their reward.
	And Sire Ote his brother made him his heire,	Sir Otis his brother made him his heir,
	And sithen wedded Gamelyn a wif good and faire;	And then Gamelyn married a wife who was good and fair.[35]
	They lyved togidere the while that Crist wolde,	They lived together for the time that Christ permitted them,
	And sithen was Gamelyn graven under molde.	And then Gamelyn was buried under the earth.
	And so shull we alle may ther no man fle:	And so we all shall go there; no man can flee it.
898	God bring us to that joye that ever shal be!	May God bring us to the joy that will forever be!

[35] Skeat notes that, apart from saints, this is the only woman in the poem (xxxvii). Although there are romantic elements this is not a conventional love story but one of adventure. Rosalind is added as a love interest in the story's later analogue in Thomas Lodge's *Euphues' Golden Legacy* (1558), which would in turn form the basis of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.

Gamelyn and Chaucer's Yeoman's Tale?

The *Tale of Gamelyn* defies easy categorization. It does not seem very 'romantic' in that it has no love story beyond an obligatory marriage at the end, and thus the tale has variously been categorized as ballad, as "popular epic,"[1] as a "Lady Meed" satire,[2] or as a sort of proto-outlaw romance. Skeat suggested that the story was Anglo-French in origin,[3] but no clear sources or originals have been identified. The text survives in twenty-five early manuscripts, all ones of *The Canterbury Tales*.[4] Scholars have generally surmised that Chaucer perhaps intended to rework the romance into one of his tales, and the text almost invariably follows the Cook's abortive segment. Skeat also notes that the line "by seynt Jame of Gales that mony man hath sought," repeated in *Gamelyn* twice (277 and 764), is identical to one in "Þe Simonie" (475) in the Auchinleck manuscript, along with numerous other textual matches.[5] If Chaucer did consult Auchinleck for *The Canterbury Tales*, one of its lost texts might well have been *Gamelyn*, although critics have generally placed the poem's composition as slightly later, around 1350.

Gamelyn survives in the early manuscripts of Corpus Christi 198, Petworth MS 7, and Harley MS 7334. Although not in Hengwyrt or Ellesmere, both manuscripts have blank pages for its possible inclusion, and the scribe seems to have inserted the poem in

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[1] TEAMS cites Francis Child's term. Stephen Knight and Thomas H. Ohlgren, ed., "*The Tale of Gamelyn*: Introduction," in *The Tale of Gamelyn*. *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/gamelyn.htm

[2] Richard W. Kaeuper, "An Historian's Reading of the *Tale of Gamelyn*," *Medium Aevum* 52 (1983): 59.

[3] Walter William Skeat, ed., *The Tale of Gamelyn: From the Harleian Ms. No. 7334* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1884), vii.

[4] For a complete list see Franklin Rogers, "The *Tale of Gamelyn* and the Editing of *The Canterbury Tales*," *JEGP* 43 (1959): 49.

[5] Skeat, xii-xiii.

Harley with uncertainty, perhaps also believing it noncanonical.[6] What business *Gamelyn* has in Chaucer's manuscripts has provoked disagreement. Since the early conclusion that it was not Chaucerian the poem has been tarred as "spurious" and its study has largely been confined to situating its relation to the manuscripts and the *Cook's Tale*. The *Cook's Tale*'s brevity and abrupt ending have produced two broad conjectures apart from the simple one that Chaucer considered it finished.[7] The first is that the tale was cut out by others because of its 'scurrilous' content, or that quires were lost. Yet Scattergood notes that the *Miller's Tale* is hardly more uplifting but survives.[8] The second sees the fragment as an authorial decision to abandon the tale and replace it with *Gamelyn*. The poem was perhaps found among Chaucer's papers,[9] leading to such editorial uncertainty, although a few scholars posit that Hengwyrt was written in his lifetime and that Chaucer possibly wavered over its inclusion,[10] explaining the blank pages. Harley has "icy comencera le fable de Gamelyn" before the text. Might the future tense of the note imply the poem was not yet located or even written by its ailing author?

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[6] N.F. Blake, "Chaucer, Gamelyn and the Cook's Tale," in *The Medieval Book and a Modern Collector: Essays in Honour of Toshiyuki Takamiya*, ed. Takami Matsuda, Richard A. Linenthal, and John Scahill (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 87-98.

[7] Jim Casey, "Unfinished Business: The Termination of Chaucer's *Cook's Tale*," *Chaucer Review* 41:2 (2006): 191.

[8] V.J. Scattergood, "Perkyn Revelour and the *Cook's Tale*," *Chaucer Review* 19:1 (1984): 15. For the view that quires of the *Cook's Tale* were lost, see M.C. Seymour, "Of This Cokes Tale," *Chaucer Review* 24:3 (1990): 259.

[9] See also J. S. P. Tatlock, "The Canterbury Tales in 1400," *PMLA* 50:1 (1935): 112 and John M. Bowers, "Chaucer's Canterbury Tales – Politically Corrected," in *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority, and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400-1602*, ed. Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline (Columbus: Ohio State Press, 1999), 29. Bowers also conjectures that Chaucer passed away before he could work on *Gamelyn* (29).

[10] Blake, 89. Mooney asserts that Hengwyrt and Ellesmere were written by Adam Pinkhurst, who might have done so under authorial supervision. Linne R. Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe," *Speculum* 81 (2006): 97-138. Stanley believes that Chaucer had other works "which reached the scriveners before they were complete." E.G. Stanley, "Of This Cokes Tale Maked Chaucer Na Moore," *Poetica* 5 (1976): 36.

In several manuscripts *Gamelyn* ends with such scribal notes as "Here endeþ the tale of the Coke," and the poem has been read as the Cook's continuation of or replacement for his tale. Chaucer lived in a litigious time and abrupt endings needed to be accounted for lest a confused buyer believe the book was incomplete.[11] BL Lansdowne 851 has a counterfeit link where "for schame of the harlotrie" (7) the Cook halts and segues into *Gamelyn*,[12] much as Chaucer the Pilgrim stops *Sir Thopas* when the Host protests and substitutes *Melibee*. Yet Skeat objects that rubricators and scribes were usually different people, and he laments "the stupidity of the botcher"[13] who adds the title "The Cokes Tale of Gamelyn" in Harley 7334. Giving the precedent of Urry's edition in 1721,[14] Skeat argues that *Gamelyn* would better fit the Knight's Yeoman, who otherwise receives no tale. Crawford claims that Skeat's view prevails but follows precedent in giving the story to the Cook.[15]

A few critics such as Shippey do favor the Yeoman,[16] but little more has been said beyond pointing out fairly surface correspondences. The assignment of *Gamelyn* in *The Canterbury Tales*, if Chaucer intended to use it at all, must necessarily be speculative. Yet I see its analysis as important in establishing Chaucer's interest in and respect for the

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[11] George Haven Putnam, *Books and Their Makers During the Middle Ages* (New York: Putnam, 1896), 259, quoted in J. S. P. Tatlock, "*The Canterbury Tales* in 1400," *PMLA* 50:1 (1935): 110.

[12] John M. Bowers, ed., "Spurious Links," in *The Canterbury Tales: Fifteenth-Century Continuations and Additions* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992).

[13] Skeat, xiv.

[14] John Urry, *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer: The Miscellaneous Pieces*, Vol. VI (1721) (Edinburgh, 1782), 5.

[15] Donna Crawford, "Revel and Youth in The *Cook's Tale* and The *Tale of Gamelyn*," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 243:1 (2006): 35.

[16] T. A. Shippey, "The *Tale of Gamelyn*: Class Warfare and the Embarrassments of Genre," in *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, ed. Ad Putter and Jane Gilbert Jane (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 79.

poem and for English romance generally. Rather than seeing the issue as one of manuscript paleology, I would like to focus on the text of *Gamelyn* and its correlations to the Yeoman's portrait in the *General Prologue*. In doing so, *Gamelyn*'s themes of rural life, legal conservatism, and bourgeois values seem more appropriate for the Yeoman rather than the Cook.

The *Cook's Tale* is set "in our citee" (I.4365), and "Roger of Ware" sets the story in a clearly urban milieu with its realistic references to shops, streets, and London placenames such as Cheapside and Newgate. Conversely, *Gamelyn* occupies a wholly rural setting with a corresponding lexicon; the sheriff finds "nyst but non aye" ("the nest but no eggs," 606). The poem's actors are country gentry and yeomen, men who might be minor knights or landowners "but whose horizons are essentially local."[17] The countryside in the poem does not suggest a pastoral idyll but rather a violently masculine world of wrestling for rams, oaken staves, and broken bones. Yet the poet praises the values of its folk. The supposedly unrefined wrestling match with its commoner's prizes is a model of genteel speech, and even the insults obey the etiquette of a *flyting*. The Champion plays by the rules and concedes defeat by calling Gamelyn the "alther maister" (256)[18] before "two gentile men" (267) award Gamelyn his prize.

Hoffman reads the poem as having a structural symmetry, and one of *Gamelyn*'s binaries consists of its urban/rural opposition.[19] A medieval *forest* was not hostile

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[17] Kaeuper, 53.

[18] Colleen Donnelly, "Aristocratic Veneer and the Substance of Verbal Bonds in *The Weddynge of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell* and *Gamelyn*," *Studies in Philology* 94:3 (1997): 338.

[19] Dean A. Hoffman, "'After Bale Come Boote': Narrative Symmetry in the *Tale of Gamelyn*," *Studia Neophilologica* 60:2 (1988):163.

wilderness but the trees, pasture, and hamlets which lay outside urban limits and the reach of common law.[20] The poet's sympathies clearly rest with the farmers and outlaws of the countryside, who help those in need in contrast to the callous abbots and priors who hail from important places. The duality is emphasized in John's identification with the civic world. The manor functions more like an urban space with its gates and guards "on the model of a castle or walled city."[21] In contrast, the forest in which Gamelyn takes refuge, "although ostensibly lawless, is marked by allegiance and generosity, whereas the supposedly civilized manor is acquired and maintained through duplicity and brutality."[22] Though initially Adam and Gamelyn are reluctant to "walken in this wilde wode my clothes to tere" (618), they eventually find the non-civic space a self-actualizing zone of liberty and community rather than exile.

Crawford reads the *Cook's Tale* as a possible contest between a youthful protagonist and a dour elder and assigns *Gamelyn* to the Cook on the basis of *Gamelyn*'s parallel theme of young rebellion.[23] Interestingly, in his first skirmish Gamelyn tells his brother that "I wil not be thi coke!" (92). Yet the motives of Gamelyn and Perkyn are too dissimilar for such a thematic comparison. Gamelyn has been cheated out of his legacy and Perkyn, however lovable a rascal the fabliaux might intend him to be, robs his employer (I.4390). Far from being grudging and devious, the kindly master treats Perkyn

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[20] William B. McColly, "Chaucer's Yeoman and the Rank of His Knight," *Chaucer Review* 20:1 (1985): 18.

[21] Hoffman, 166.

[22] Hoffman, 163.

[23] Crawford, 34.

with extraordinary indulgence.[24] Perkyn's time in Newgate prison is whimsical but deserved, whereas Gamelyn suffers from his brother's malice and the perversion of justice. Chiefly, Perkyn's progress is toward an evasion of the law. After his master presents a properly legal *papir* of release from his apprenticeship (I.4404), he enters a final downward spiral into criminality. The wooden and moralizing false end attached to the *Cook's Tale* in late manuscripts, evidently composed by scribes who overlook the Cook's usual inebriation, entirely deflates the fun of Perkyn's carnival vulgarity but does conform to his disdain for laws and authority.[25]

In comparison, *Gamelyn* critics have noted the legal conservatism of the poem. While Gamelyn doles out extrajudicial acts of violence and not law to his brother and the stacked inquest, he does so in court.[26] Fundamentally, he seeks not a ducking of the law but its rehabilitation in order to obtain his legitimate inheritance. Gamelyn revolts against the court because of its fraudulent pose of justice, telling the judge "thou hast yove domes of the worst assise" (866), but does not question the necessity for such institutions. Although some defiant parody of the inquest is surely intended, Gamelyn affirms its legitimacy in principle when he forms "a quest of his men stronge" (874) to replace the bribed one. Similarly, Gamelyn's humorous and violent re-ordination of new "orders of

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[24] Bowers notes that historically a thieving apprentice was more likely to be flogged and expelled ("Politically Corrected" 31).

[25] As an example, in Chicago and Rawlinson 141 Perkyn and his companion are hanged: "and þus with hordam and briberie / togeder þei used tyl hanged hye / for who so evel byeth shal make a sory sale / and þus I make an ende of my tale." Quoted in Stephen Partridge, "Minding the Gaps: Interpreting the Manuscript Evidence of the *Cook's Tale* and the *Squire's Tale*," in *The English Medieval Book: Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, ed. Jeremy Griffiths, Vincent Gillespie, A. S. G. Edwards, and Ralph Hanna (London: British Library, 2000), 60.

[26] Donnelly, 343.

monke and frere" (529) has a blasphemous tinge but also suggests a sort of cleansing of the temple. While the servants have no sympathy for the proud, compromised clerics (504), the text is not antireligious. Gamelyn tells Adam to "do hem but goode / thei bene men of holy churche" (517-8). Much as Robin Hood reveres the Virgin, Gamelyn has a broad religious reverence underlying his righteous anger at men who will not give "to one of these little ones a cup of cold water" (Matt. 10:42).

Romance often offers a marginalized audience such a revenge fantasy, and possible frustration over perverted justice by wealthy insiders or brigands has historical justification. The writers of both popular tales and legal petitions in the fourteenth century evidently saw royal justice as having failed, and court records abound with complaints of juries either bought or threatened.[27] Sheriffs were known for graft and abusing their offices to harass personal enemies, and Langland depicts Lady Meed riding a newly-shod sheriff to Westminster (B II.166). Earlier centuries may have been no more circumspect, and Stephen's reign is chronicled as a notoriously lawless era, but the fourteenth saw an expanding application of royal law into the countryside which was apparently both welcomed and deplored for its scope for abuse.[28] The sheriff's office preceded the conquest but seems to have deteriorated into a cash cow for powerful local families.[29] Edwardian and Ricardian England was a litigious and dangerous time, and Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims carry weapons not only for adornment but for personal protection. The prevalence of violence and banditry implies that "far from despairing of

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[27] Kaueper, 55.

[28] Kaeuper, 59.

[29] Edgar F. Shannon Jr., "Mediaeval Law in the *Tale of Gamelyn*," *Speculum* 26:3 (1951): 459.

the King's justice, men wanted more of it"[30] while they also regretted the venality of those sent to bring order.

Chaucer himself was attacked by highwaymen in 1390, lending weight to the argument that he had reservations about writing a virtuous outlaw into the *Canterbury Tales*. Nothing indicates that Chaucer had any sympathy for the rebels of 1381 who terrorized London. Yet Gamelyn does not molest his countrymen or tenants. The poet forestalls such a conclusion by stating that "there was no man that for him ferde the wors / but abbots and priours, monk and chanoun" (776-7), who presumably deserve it. Gamelyn's actions validate rule by law. He dutifully shows up for his summons and trial, hoping for legitimate proceedings. The forest band which he joins conforms to feudal concepts of order and hierarchy with its lord and loyal retainers.[31] After moving to "slee the giltif" (818), he reconciles with the king, the ruler "of the best sise" (895). Gamelyn himself becomes a justice, and "order is reestablished within the social hierarchy; the aristocracy has simply been forced to clean house."[32] Thus even calling Gamelyn an *outlaw* contradicts his basic objective, which is not brigandage but redressal of the infractions against his tenants and his father's bequest. The poem resounds with principles of legal procedure such as inquests, surety, and *wolfshede*. The poet knows his law in a way a city cook is highly unlikely to.

Gamelyn's "outlaw" identification has also been problematized by reading it from within modern national narratives. The American outlaw usually stresses his everyman

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[30] Kaeuper, 60.

[31] Donnelly, 341.

[32] Donnelly, 343.

breeding and disdain for established elites, but Simeone's statement that "sooner or later most outlaws, historical or legendary, are highborn"[33] applies well to medieval English romance. Although Robin Hood's social rank in early iterations was ambiguous, making him genteel validates him as a corresponding lord of his outlaw domain and makes his fall from grace additionally dramatic and sympathetic.[34] *Gamelyn*'s earthy humor has marked it as low-class minstrelsy, and Gamelyn is nowhere identified as explicitly noble. Sir John's purchased holdings argue that the family belongs to the gentry but not the peerage.[35] Yet Gamelyn holds enough land and tenants to offer a liveable and attractive share to Adam, and in asserting his social dignity he protests to brother John that he was "born of a lady and gete of a knyght" (108). Shippey posits that Gamelyn is literally a bastard as John may have enjoyed too "mochel game" (4) with other women, resulting in *Game + lyn,*[36] but more likely the text plays out contemporary problems with primogeniture among the noble landed.

Yet one of the critical themes for the poet is Gamelyn's natural refinement as opposed to the debased breeding of his brother John and the high-ranking clerics. The verbal bonds of *treuþe* which were so fundamental to the chivalric code are upheld among the wrestlers, who keep their word, in comparison to brother John's cynical lies and perhaps the sanctimonious men of God who defile their oaths of service in stuffing

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[33] W.E. Simeone, "Robin Hood and Some Other Outlaws," *Journal of American Folklore* 71:279 (1958): 30.

[34] Simeone, 31.

[35] Chris Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), 58 and 69-71, quoted in Donnelly, 335.

[36] Shippey, 87.

themselves with multiple courses (463) while denying food to the famished Gamelyn. In holding to his word Gamelyn gains Adam's faithful service while brother John's craven falsehoods result in unreliable and corrupt supporters.[37] The master outlaw similarly has a loyal retinue drawn to his noble generosity and fidelity, and his band correspondingly addresses Gamelyn "myldely and stille" (651) with courtly deportment. The master vows that Gamelyn will "have ynow" (674) to eat without knowing his name, and when amnesty is made, he returns home peaceably and makes provision for a new leader for his men by promoting Gamelyn.

The rural/urban opposition consequently forms a moral distinction between the empty social rank of brother John's "civilized" manor and the authentic chivalry of Gamelyn's sphere in the forest. At one point Gamelyn breaks the divide, literally, by crashing the gate of the manor and holding a feast. What could be an occasion for slapstick and earthy humor is instead a scene of wrestlers and friends acting in a conspicuously refined manner. The poet stresses that "with moche solace was ther noon cheest" (326)—"no quarreling troubled the great merriment." Much like a royal wedding, the guests stay an appropriate time and politely take their leave (330-6). The episode is an advance and not a victory as brother John soon takes revenge, but during the feast the mood is less carnivalesque and more a performance of courtly generosity juxtaposed against John's ill-mannered parsimony.

The sentiment that true gentility comes from conduct and not merely rank is of course a very bourgeois one which reflects its author's and audience's aspirations. The

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[37] Donnelly, 340.

hardening of class divisions in Ricardian England was a rearguard action against their actual muddying after the dislocations and innovations following the plagues and war with France. Chaucer and his peers enjoyed unprecedented opportunities for advancement in royal service as landless esquires,[38] and Chaucer himself was recorded as a *valet*, a term etymologically equivalent to *yeoman* as a person providing royal service.[39] The Black Prince's records list stewards, attorneys, and bureaucrats as yeomen and valets,[40] and as participants in the "Bastard Feudalism" of their era they attained quasi-rank for their performance in war and peace.

Richard II surrounded himself with a bodyguard of Cheshire yeomen who were deplored as common thugs and "unruly men."[41] If Chaucer's position at court was endangered by such hotheads, he may have had reason to scorn them, as evinced in his odious Symkyn who marries to preserve his "yomanrye" (I.3949).[42] Yet the title of yeoman seems to have indicated function more than class, and Chaucer was nominally a part of their broad ranks. Chaucer also gives a moral tale to the Canon's Yeoman. More inescapably, Gamelyn's depiction is positive, as he transcends his class as a courtly protagonist. His show of knightly generosity and valor to the Franklin parallels that of Guy of Warwick to Earl Jonas, with the Champion not much less perilous than dragons and Saracens.

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[38] Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 11.

[39] McColly, 17.

[40] McColly, 17. McColly's source is M.C.B. Dawes, ed., *Register of Edward the Black Prince*, 4 vols. (London: H.M.S.O., 1930-33).

[41] Adam of Usk, *The Chronicle, A.D. 1377-1421*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson (1904) (Dyfed, Wales: Llanerch, 1990), 39, quoted in Bowers, "Politically Corrected," 20.

[42] Shippey, 81. See also Bowers, "Politically Corrected," 17-18.

All this may serve to illuminate Chaucer's portrait of the Knight's Yeoman in the *General Prologue*. Pearsall claims that he is merely a token peasant for Chaucer,[43] but the Yeoman has enough status for the Knight to ride out with "servantz namo" (I.101). The Yeoman may simply be another useful bodyguard-attendant as no weapons are mentioned for the Knight whereas the Yeoman is armed to the teeth. Yet among his arms he has a sword, a rather lavish accessory for a commoner,[44] and a certain sartorial affluence in appearing "gay" (I.111, 113) whereas the Knight is notably "nat gay" (I.74) in his military austerity.[45] The Yeoman wears green and carries a bow and peacock arrows. He knows "wodecraft" (I.110) and bears a horn. The Yeoman so perfectly fits the role of forester that the narrator's "I gesse" (I.117) seems an ironic understatement of the fact. Foresters at times arranged hunts for their lords but were primarily enforcement officers guarding against illegal loggers and poachers who might be warned or halted with a horn blast. The Knight's custody of enough land and wealth to retain a forester marks him as almost aristocratic.[46]

Put together, Gamelyn seems an ideal avatar for the Yeoman's values, interests, and aspirations. Like Gamelyn, the Yeoman identifies with rural life, and his "broun visage" (I.109) suggests he prefers the outdoors. The two share the same occupation as justices of the forest under aristocratic appointment (888), an office which requires both

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[43] Derek Pearsall, *The Canterbury Tales* (Boston: G. Allen & Unwin, 1985), 26–27, quoted in Kenneth J. Thompson, "Chaucer's Warrior Bowman: The Roles and Equipment of the Knight's Yeoman," *Chaucer Review* 40:4 (2006): 387.

[44] Thompson, 392.

[45] Thompson, 401.

[46] McColly suggests the Knight belongs to the peerage or the baronage (25).

physical strength for dealing with violent offenders and familiarity of legal practice and enforcement. Most importantly, the poem's ethos in which true gentility lies in holding to one's word, aiding the weak, and remediating injustice rather than birth rank dovetails into the Yeoman's social aspirations. Gamelyn performs an ideal for the Yeoman, unless Chaucer intended some serious editorial shifts in changing the story to a fabliaux—which is improbable as Chaucer himself was deputy forester for Somerset in royal service. In the extant text the story of a virtuous outlaw's exile and return after a familial struggle has little resonance with a tale of thieves and prostitutes. The sense of humor both share is of a different nature.

All this presumes that Chaucer might have intended his Yeoman to represent a desideratum of himself. Some of the pilgrims are primarily concerned with *requiting* other tellers without any lofty agendas, and a cook-innkeeper rivalry might have suited the progress of the tales. Yet the Wife of Bath's loathly lady nicely shores up her own program as a fading flower, and the Franklin has a social-climbing agenda much like *Gamelyn* in depicting the natural gentility of his characters. Even the Prioress' "litel clergeon" has a sentimental, safe nature agreeable to the teller's ideals. The Knight praises courtly love and knightly refinement, and for the Yeoman to qualify the message by stressing its applicability to all who choose to be *fre* would be a fitting response.

As long as we are so troubled by the order of the fragments in *The Canterbury Tales*, these arguments are as conjectural as the assumption that Chaucer had any plans for *Gamelyn* at all. But a hypothetical *Yeoman's Tale of Gamelyn* both complements and answers the Knight and thematically conforms to Kittredge's "marriage group." Chaucer the son of a wine merchant, the Wife of Bath's loathly lady, and Gamelyn the young (and

possibly the bastard) would all likely assent to the sentiment that "am I gentil, whan that I bigynne / to lyven vertuously and weyve synne" (III.1175-6). Gamelyn acts rather unknightly in disrobing to wrestle over a ram, but in doing so to give help to a stranger the poet illustrates "that such trappings are no measure or proof of a knight's true character."[47] In Chaucer's literary period, one with less rigid expectations of conformity of style, the mixing of serious matters and slapstick humor adds to rather than detracts from Gamelyn's earnestness.

[47] Donnelly, 338.

CHAPTER 6

Guy of Warwick (Stanzaic)

The stanzaic *Guy of Warwick*, along with the couplet *Guy* which forms the first half of the story, survives in one unique manuscript, Auchinleck (c. 1330). Redacted versions include Cambridge, Cambridge University Library MS Ff.2.38 (c. 1450) and Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 107/176 (c. 1475). I take as my text source Alison Wiggins, ed. *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick.* Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004. http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/guywfrm.htm. No modern editions predominate other than Julius Zupitza, ed., *The Romance of Guy of Warwick* (1883).

Main characters
Guy
Felicia, Guy's wife
Earl Jonas, Guy's friend
Earl Terry, Guy's friend
Herhaud, Guy's friend
King Athelstan
Reinbroun, Guy's son

1	God graunt hem heven-blis to mede	May God grant Heaven's bliss to reward
	That herken to mi romaunce rede	Those who listen to me read my romance,
	Al of a gentil knight;	All about a noble knight.
	The best bodi he was at nede	He was the best person in need
	That ever might bistriden stede	That might ever ride a steed,
	And freest founde in fight.	And the bravest to be found in a fight.
	The word of him ful wide it ran	Word of him spread wide;
	Over al this warld the priis he wan,	All over this world he won a reputation
	As man most of might.	As a man greatest in might.
10	Balder bern was non in bi,	There was no bolder man around.
	His name was hoten Sir Gii	His name was called Sir Guy
	Of Warwike wise and wight.	Of Warwick, wise and fearless.
	Wight he was for sothe to say	He was manly, to say the truth,
	And holden for priis in everi play	And respected highly in every contest
	As knight of gret boundé.	As a knight of great valor.
	Out of this lond he went his way	He traveled out of this land,
	Thurth mani divers cuntray	Through many different countries

	That was biyond the see.	That were beyond the sea.
	Sethen he com into Inglond	Then he came into England
20	And Athelston the king he fond	And met with Athelston the king,
	That was bothe hende and fre.	Who was both gracious and generous.[1]
	For his love ich understond	For his love, as I understand,
	He slough a dragoun in Northhumberlond	He killed a dragon in Northumberland,[2]
	Ful fer in the north cuntré.	Far up in the north country.
	He and Herhaud for sothe to say	He and Herhaud, to say the truth,
	To Wallingforth toke the way	Made their way to Wallingford,[3]
	That was his faders toun.	Which was his father's town.
	Than was his fader sothe to say	Then his father, in truth as well,
	Ded and birid in the clay;	Died and was buried in the clay.
30	His air was Sir Gioun.	His heir was Sir Guy.[4]
	Alle that held of him lond or fe	All who held land or property from him
	Deden him omage and feuté	Pledged their homage and loyalty
	And com to his somoun.	And came at his summons.
	He tok alle his faders lond	He took all his father's own land
	And gaf it hende Herhaud in hond	And gave it into noble Herhaud's hand,
	Right to his warisoun.	As a fitting reward.
	And alle that hadde in his servise be	And for all who had been in his service,
	He gaf hem gold and riche fe	He gave them gold and rich properties
	Ful hendeliche on honde	Graciously into their hands,
40	And sethen he went with his meyné	And then he went with his attendants
	To th'erl Rohaud that was so fre,	To Earl Rohaud, who was so courteous,[5]
	At Warwike he him fond.	Finding him at Warwick.
	Alle than were thai glad and blithe	All were then glad and at ease
	And thonked God a thousand sithe	And thanked God a thousand times
	That Gii was comen to lond.	That Guy was coming to their land.
	Sethe on hunting thai gun ride	Then they rode out hunting
	With knightes fele and miche pride	With many knights and stately pride,
	As ye may understond.	As you may understand.
	On a day Sir Gii gan fond	One day, Sir Guy set out
50	And feir Felice he tok bi hond	And took fair Felicia by the hand
	And seyd to that bird so blithe	And said to that lady so fair,

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[1] *Hende and fre*: This formula often reoccurs in the text, reflecting the oral nature of romance recitation. *Hende* can mean various attributes of courtly refinement or graciousness. *Free* can have the sentimental nuance of 'adventurous' but more properly meant 'generous' or noble in rank, i.e. 'free-born.' Chaucer's Franklin likely has this meaning in mind when he asks, "which was the mooste fre?" (V.1622).

[2] An episode from the couplet *Guy of Warwick*, which precedes this story. Guy's slaying of the dragon is also mentioned in *Bevis of Hampton* (2607-8).

[3] Wallingforth: This is perhaps Wallingford, south of Oxford. Warwick is further north, near Coventry.

[4] *Sir Gioun*: Why the Auchinleck scribe distinctly uses a different spelling here is a mystery, but it this is not a different person. In the following *Reinbroun*, also in Auchinleck, the hero refers to his father both as *Guy* and *Gioun* (751-4). See also line 232.

[5] *Th'erl Rohaud*: Millward notes that "by ME, titles used with a proper name usually preceded the name; titles of foreign personages often were preceded by a definite article." Thus *kyng Richard* but *þe king Alexander*. Evidently practices were in flux during the time of Guy's writing, as Rohaud is ostensibly English. Celia M. Millward, *A Biography of the English Language* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 157.

	"Ichave," he seyd, "thurth Godes sond	"I have," he said, "through God's grace,
	Won the priis in mani lond	Won the respect in many lands
	Of knightes strong and stithe	Of knights, strong and sturdy,
	And me is boden gret anour,	And a great honor has been offered to me:
	Kinges douhter and emperour,	The daughter of the king and emperor,
	To have to mi wive.	To have as my wife.
	Ac swete Felice," he seyd than,	But sweet Felica," he said then,
	"Y no schal never spouse wiman	"I will never marry another woman
60	Whiles thou art olive."	While you are alive."
	Than answerd that swete wight	Then that sweet lass answered
	And seyd ogain to him ful right	And replied to him at once,
	"Bi Him that schope mankinne,	"By He who created mankind,
	Icham desired day and night	I am pursued, day and night,
	Of erl, baroun, and mani a knight;	By earl, baron, and many a knight.
	For nothing wil thai blinne.	They will not stop for anything.
	Ac Gii," sche seyd, "hende and fre,	But Guy," she said, "gentle and noble,
	Al mi love is layd on thee,	All my heart is set on you.
	Our love schal never tuinne;	Our love will never fail.
70	And bot ich have thee to make	And if I cannot have you as mine,
	Other lord nil Y non take	I will have no other lord,
	For al this warld to winne."	Even for all this world with it."
	Anon to hir than answerd Gii,	Guy immediately replied to her,
	To fair Felice that sat him bi	The fair Felica who sat by him,
	That semly was of sight,	Who was beautiful to behold:
	"Leman," he seyd, "gramerci."	"Darling," he said, "my kind thanks."
	With joie and with melodi	With joy and with melody
	He kist that swete wight.	He kissed that sweet girl.
	Than was he bothe glad and blithe,	Then he was both glad and happy;
80	His joie couthe he no man kithe	He could express his joy to no one
	For that bird so bright.	For that woman shining so bright.
	He no was never therbiforn	He was never before
	Half so blithe sethe he was born	Half so happy since he was born,
	For nought that man him hight.	For anything that men had given him.
	On a day th'erl gan fond	One day the earl set out
	And fair Felice he tok bi hond	And took fair Felicia by the hand
	And hir moder biside,	And her mother beside her.
	"Douhter," he seyd, "now understond	"Daughter," he said, "now hear me:
	Why wiltow have non husbond	Why you will not have a husband
90	That might thee spouse with pride?	Who would marry you with pride?
	Thou has ben desired of mani man	You have been wanted by many men
	And yete no wostow never nan	And yet you've never taken one
	For nought that might bitide.	For anything that might happen.
	Leve douhter hende and fre	Dear daughter, gracious and free,
	Telle me now *par charité*	Tell me now, for charity's sake,
	What man thou wilt abide."	What man you will accept."
	Felice answerd ogain	Felicia answered in reply,
	"Fader," quath hye, "ichil thee sain	"Father," she said, "I will tell you
	With wordes fre and hende.	With free and courteous words."
	. . . . .	. . . . .
Gui	Li quons apele par grant amur	With tender affection he asked

--	Felice sa fille qui tant ert sage:	Felicia his daughter, who was so wise,
--	"Fille, di mei tun corage."	"Daughter, tell me your heart."[6]
	. . . . .	. . . . .
100	Fader," quath sche, "ichil ful fayn	"Father," she said, "I will gladly
	Tel thee at wordes tuain	Tell you in two words,
	Bi Him that schop mankende.	By He who created mankind.
	Opon Sir Gii that gentil knight,	In truth, all my love is set
	Ywis, mi love is alle alight	On Sir Guy, that noble knight,
	In warld where that he wende	Wherever he may go in the world.
	And bot he spouse me, at o word,	And unless he weds me, in a word,
	Y no kepe never take lord,	I will never accept or obey a lord,
	Day withouten ende."	For days without end.
	Than seyd th'erl with wordes fre,	Then the earl spoke with generous words,
110	"Douhter, yblisced mot thou be	"Daughter, may you be blessed
	Of Godes mouthe to mede.	From God's hand as a reward.
	Ich hadde wele lever than al mi fe	I would rather have him marry you
	With than he wald spousy thee,	Than all of my possessions,
	That douhti man of dede.	That valiant man of deeds!
	He hath ben desired of mani woman	But he has been sought by many women
	And he hath forsaken hem everilcan,	And he has declined each one of them,
	That worthly were in wede.	Who were so noble in their attire.
	Ac natheles ichil to him fare	But nonetheless, I will go to him
	For to witen of his answare,	To find out the answer from
120	That douhti man of dede."	That rugged man of deeds."
	On a day withouten lesing	One day, without lying,
	Th'erl him rode on dere hunting	The earl rode out deer hunting
	And Sir Gii the conquerour,	With Sir Guy the conqueror.
	Als thai riden on her talking	As they rode out, in their talking
	Thai speken togider of mani thing,	They spoke together of many things,
	Of levedis bright in bour.	Of beautiful ladies in their bowers.
	Th'erl seyd to Sir Gii hende and fre,	The earl said to Sir Guy, gracious and free,
	"Tel me the sothe *par charité*	"Tell me the truth, for charity's sake.
	Y pray thee, *par amoure*,	I am asking you, for the sake of love,
130	Hastow ment ever in thi live	Do you ever intend during your life
	Spouse ani wiman to wive	To take any woman to be your wife
	That falleth to thine anour?"	Who reaches to your high rank?"
	Sir Gii answerd and seyd than	Sir Guy then answered and said,
	"Bi Him," he seyd, "that this warld wan	"By He," he said, "Who won this world
	To saven al mankende,	To redeem all mankind,
	Bi nought that Y tel can	I can say no more than that
	Y nil never spouse wiman	I will never marry a woman
	Save on is fre and hende."	Except one who is noble and courteous."
	"Sir," quath th'erl, "listen nou to me:	"Sir," confided the earl, "listen now to me.
140	Y have a douhter bright on ble,	I have a daughter with a pretty face.
	Y pray thee leve frende,	I hope that you, dear friend,
	To wive wiltow hir understond	Will accept her as your wife.
	Y schal thee sese in al mi lond	I will endow you with all my land
	To hold withouten ende."	To hold without end."
	"Gramerci," seyd Gii anon,	"My richest thanks," said Guy at once.

[6] Lines from *Gui de Warewic*, 7464-66. As TEAMS points out, Felicia replies twice in an awkward way in the English MS, as the scribe has compressed a slightly longer conversation in the original source.

	"So help me Crist and Seyn Jon	"So help me Christ and Saint John,
	And Y schuld spouse a wive	If I were to marry a wife,
	Ich hadde lever hir bodi alon	I would rather have her alone
	Than winnen al this warldes won	Than win all this world's riches
150	With ani woman o live."	With any other woman alive!"
	Than seyd th'erl, "Gramerci,"	The earl then said, "My deepest gratitude,"
	And in his armes he kist Sir Gii	And in his arms he kissed Sir Guy
	And thonked him mani a sithe.	And thanked him many times.
	"Sir Gii," he seyd, "thou art mi frende,	"Sir Guy," he said, "you are my friend.
	Now thou wilt spouse mi dohter hende	Now that you will wed my gracious daughter,
	Was Y never are so blithe."	I was never before so merry.
	"Ac certes," seyd th'erl so fre,	But to be sure," said the earl so courteously,
	"Sir Gii, yif thou wilt trowe me	"Sir Guy, if you will put your trust in me,
	No lenger thou no schalt abide.	You will not wait any longer.
160	Now for fourtenight it schal be	A fortnight from now there will be
	The bridal hold with gamen and gle	The bridal feast with entertainment and joy
	At Warwike in that tyde."	At Warwick in that time."
	Than was Sir Gii glad and blithe	Then Sir Guy was glad and pleased.
	His joie couthe he no man kithe,	His joy was inexpressible to any man.
	To his ostel he gan ride.	He turned to ride to his lodgings.
	And tho Gii com hom to his frende	And when Guy came home to his friend,
	He schuld spouse his douhter hende	He told Herhaud the news
	He teld Herhaud that tide.	That he would wed the earl's beautiful daughter.
	Th'erl Rouhaud as swithe dede sende	Just as swiftly, earl Rouhaud
170	After lordinges fer and hende	Sent for nobles from near and far
	That pris wel told in tour,	Whose reputations were well known in court.
	When the time was comen to th'ende	When the time had come to the end,
	To chirche wel feir gun thai wende	They elegantly made their way to church
	With mirthe and michel anour.	With joy and great honor.
	Miche semly folk was gadred thare	Many distinguished people were gathered there,
	Of erls, barouns, lasse and mare,	Earls, barons, low and great
	And levedis bright in bour.	And ladies beautiful in their bedrooms.
	Than spoused Sir Gii that day	Then that day Sir Guy wedded
	Fair Felice that miri may	Fair Felicia, that merry maid,
180	With joie and gret vigour.	With joy and high spirits.
	When he hadde spoused that swete wight	When he had married that sweet lass,
	The fest lasted a fourtennight	The feast lasted fourteen nights,
	That frely folk in fere	Those noble people together
	With erl, baroun, and mani a knight	With earls, barons, and many a knight
	And mani a levedy fair and bright	And many a lady, fair and bright,
	The best in lond that were.	The finest that were in the land.
	Ther wer giftes for the nones,	There were gifts for the occasion,
	Gold and silver and precious stones	Gold and silver and precious stones,
	And druries riche and dere.	And lavish and expensive tokens.
190	Ther was mirthe and melody	There was revelry and song
	And al maner menstracie	And all kinds of music played,
	As ye may fortheward here.	As you will now hear about.
	Ther was trumpes and tabour,	There were horn players and drummers,
	Fithel, croude, and harpour	Fiddlers, guitarists, and harpists,[7]

[7] *Croude*: A croude (Welsh *crwth*) is a sort of early violin derived from the lyre which was popular with folk musicians. *Organisters* (196) might have played small handheld pipe organs closer to a panflute.

	Her craftes for to kithe;	With their skill on full display.
	Organisters and gode stivours,	Organists and good bagpipers,
	Minstrels of mouthe and mani dysour	Storytellers and many entertainers,
	To glade tho bernes blithe.	To gladden those happy people.
	Ther nis no tong may telle in tale	There is no tongue which can describe
200	The joie that was at that bridale	The joy that was at that wedding,
	With menske and mirthe to mithe,	With hospitality and fun, as was fitting,[8]
	For ther was al maner of gle	For there were all sorts of amusements
	That hert might thinke other eyghe se	That heart could imagine or eye see,
	As ye may list and lithe.	As you may listen and hear about.
	Herls, barouns, hende and fre	Earls, barons, gracious and noble,
	That ther war gadred of mani cuntré	Were gathered there from many lands,
	That worthliche were in wede,	Who were stately in their clothing;
	Thai goven glewemen for her gle	They rewarded the entertainers for their craft
	Robes riche, gold and fe,	With rich robes, gold, and goods.
210	Her giftes were nought gnede.	Their gifts were not stingy!
	On the fiftenday ful yare	On the fifteenth day, early on,
	Thai toke her leve for to fare	They made their goodbyes to leave
	And thonked hem her gode dede.	And thanked them for their kindness.
	Than hadde Gii that gentil knight	Then Guy, that gentle knight,
	Feliis to his wil day and night	Had Felicia at his pleasure day and night,
	In gest also we rede.	As we read in the story.
	When Gii hadde spoused that hendy flour,	When Guy had wedded that graceful flower,
	Fair Feliis so bright in bour	The fair Felicia, so beautiful in her bedroom,
	That was him leve and dere,	Who was so beloved and dear to him,
220	Ywis, in Warwike in that tour	In truth, in that tower in Warwick,
	Fiftendays with honour	For fifteen days they were together
	With joie togider thai were.	With joy and honor.
	So it bifel that first night	It so happened on the first night,
	That he neyghed that swete wight	When he slept with that sweet lass,
	A child thai geten yfere	That they conceived a child together.
	And sethen with sorwe and sikeing sare	But later, with sorrow and mournful sighing,
	Her joie turned hem into care	Their joy changed into sadness,
	As ye may forward here.	As you may from here on learn.
	Than was Sir Gii of gret renoun	Sir Guy was of great renown then,
230	And holden lord of mani a toun	And respected as lord of many a town,
	As prince proude in pride.	A prince magnificent in pride.
	That Erl Rohaut and Sir Gyoun	Earl Rohaud and Sir Guy
	In fretthe to fel the dere adoun	Would ride out hunting
	On hunting thai gun ride.	In the woodlands to take the deer.
	It bifel opon a somers day	It so happened one summer's day
	That Sir Gii at Warwike lay -	When Sir Guy lay at Warwick—
	In herd is nought to hide -	There is no reason to hide anything—
	At night in tale as it is told	That at night, in the tale as it is told,
	To bedde went tho bernes bold	The valiant couple went to bed
240	Bi time to rest that tide.	At their time, to rest the night.
	To a turet Sir Gii is went	But Sir Guy went to a turret
	And biheld that firmament	And beheld the heavens
	That thicke with steres stode,	That stood crowded with stars.

[8] *Mithe*: TEAMS notes that this orphan word is not in the MED and appears nowhere else. OE *míðan*, 'conceal,' does not fit the context. A misspelling or variant of *meet*, 'proper'?

	On Jhesu omnipotent	He thought with a downcast mood
	That alle his honour hadde him lent	of Christ the omnipotent,
	He thought with dreri mode,	Who had lent him all his glory,
	Hou he hadde ever ben strong werrour,	And how he had always been a strong warrior.
	For Jhesu love, our Saveour,	But for Jesus' love, our savior,
	Never no dede he gode.	He had never done any good works.
250	Mani man he hadde slayn with wrong;	He had slain many men with injustice.
	"Allas, allas!" it was his song,	"Alas, alas!" was his refrain,
	For sorwe he yede ner wode.	For he was nearly crazed with regret.
	"Allas," he seyd, "that Y was born,	"Alas," he cried, "that I was ever born!
	Bodi and soule icham forlorn,	I am lost in body and soul.
	Of blis icham al bare	I am stripped of all joys,
	For never in al mi liif biforn	For never in all my life before
	For Him that bar the croun of thorn	Have I done any good deed
	Gode dede dede Y nare.	For Him who wore a crown of thorns.
	Bot wer and wo ichave don wrought	I have left nothing but war and woe
260	And mani a man to grounde ybrought,	And have brought many a man to the earth,
	That rewes me ful sare.	Which grieves me sorely!
	To bote min sinnes ichil wende	To atone for my sins I will go
	Barfot to mi lives ende	Barefoot to my life's end,
	To bid mi mete with care."	To beg for my food with toil."
	As Gii stode thus in tour alon	As Guy stood so, alone in the tower,
	In hert him was ful wo bigon,	He was overcome in his heart by grief.
	"Allas!" it was his song.	"Alas!" was his continual song.
	Than com Feliis sone anon	Soon Felicia came
	And herd him make rewely mon	And heard him make his pitiful cries
270	With sorwe and care among.	With constant sorrow and pain.
	"Leman," sche seyd, "what is thi thought?	"Lover," she said, "what is your trouble?
	Whi artow thus in sorwe brought?	Why are you brought into such sorrow?
	Me thenke thi pain wel strong.	It seems to me the grief is severe.
	Hastow ought herd of me bot gode	Have you heard anything of me besides good
	That thou makes thus dreri mode?	That has put you in such a gloomy mood?
	Ywis, thou hast gret wrong."	Truly, someone has done you great injustice!"
	"Leman," seyd Gii ogain,	"Dear heart," said Guy in return,
	"Ichil thee telle the sothe ful fain	"I will tell you the truth willingly
	Whi icham brought to grounde.	Why I am brought to the earth.
280	Sethen Y thee seyghe first with ayn -	Since I first saw you with my eyes—
	Allas the while Y may sayn -	Alas, that time, I may say—
	Thi love me hath so ybounde	Your love has so bewitched me
	That never sethen no dede Y gode	That I have never after done any good
	Bot in wer schadde mannes blode	But to shed men's blood in war
	With mani a griseli wounde.	With many a grisly wound.
	Now may me rewe al mi live	Now I might regret all my life
	That ever was Y born o wive	That I was ever born of a woman.
	Wayleway that stounde!"	Alas for that moment!
	"Ac yif ich hadde don half the dede	But if I had done half my best
290	For Him that on Rode gan blede	For Him who bled on the Cross
	With grimly woundes sare,	With grim and painful wounds,
	In Hevene He wald have quit mi mede	He would have rewarded me in Heaven
	In joie to won with angels wede	To live in joy with angels' clothes,
	Evermore withouten care.	Forevermore without worry.
	Ac for thi love ich have al wrought,	But I have done all for your love,
	For His love dede Y never nought;	And for His love I never did anything.
	Jhesu amende mi fare.	Jesus, put right my ways!

	Therfore ich wot that icham lorn.	For this I know that I am lost.
	Allas the time that Y was born,	Alas the time that I was born!
300	Of blis icham al bare.	My life is barren of joy.
	“Bot God is curteys and hende	But God is gracious and kind
	And so dere he hath bought mankende	And has redeemed mankind so dearly
	For no thing wil hem lete.	That He will not abandon it for anything.
	For His love ichil now wende	For His love I will now go
	Barfot to mi lives ende	Barefoot to my life’s end,
	Mine sinnes forto bete	To atone for my sins,
	That whoreso Y lye anight	So that wherever I lie at night
	Y schal never be seyn with sight	I will not be recognized by sight,
	Bi way no bi strete.	Not along any path or street.
310	Of alle the dedes Y may do wel,	Of all the deeds that I may do well,
	God graunt thee, lef, that halvendel	God grant you, dear, the benefit of half,
	And Marie His moder swete.”	And Mary, His sweet mother as well.”
	Than stode that hende levedi stille	Then that gentle lady stood still
	And in hir hert hir liked ille	And was distraught at heart
	And gan to wepe anon.	And immediately began to weep.
	“Leman,” sche seyd, “what is thi wille?	“Sweetheart,” she said, “what is your will?
	Ywis, thi speche wil me spille.	Truly, your words are killing me!
	Y not what Y may don.	I do not know what I will do.
	Y wot thou hast in sum cuntré	I think that you have, in some country,
320	Spoused another woman than me	Married another woman beside me;
	That thou wilt to hir gon	That you will go to her,
	And now thou wilt fro me fare.	And you will abandon me now.
	Allas, allas, now cometh mi care!	Alas, alas, now my sorrows have come!
	For sorwe ichil me slon.	I will slay myself for grief.
	“For wer and wo thatow hast wrought	For the war and woe that you have caused,
	God that al mankende hath bought,	God, who has redeemed all mankind,
	So curteys He is and hende,	And is so gracious and kind,
	Schrive thee wele in word and thought	Will forgive you in full in word and thought.
	And than thee tharf dout right nought	And then you need not have any fears
330	Ogaines the foule fende.	In the presence of the foul fiend.
	Chirches and abbays thou might make	You could found churches and abbeys
	That schal pray for thi sake	That would pray for your sake
	To Him that schope mankende.	To Him that created mankind.
	Hastow no nede to go me fro;	You have no need to go from me.
	Save thou might thi soule fram wo	You may save your soul from suffering,
	In joie withouten ende.”	In joy without end.”
	“Leve leman,” than seyd Sir Gii,	“Dear heart,” said Sir Guy,
	“Lete ben alle this reweful cri;	“Let go all this pitiful crying!
	It is nought worth thi tale.	It is not worth your concern.
340	For mani a bern and knight hardi	For I have slain, certainly,
	Ich have ysleyn sikerly	Countless men and hardy knights,
	And strued cites fale	And have destroyed many cities,
	And for ich have destrued mankin	And because I have plagued mankind,
	Y schal walk for mi sinne	I will walk for my sin,
	Barfot bi doun and dale.	Barefoot on hill and valley.
	That ich have with mi bodi wrought,	What I have caused with my body,
	With mi bodi it schal be bought	I will pay for with my body,
	To bote me of that bale.	To relieve me of that foulness.
	“Leman,” he seyd, “*par charité*,	Darling,” he said, “for charity’s sake,
350	Astow art bothe hende and fre	If you are both noble and gracious,
	O thing Y thee pray:	I ask one thing of you.

	Loke thou make no sorwe for me	See that you make no sorrow over me
	Bot hold thee stille astow may be	But keep yourself as silent as you can
	Til tomorwe at day.	Until tomorrow at daylight.
	Gret wele thi fader that is so hende	Greet your father well, who is so gracious,
	And thi moder and al thi frende	And your mother and all your friends.
	Bi sond as Y thee say;	Be sound, as I ask you to do.
	Grete wele Herhaud Y thee biseche;	Greet Herhaud kindly, I implore you.
	Leman, God Y thee biteche,	My love, I entrust you to God;
360	Y wil fare forth in mi way.	I will go forth on my way.
	"Leman, Y warn thee biforn	Dear heart, I caution you in advance
	With a knave child thou art ycorn	That you will be favored with a baby boy
	That douhti beth of dede.	Who will be valiant in deeds.[9]
	For Him that bar the croun of thorn,	For Him who bore the crown of thorns,
	Therfore, as sone as it is born	Therefore, as soon as he is born,
	Pray Herhaud wight in wede	Ask Herhaud, so manly in his ways,
	He teche mi sone as he wele can	To teach my son as well as he can
	Al the thewes of gentil man	All the customs of a refined man
	And helpe him at his nede.	And to help him in times of need.
370	For he is bothe gode and hende	For he is both good and gracious
	And ever he hath ben trewe and kende,	And has always been faithful and kind;
	God quite him his mede.	God give him his reward.
	"Leman," he seyd, "have here mi brond	My dear," he said, "take my sword here,
	And take mi sone it in his hond	And if you are noble and good,
	Astow art hende and fre,	Give it into his hand as soon as it is time.
	He may therwith ich understond	With it he will, I know,
	Winne the priis in everi lond	Win victory in every land,
	For better may non be.	For there can be none better.
	Leman," he seyd, "have now godeday.	Darling," he said, "now farewell.
380	Ichil fare forth in mi way	I will go forth on my way
	And wende in mi jurné."	And set off on my journey."
	Thai kist hem in armes tuo	They kissed each other with open arms
	And bothe thai fel aswon tho -	And then both of them were overcome.
	Gret diol it was to se.	It was a tearful sight to see.
	Gret sorwe thai made at her parting	They made great sorrow at their parting
	And kist hem with eyghen wepeing,	And kissed each other with weeping eyes.
	Bi the hond sche gan him reche	She grasped him by the hand
	"Leman," sche seyd, "have here this ring;	And said, "Darling, take this ring here;
	For Jhesus love heven-king	For Jesus' love, Heaven's king,
390	A word Y thee biseche:	I beg a word with you:
	When thou ert in fer cuntré	When you are in a faraway country,
	Loke heron and thenk on me	Look upon it and think of me,
	And God Y thee biteche."	And God be with you."
	With that word he went hir fro	With those words he went from her,
	Wepeand with eyghen to	Weeping with both eyes,
	Withouten more speche.	Without any more speech.
	Now is Gii fram Warwike fare,	Guy then departed from Warwick
	Unto the se he went ful yare	And went straightaway to the sea
	And passed over the flod.	And passed over the ocean.

[9] The boy Sir Guy refers to will be Reinbroun, who also receives his own romance in Auchinleck. The adventures of Reinbroun are also included in the French *Gui de Warewic*, which is much longer than the English version at nearly 13,000 lines, and in other redactions of the story.

	. . . . .	. . . . .
Gui	En Jerusalem puis aler voldra	He intended to travel to Jerusalem.
--	Desore d'errer ne finera,	Thus he would not cease from wandering
--	En Jerusalem si vendra	Until he had reached Jerusalem,
--	E en meinte estrange terre	After crossing many strange lands,
--	U les sainz Deu purra require.	Where he could see God's holy relics.[10]
	. . . . .	. . . . .
400	The levedy bileft at hom in care	The lady was left at home in grief,
	With sorwe and wo and sikeing sare;	With sorrow and woe and bitter sighs;
	Wel drery was hir mode.	Her mood was dark and dreary.
	"Allas, allas," it was hir song,	"Alas, alas!" was her refrain;
	Hir here sche drough, hir hond sche wrong,	She tore her hair, she wrung her hands,
	Hir fingres brast o blode.	Her fingers ran with blood.
	Al that night til it was day	All that night until it was day
	Hir song it was, "wayleway,"	Her lament was "Woe is me!"
	For sorwe sche yede ner wode.	She nearly went mad from sorrow.
	Hir lordes swerd sche drough biforn	She drew her lord's sword before her
410	And thought have slain hirself for sorn	And thought to slay herself out of grief
	Withouten more delay.	Without any more delay.
	To sle hirselven er the child wer born	But in killing herself before the child was born
	Sche thought hir soule it wer forlorn	She thought her soul would be lost
	Evermore at Domesday,	Forevermore on Judgment Day,
	And that hir fader hir frendes ichon	And that her father and all of her friends
	Schuld seyn hir lord it hadde ydon	Would say her lord had done it
	And were so fled oway.	And had flown away because of it.
	Therfore sche dede his swerd ogain	Therefore she put his sword back,
	Elles for sorwe sche hadde hir slain	For fear that she slay herself in sorrow,
420	In gest as Y you say.	In the story as I tell you.
	Arliche amorwe when it was day	Early in the morning when it was daylight,
	To chaumber ther hir fader lay	She came wringing her hands
	Sche com wringand hir hond.	To the chamber where her father lay.
	"Fader," sche seyd, "ichil thee say	"Father," she said, "I must tell you
	Mi lord is went fro me his way	My lord has gone from me
	In pilgrimage to fond.	To undertake a pilgrimage.
	He wil passe over the se,	He will pass over the sea;
	Schal he never com to me	He will never come back to me
	Ogain into Inglond."	Again in England."
430	For sorwe that sche hadde that stounde	For the anguish she had at that moment
	Aswon sche fel adoun to grounde,	She swooned down to the ground;
	O fot no might sche stonde.	She could not stand on foot.
	"Douhter," seyd hir fader, "lat be,	"Daughter," said her father, "let this go.
	Y trowe nought that Sir Gii the fre	I do not think that gracious Sir Guy
	Is thus fram thee fare.	Has traveled far from you.
	Ywis, he nis nought passed the se;	Truly, he has not passed the sea.
	He ne doth nought bot forto fond thee	He is doing no more than testing you,
	Hou trewe of hert thou ware."	To see how true your heart is."
	"Nay, sir," sche seyd, "so God me spede,	"No, sir," she said, "so help me God,
440	He is walked in pouer wede	He is walking in tattered clothing
	To beggen his mete with care	To beg for his food in toil.
	And therfore now singen Y may	And for this I can sing

[10] Lines from the French *Gui de Warewic*, 7732-36. Excerpted in TEAMS.

	Allas the time and wayleway	‘Alas the day’ and ‘woe is me’
	That mi moder me bare.”	That my mother gave birth to me.”
	Th’erl ros up with sikeing sare	The earl rose up, sighing bitterly,
	For Sir Gii was fram him fare,	For Sir Guy had departed from him.
	In hert him was ful wo	He was greatly saddened at heart,
	And alle his frendes, lesse and mare,	Along with all his friends, low and high.
	For Sir Gii thai hadde gret care	They had great concern for Sir Guy,
450	For he was went hem fro.	For he had gone from them.
	Thai sought him than al about	They looked for him all about,
	Within the cité and without	Within the city and outside,
	Ther he was won to go.	Where he was accustomed to go.
	And when thai founde him nought that day	And when they did not find him that day
	Ther was mani a “wayleway”	There was many a ‘woe is us!’,
	Wringand her hondes tuo.	Wringing both of their hands.
	And when Gii was fram hem gon	And when Guy was gone from them,
	Herhaud and his frendes ichon	Herhaud and each of his friends,
	And other barouns him by	And other barons near him,
460	To th’erl Rohaut thai seyden anon,	Said straightaway to Earl Rohaud,
	“The best rede that we can don	“The best plan that we can act on,
	Smertliche and hastily,	Swiftly and hastily,
	Messangers we schul now sende	Is that we will send messengers now
	Over alle this lond fer and hende	Over all this land, near and far,
	To seche mi lord Sir Gii	To seek out my lord, Sir Guy.
	And yif he be nought in this lond	And if he is not in this land,
	He is in Loreyn ich understond	We will conclude he is in Lorraine
	With his brother Tirry.”	With his brother Thierry.”[11]
	Menssangers anon thai sende	At once they sent messengers
470	Over al this lond fer and hende	Over all this land, near and far,
	Fram Londen into Louthe	From London into Louth,
	Over al biyonde Humber and Trent	Over all beyond the Humber and Trent,
	And est and west thurthout al Kent	And east and west, throughout all Kent,
	To the haven of Portesmouthe.	To the harbor of Portsmouth.[12]
	Thai sought him over al up and doun	They searched for him everywhere, up and down,
	Over alle the lond in everich toun	Over all the land in every town,
	Bi costes that wer couthe	Along coasts that were known to them.
	And sethen to Warwike thai gan wende	And then they turned back to Warwick
	And seyd thai might him nowhar fende	And said they could find him nowhere,
480	Bi north no bi southe.	Not by north or by south.
	Herhaud was wele understond	Herhaud clearly surmised
	That Gii was fer in uncouthe lond.	That Guy was far away in unknown lands.
	Ful hende he was and fre,	He was gentlemanly and noble.
	Palmers wede he tok on hond	He took on himself pilgrims’ clothing;
	To seche his lord he wald fond	He would attempt to find his lord
	Unto the Grekis See.	As far as the Aegean Sea.
	To th’erl Rohaut he seyd anon	He said without delay to Earl Rohaud
	To seche his lord he most gon	That he must go to seek his lord

[11] *Brother Tirry*: As with Sirs Amis and Amiloun, Guy and Thierry have sworn an oath of brotherhood in the preceding narrative and are not literal siblings. Actual brothers seem rare in medieval romance, with Havelock’s step-brothers only a partial exception.

[12] TEAMS notes that there is no list of places here in the French source. They are perhaps meant to add local flavor.

	Thurth alle Cristianté.	Throughout all Christendom.
490	When th'erl seye him thus ydight	When the earl saw him dressed so,
	"Thou art," he seyd, "a trewe knight,	"You are," he said, "a true knight.
	Yblisced mot thou be."	May you be blessed!"
	Tho went Herhaud so trewe in tale	Then Herhaud, so faithful in speech,
	To seche his lord in londes fale,	Went to seek his lord in many lands
	For nothing he nold abide;	And would delay for nothing.
	He yede over alle bi doun and dale	He went all over, by hill and valley,
	To everi court and kinges sale	To every court and king's hall
	Bi mani a lond side.	Across many a country's border.
	Thurth Normondye and alle Speyne	Through Normandy and all Spain,
500	Into Fraunce and thurth Breteyne	Into France and through Brittany,
	He yede bothe fer and wide;	He traveled both far and wide,
	Thurth Lorain and thurth Lombardye	Through Lorraine and through Lombardy.
	And never no herd he telle of Gii	But he never heard any mention of Guy
	For nought that might bitide.	For anything that might happen.
	When Herhaud had sought him fer and hende	When Herhaud had searched far and wide,
	And he no might him nowhar fende,	And could not find him anywhere,
	Noither bi se no sond,	Neither by the sea nor on the sand,
	Into Inglond he gan wende	He turned back for England
	And th'erl Rohaut and al his frende	And Earl Rohaud and all his friends.
510	At Warwike he hem fond,	He found them in Warwick,
	And teld he hadde his lord sought	And said how he had searched for his lord
	And that he no might finde him nought	And that he could not find him
	In nonskinnes lond.	In any kind of land.
	Mani a moder child that day	Many a mother's child that day
	Wepe and gan say, "waileway,"	Wept and cried out, "woe is us!"
	Wel sore wringand her hond.	They wrung their hands bitterly.
	Now herken and ye may here	Now take note and you will hear
	In gest yif ye wil listen and lere	In the story, if you listen and learn,
	Hou Gii as pilgrim yede.	How Guy traveled as a pilgrim.
520	He welke about with glad chere	He walked about with cheerful spirits
	Thurth mani londes fer and nere	Through many lands, near and far,
	Ther God him wald spede.	Wherever God might guide him.
	First he went to Jerusalem	First he went to Jerusalem
	And sethen he went to Bedlem	And then he went to Bethlehem,
	Thurth mani an uncouthe thede.	Through many a foreign soil.
	Yete he bithought him sethen tho	And still he decided then
	Forto sechen halwen mo	To seek out more holy places
	To winne him heven-mede.	To win for himself Heaven's joys.
	Tho he went his pilgrimage	He continued his pilgrimage then
530	Toward the court of Antiage,	Toward the court of Antioch.
	Bi this half that cité	On the near side of that city
	He mett a man of fair parage,	He met a man of high peerage,
	Ycomen he was of heyghe linage	Who was born from noble ancestry
	And of kin fair and fre.	And of a fair and free family.
	Michel he was of bodi ypight,	He was well-built in body;
	A man he semed of michel might	He seemed a man of immense might
	And of gret bounté	And of great prowess,
	With white hore heved and berd yblowe	With grayish-white hair and flowing beard
	As white as ani driven snowe;	As white as the driven snow.
540	Gret sorwe than made he.	He was in great sorrow.
	So gret sorwe ther he made	He made such great mourning there
	Sir Gii of him rewthe hade	That Sir Guy had pity on him.

	He gan to wepe so sare.	He began to cry so bitterly
	His cloth he rent, his here totorn,	That he ripped his clothes and tore his hair
	And curssed the time that he was born	And cursed the time that he was born.
	Wel diolful was his fare;	His manner was full of anguish;
	More sorwe made never man.	No man ever made such a lament.
	Gii stode and loked on him than	Guy stood and looked on him
	And hadde of him gret care.	And had great concern for him.
550	He seyd, "Allas and walewo,	He said, "Alas! Woe is me!
	Al mi joie it is ago,	All my joy is gone.
	Of blis icham al bare."	I am bereft of all bliss."
	"Gode man, what artow," seyd Gii,	"Good man, who are you," said Guy,
	"That makest thus this reweful cri	"That you make this pitiful cry
	And thus sorweful mone?	And moan so sorrowfully?
	Me thenke for thee icham sori	I feel sorry for your sake,
	For that thine hert is thus drery,	For your heart is so downcast;
	Thi joie is fro thee gon.	Your joy is gone from you.
	Telle me the sothe Y pray thee	Tell me the truth, I ask you,
560	For Godes love in Trinité	For God's love in Trinity,
	That this world hath in won.	Who lived in this world.
	For Jhesu is of so michel might	For Jesus is of such great might
	He may make thine hert light	He may make your heart light
	And thou not never hou son."	At a time you do not expect it."
	"Gode man," seyd the pilgrim,	"Young man," replied the pilgrim,
	"Thou hast me frained bi God thin	"You have asked me by your God
	To telle thee of mi fare	To tell you about my troubles
	And alle the soth withouten les	And all the truth without lying.
	Ichil thee telle hou it wes	I will tell you how it happened,
570	Of blis hou icham bare.	How I am barren of joys.
	So michel sorwe is on me steke	So much grief has afflicted me
	That min hert it wil tobreke	That my heart will break from it
	With sorwe and sikeing sare.	With sorrow and tearful sighs.
	Forlorn ich have al mi blis	All of my happiness is lost!
	Y no schal never have joie, ywis,	I will never have joy, truly.
	In erthe Y wald Y ware.	I wish I were in my grave!
	"A man Y was of state sum stounde	I was once a man of stately rank
	And holden a lord of gret mounde	And respected as a lord of great authority
	And erl of al Durras.	And as earl of all Durrës.[13]
580	Fair sones ich hadde fiftene	I had fifteen fair sons
	And alle were knightes stout and kene;	And all were knights, strong and keen.
	Men cleped me th'erl Jonas.	Men called me Earl Jonas.
	Y trowe in this warld is man non,	I am sure there is no man in this world,
	Ywis, that is so wo bigon	Indeed, who is so burdened by woe
	Sethen the world made was,	Since the earth was made,
	For alle min sones ich have forlorn -	For I have lost all my sons.
	Better berns were non born -	Better men were never born!
	Therfore Y sing 'allas.'	For this my song is 'alas!'
	"For blithe worth Y never more:	For I will never again be happy;
590	Alle mi sones ich have forlore	I have lost all of my sons
	Thurth a batayl unride,	Through a hideous battle,
	Thurth Sarrayins that fel wore	Because of Saracens that were fierce.

[13] *Durras*: Probably modern Durrës in coastal Albania.

	To Jerusalem thai com ful yore	They came eagerly to Jerusalem
	To rob and reve with pride.	To rob and plunder with arrogance.
	And we toke our ost anon	And we took out our army at once,
	Ogaines hem we gun gon	Going forth against them
	Bateyl of hem to abide;	To face them in battle.
	The acountre of hem was so strong	Their attack was so strong
	That mani dyed ther among	That many among us died there
600	Or we wald rest that tide.	Before we could rest that night.
	"Thurth mi fiftene sone	Through my fifteen sons
	Were the geauntes overcome	The monsters were overcome
	And driven doun to grounde.	And driven down to the ground!
	Fiftene amirals ther wer nome,	Fifteen emirs were taken there.
	The king gan fle with alle his trome	Their king began to flee with his troops
	For drede of ous that stounde.	For dread of us at that moment.
	Ich and mi sones withouten lesing	My sons and I, without a lie,
	Out of that lond we driven the king	We drove the king out of that land
	And his men gaf dedli wounde.	And gave his men deadly wounds.
610	The king him hight Triamour,	Their king was called Triamour;
	A lord he was of gret honour	He was a lord of great honor
	And man of michel mounde.	And a man of immense prowess.
	"Than dede we wel gret foly:	Then we committed a great folly.
	We suwed him with maistrie	We pursued him in force
	Into his owhen lond.	Into his own lands.
	Into Alisaundre thai fleye owy,	They flew away into Alexandria;
	The cuntré ros up with a cri	The country rose up with a cry
	To help her king an hond.	To give hands to their king in help.
	In a brom feld ther wer hidde	Three hundred Saracens, well-armed,
620	Thre hundred Sarrayins wele yschridde	Were in hiding in a field of bushes,
	With helme and grimly brond,	All with helmets and lethal blades.
	Out of that brom thai lepen anon	Out of the bushes they leaped at once
	And bilapped ous everichon	And surrounded every one of us
	And drof ous alle to schond.	And drove us all to shameful defeat.
	"Thai hewen at ous with michel hete	They struck at us with blazing fury,
	And we layd on hem dintes grete	And we landed great blows on them
	And slouwen of her ferred,	And killed many of their troops.
	And ar that we were alle ynome	And before we were all taken
	Mani of hem were overcome	Many of them were overcome,
630	Ded wounded under wede.	Fatally wounded in their armor.
	Thai were to mani and we to fewe,	But they were too many and we too few.
	Al our armour thai tohewe	All of our armor they cut to pieces
	And stiked under ous our stede;	And slaughtered our horses under us.
	Yete we foughten afot long	Yet we fought on foot a long time until
	Til swerdes brosten that were strong	Our swords, which were so strong, broke
	And than yeld we ous for nede.	And then we surrendered out of necessity.
	"To the king we yolden ous al and some	We yielded ourselves to the king, all and some,
	That we might to raunsoun come	That we might be taken for ransom
	To save our lives ichon,	To save each of our lives.
640	Into Alisaunder he ladde ous tho	He led us then to Alexandria
	And into his prisoun dede ous do,	And put us into his prison,
	Was maked of lime and ston.	Which was made of solid limestone.
	Litel was our drink and lasse our mete,	Our drink was little and our food less.
	For hunger we wende our lives lete;	We thought we would lose our lives from hunger.
	Wel wo was ous bigon.	We were overcome with grief.
	So were we ther alle that yer	We were there all that year in this way,

	With michel sorwe bothe yfere	All together in great suffering,
	That socour com ous non.	For no help came to us.
	"So it bifel that riche Soudan	So it happened that a rich sultan
650	Made a fest of mani a man	Made a feast for many a man,
	Of thritti kinges bi tale.	For thirty kings in count.
	King Triamour com to court tho	King Triamour came to the court
	And Fabour his sone dede also	And Fabor, his son, did as well
	With knightes mani and fale	With knights, many and plentiful,
	The thridde day of that fest	On the third day of that feast,
	That was so riche and so honest	Which was so rich and stately,
	So derlich dight in sale.	And so lavishly prepared in the hall.
	After that fest that riche was	After that feast which was so grand,
	Ther bifel a wonder cas	A wondrous event happened
660	Wherthurth ros michel bale.	That would lead to great evil.
	"That riche Soudan hadde a sone	That rich sultan had a son
	That was yhold a douhti gome,	Who was held to be a rugged man;
	Sadok was his name.	Sadok was his name.
	The kinges sone Fabour he cleped him to,	The king's son, Fabor, called to him.
	Into his chaumber thai gun go,	They went into his chamber,
	Tho knightes bothe ysame.	Both of the two knights together.
	Sadok gan to Fabour sayn	Sadok asked Fabor
	Yif he wald ate ches playn	If he would play chess[14]
	And held ogain him game,	And challenged him to a game,
670	And he answerd in gode maner	And he answered in good faith
	He wald play with him yfere	That he would play together with him
	Withouten ani blame.	Without any poor sportsmanship.
	"Ate ches thai sett hem to playn,	They set themselves at the chessboard to play,
	Tho hendy knightes bothe tuayn	Both of those noble knights,
	That egre were of sight.	Who were so competitive in manner.
	Er thai hadde don half a game	Before they had finished half the game
	With strong wretthe thai gan to grame,	They began to seethe with strong rage,
	Tho gomes michel of might.	Those men of great might.
	Thurth a chek Fabour seyd for soth	It was with a check Fabor called, in truth,
680	Sadok in hert wex wroth	That Sadok became enraged in heart
	And missayd him anonright	And at once became abusive with him,
	And clepd him *fiz a putayn*	Calling him 'son of a whore!'[15]
	And smot him with might and main	He struck him with force and fury,
	Wherthurth ros michel fight.	Through which a great fight arose.
	"With a roke he brac his heved than	He smashed Sadok's head with a rook
	That the blod biforn out span	So that the blood spurted out
	In that ich place.	All over the place.
	'Sadok,' seyd than Fabour,	Then Fabor shouted, 'Sadok,
	'Thou dost me gret deshonour	You have done me great dishonor

[14] Chess was at the time thought to be helpful in teaching war strategies. As the game apparently began in India and spread through Muslim lands it would have still had an exotic connotation to an English audience. See also *Floris*, line 717, where the hero plays checkers.

[15] *Fiz a putayn:* The phrase 'pardon my French' is centuries later, but here there is a similar attribution of vulgar language to French. Compare *Bevis of Hampton*, line 302, where Bevis swears in English. Romance characters invariably speak and understand English no matter their geography. Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale* has a rare touch of realism when Custance washes up in Northumberland and the locals have difficulty comprehending her "Latyn corrupt" (*CT* II.519), presumably Italian.

690	That thou me manace.	To threaten me like this!
	Nar thou mi lordes sone were	If you were not my lord's son,
	Thou schuldest dye right now here.	You would die here right now.
	Schustow never hennes passe.'	You would never walk out of here!'
	Sadok stirt up to Fabour	Sadok charged Fabor
	And cleped him anon, 'Vile traitour!'	And swiftly called him, 'Vile traitor!'
	And smot him in the face.	And struck him in the face.
	"With his fest he smot him thore	With his fist he punched him there
	That Fabour was agreved sore	So that Fabor was infuriated
	And stirt up in that stounde.	And leaped up from his place.
700	The cheker he hent up fot-hot	He flung up the chessboard in a rush
	And Sadok in the heved he smot	And smashed it on Sadok's head
	That he fel ded to grounde.	So that he fell dead to the ground.[16]
	His fader sone he hath yteld	He had soon told his father
	That he hath the Soudan sone aqueld	That he had killed the sultan's son
	And goven him dethes wounde,	By giving him a deadly wound.
	On hors thai lopen than bilive	Without delay they leaped on horses;
	Out of the lond thai gun drive	They galloped away out of the land
	For ferd thai were yfounde.	For fear that they would be found.
	"When it was the Soudan teld	When the sultan was told
710	That his sone was aqueld	That his son was dead
	And brought of his liif dawe	And deprived of his life's days,
	On al maner he him bithought	He considered every way
	Hou that he him wreke mought	That he might wreak vengeance
	Thurth jugement of lawe.	Through the judgment of law.
	After the king he sent an heyghe	He had a messenger rush to the king
	To defende him of that felonie	To warn the man who had slain his son
	That he his sone hath yslawe	To defend himself against that felony;
	And bot he wald com anon	And unless he would come at once
	With strengthe he schuld on him gon,	He would come to him in force
720	With wilde hors don him drawe.	And have him drawn with wild horses.
	"King Triamour com to court tho	King Triamour then came to court
	And Fabour his sone dede also	And Fabor, his son, did as well
	To the Soudans parlement.	To the sultan's assembly.
	When thai biforn him comen beth	When they were there before him,
	Thai were adouted of her deth	They were in fear of their lives;
	Her lives thai wende have spent	They believed their days to be finished.
	For the Soudan cleped hem fot-hot	For the sultan called them in haste
	And his sones deth hem atwot	And charged them with his son's death
	And seyd thai were alle schent;	And said they were all condemned.
730	Bot thai hem therof were might	Unless they had a strong defense
	In strong perile he schuld hem dight	He would place them in great peril
	And to her jugement.	And to their judgment.
	"Than dede he com forth a Sarrayine -	Then the sultan had a Saracen come forward.
	Have he Cristes curs and mine	May he have Christ's curse, and mine,
	With boke and eke with belle -	With the book and bell as well![17]
	Out of Egypt he was ycome,	He had come out of Egypt.
	Michel and griselich was that gome	The man was huge and bloodthirsty

[16] Medieval chessboards were not balsa-wood affairs but could be carved from ivory or marble, and were certainly heavy enough to kill.

[17] *With boke and eke with belle*: The ritual tools of Catholic excommunication. See also *Athelston*, 682.

	With ani god man to duelle.	Against any good man in a duel.
	He is so michel and unrede	He is so gigantic and hideous
740	Of his sight a man may drede	That any man might dread his sight,
	With tong as Y thee telle;	As I tell you with my tongue.
	As blac he is as brodes brend,	He is as black as burnt nails;
	He semes as it were a fende	He seems as if he were a fiend
	That comen were out of helle.	That had come out of hell.
	"For he is so michel of bodi ypight	For he is so powerfully built in body that
	Ogains him tuelve men have no might	Twelve men against him have no chance,
	Ben thai never so strong,	However strong they are.
	For he is four fot sikerly	For he is so incredibly tall
	More than ani man stont him bi,	That he is four feet higher, certainly,
750	So wonderliche he is long.	Than any man standing by him.
	Yif King Triamour that ther was	If King Triamour, who was there,
	Might fenden him in playn place	Wished to defend himself on open ground
	Of that michel wrong	Against that great crime,
	Than is that vile glotoun	Then that foul monster
	Made the Soudans championoun	Would be appointed the sultan's champion
	Batayl of him to fong.	To face him in battle.
	"King Triamour answerd than	King Trimaour then gave his reply
	To that riche Soudan	To that rich sultan
	In that ich stounde	In that same place
760	That he wald defende him wele ynough	That he would defend himself well enough,
	That he never his sone slough	If the sultan would not slay his son
	No gaf him dedli wounde.	Or inflict deadly wounds on him.
	When he seye Amoraunt so grim -	No man would dare fight with him
	Ther durst no man fight with him	When he saw Amoraunt, so grim,
	So grille he was on grounde -	So savagely did he stand on the ground.
	Than asked he respite til a day	Then he asked for a reprieve for a time
	To finde another yif he may	To find another man, if he might
	Ogaines him durst founde.	Dare to face against him.
	"Than hadde he respite al that yere	Then he had a reprieve all that year
770	And fourti days so was the maner	And forty days, as was the custom,
	Thurth lawe was than in lond;	According to the law in the land then.
	Yif himselven durst nought fight	If he dared not fight himself,
	Finde another yif he might	He might find another if he
	Ogaines him durst stond.	Would dare to stand against him.
	The king as swithe hom is went,	The king went home as swiftly;
	Over alle his lond anon he sent	At once he sent word all over his land
	After erl, baroun, and bond	For earls, barons, and bonded men,
	And asked yif ani wer so bold -	And asked if any were so bold.
	Thriddendel his lond have he schold -	He who dared to take the battle in hand
780	The batayl durst take an hond.	Would have a third portion of his land.
	"Ac for nought that he hot might	But his promises were for nothing.
	Ther was non durst take the fight	There was no one who dared accept the fight
	With the geaunt for his sake.	With the giant for his sake.
	Than was ich out of prisoun nome,	Then I was taken out of prison.
	Biforn him he dede me come	He made me appear before him
	Conseyl of me to take	To take counsel with me,
	And asked me at worde fewe	And asked me in few words
	Yif Y wist other Y knewe	If I could think of or knew
	A man so mighti of strake	A man so mighty in combat
790	That for him durst take the fight;	Who would dare take the fight for him.
	Were he burjays other knight	If he were a burgess or knight,

	Riche prince he wald him make.	The king would make him a rich prince.
	"And yif Y might ani fende	And if I might find someone
	He wald make me riche and al mi kende	He would make me and all my kin rich
	And gif me gret honour	And give me great honor,
	And wold sese into min hond	And would place into my hand
	To helden thriddendel his lond	A third of his land to hold,
	With cité, toun, and tour.	With city, town, and tower.
	Ac ichim answerd than	But I answered then
800	In alle this warld was ther no man	That there was no man in all this world
	To fight with that traitour	To fight with that villain
	Bot yif it Gii of Warwike were	Unless it were Guy of Warwick
	Or Herhaud of Ardern his fere	Or Herhaud of Arden, his companion.
	In warld thai bere the flour.	In the world they bear the prize.
	"When the king herd tho	When the king heard
	That Y spac of tho knightes to	What I said about those two knights,
	Ful blithe he was of chere,	He was very pleased in his appearance.
	He kist me so glad he was.	He kissed me, he was so glad.
	'Merci,' he seyd, 'Erl Jonas;	'Thank you, Earl Jonas,' he said.[18]
810	Thou art me leve and dere.	'You are dear and precious to me.
	Yif ich hadde here Sir Gii	If I had here Sir Guy,
	Or Herhaud that is so hardi	Or Herhaud, who is so hardy,
	Of the maistri siker Y were.	I would be certain of victory.
	And thou mightest bring me her on	If you can bring me one of them here,
	Thee and thine sones Y schal lete gon	I will release you and your sons
	Fram prisoun quite and skere.'	From prison, fully and blameless.'
	"Bi mi lay he dede me swere	On my faith he made me swear
	That Y schuld trewelich bode bere	That I would faithfully carry word
	To tho knightes so hende	To those knights who were so valiant,
820	And seyd to me as swithe anon	And he said to me just as quickly that
	With michel sorwe he schuld me slon	With great sorrow he would slay me
	Bot ichem might fende	Unless I could find them,
	And al mine sones do todrawe;	And have all my sons torn apart.
	And ichim graunt in that thrawe	And I have been granted that interval
	To bring hem out of bende.	To bring them out of bondage.
	Out of this lond Y went tho	Out of this land I went
	With michel care and michel wo;	With great hardship and great woe.
	Y nist wider to wende.	I did not know which way to go.
	"Y sought hem into the lond of Coyne,	I searched for them in the land of Konya,
830	Into Calaber and into Sessoyne,	Into Calabria and into Saxony,
	And fro thennes into Almayne,	And from there into Germany,
	In Tuskan and in Lombardye,	In Tuscany and in Lombardy,
	In Fraunce and in Normondye,	In France and in Normandy,
	Into the lond of Speyne,	Into the land of Spain,
	In Braban, in Poil and in Bars,	In Brabant, Apulia, and Barcelona,
	And into kinges lond of Tars	And into the king's land of Tarsia[19]
	And thurth al Aquitayne,	And through all Aquitaine,
	In Cisil, in Hungri and in Ragoun,	In Sicily, in Hungary, and in Ragusa,
	In Romayne, Borgoine, and Gastoine	In Romania, Burgundy, and Gascony,

[18] *Merci:* This word was probably usually 'mercy' in the sense of asking for help or pardon, but here it makes contextual sense that Triamour is showing gratitude and using French *merci* as an interjection.

[19] *Tars*: Perhaps Tarsia, Italy, or Tarsus, modern Turkey.

840	And thurthout al Breteyne.	And throughout all Brittany.
	“And into Inglond wenden Y gan	And I made my way to England
	And asked ther mani a man	And asked many a man there,
	Bothe yong and old,	Both young and old,
	And in Warwike that cité	And in the city of Warwick,
	Ther he was lord of that cuntré	Where he was lord of that country
	For to haven in wold.	And held it in rule.
	Ac Y no fond non lite no miche	But I found nobody at all
	That couthe telle me sikerliche	Who could tell me with certainty
	Of tho to knightes bold,	About those two bold knights,
850	Wher Y schold Gii no Herhaud fende	Where I could find Guy or Herhaud
	In no lond fer no hende;	In any land, near or far.
	Therfore min hert is cold.	Therefore my heart is cold,
	“For ich have the king mi trewthe yplight	For I have sworn the king my pledge
	That Y schal bring Gii now right	That I will bring Guy right away
	Yif he olives be.	If he is alive.
	And yive Y bring him nought anon	And if I do not bring him at once,
	Wele ich wot he wil me slon -	I know well that that he will kill me.
	Therfore wel wo is me -	Because of this I am in great anguish.
	And min sones he schal don hong	He will have my sons hanged
860	And todrawe with michel wrong,	And drawn apart with great injustice,
	Tho knightes hende and fre.	Those knights, gracious and noble.
	And yif thai dye gret harm it is	And if they die it is a great sadness.
	For hem ich have swiche sorwe, ywis,	For them I have such sorrow, to be sure,
	Mine hert wil breken on thre.”	My heart will be broken into three.”
	“God man,” seyd Gii, “listen me now,	“Good man,” said Guy, “listen to me now.
	For thine sones gret sorwe hastow	You have great sorrow for your sons,
	And no wonder it nis	And it is no wonder,
	When thou Gii and Herhaud hath sought	When you have looked for Guy and Herhaud
	And thou no may hem finde nought;	And you cannot find them.
870	Thi care is michel, ywis.	Your grief is great, certainly.
	Thurth hem thine hope was to go fre	Through them your hope was to go free,
	And thi sones al forth with thee	With all your sons forth with you,
	Thurth Godes help and his.	Through God’s help and theirs.
	Sum time bi dayes old	There was a time in the old days
	For douhti men thai wer told	When they were counted as sturdy men
	And holden of gret priis.	And held in high esteem.
	“Thurth Godes helpe our Dright -	Through God’s help, our Lord,
	He be min help and give me might	Who is my support and gives me strength,
	And leve me wele to spede -	And grants me success,
880	And for Gyes love and Herhaud also	And for Guy’s love and Herhaud also,
	That thou hast sought with michel wo,	Who were fearless in deeds,
	That douhti were of dede,	Who you have searched for with great trouble,
	Batayl ichil now for thee fong	I will take up the battle now for you
	Ogain the geaunt that is so strong,	Against the giant who is so strong,
	Thou seyst is so unrede.	Who you say is so hideous.
	And thei he be the fende outright	And even if he is the devil himself,
	Y schal for thee take the fight	I will take the fight for you
	And help thee at this nede.”	And help you in your time of need.”
	When th’erl herd him speke so	When the earl heard him speak so,
890	That he wald batayl fong for him tho	That he would undergo battle for him,
	He biheld fot and heved.	He eyed him from foot to head.
	Michel he was of bodi pight,	He was built powerfully in body;
	A man he semed of michel might	He seemed a man of great might,

	Ac pouerliche he was biweved.	But he was poorly clothed.
	With a long berd his neb was growe,	His face was overgrown with a long beard.
	Miche wo him thought he hadde ydrowe.	He looked as if he had suffered many hardships.
	He wende his wit were reved	He assumed the man had lost his wits,
	For he seyd he wald as yern	For he said without hesitation that he would
	Fight with that geaunt stern	Fight with that forbidding giant,
900	Bot yif he hadde him preved.	Unless it was denied to him.
	"God man," than seyd he,	"Good man," he said then,
	"God almighten foryeld it thee	"God Almighty reward you
	That is so michel of might	For being so great in strength
	Thatow wost batayl for me fong	That you would undertake battle for me
	Ogain the geaunt that is so strong;	Against the giant, who is so strong.
	Thou knowest him nought, Y plight,	But I swear, you know nothing about him!
	For yif he loked on thee with wrake,	For if he looked on you with rage,
	Sternliche with his eyghen blake,	Sternly, with his black eyes,
	So grim he is of sight	He is so terrifying to see.
910	Wastow never so bold in al thi teime	You were never so bold in all your days
	Thatow durst batayl of him nim	That you would dare face him in battle
	No hold ogaines him fight."	Or withstand the fight against him."
	"Gode man," seyd Gii, "lat be that thought	"My good man," said Guy, "let that thought go.
	For swiche wordes help ous nought	For such words give us no help
	Ogain that schrewe qued.	Against that wicked devil!
	Mani hath loked me opon	Many have looked upon me
	With wicked wil, mani on	With malicious intent, many a man
	That wald han had min hed,	Has wanted to have my head,
	And thei no fled Y never yete	And I have never yet fled from them,
920	No never for ferd batayl lete,	Nor ever left a battle out of fear,
	For no man that brac bred.	For any man who ever ate bread!
	And thei he be the devels rote	And even if he is the devil's spawn,
	Y schal nought fle him afot,	I will not back one foot away,
	Bi Him that suffred ded."	In the name of Him who suffered death."
	"Leve sir," than seyd he,	"Dear sir," he then said,
	"God of heven foryeld it te.	"God in Heaven reward you for it!
	Thine wordes er ful swete."	Your words are very sweet."
	For joie he hadde in hert that stounde;	He had joy in his heart that moment.
	On knes he fel adoun to grounde	He fell to his knees to the ground
930	And kist Sir Gyes fet.	And kissed Sir Guy's feet.
	Gii tok him up in armes to,	Guy took him up in his two arms
	Into Alisaunder thai gun go	And they went into Alexandria
	With the king to mete.	To meet with the king.
	And when thai com into the tour	And when they came into the tower
	Bifor the king Sir Triamour	Before the king, Sir Triamour,
	Wel fair thai gun him grete.	They greeted him courteously.
	And when he seye th'erl Jonas	And when the king saw Earl Jonas,
	Unnethe he knewe him in the fas	He barely recognized his face,
	So chaunged was his ble.	So much had his features changed.
940	"Erl Jonas," seyd the king,	"Earl Jonas," said the king,
	"Telle me now withouten lesing	"Tell me now without any lying,
	Gii and Herhaud where ben he?"	Guy and Herhaud—where are they?"
	Th'erl answerd and siked sore,	The earl answered and sighed sadly,
	"Gii no Herhaud sestow no more	"I tell you the truth,
	For sothe Y telle thee.	You will see Guy or Herhaud no more.
	For hem ich have in Inglond ben	For them I have been in England
	And Y no might hem nowhar sen,	And I could not see them anywhere;

	Therfore wel wo is me.	Therefore woe is me. But the people
	“Ac the lond folk teld me in speche	Of that land told me in conversation
950	That Gii was gon halwen to seche	That Guy had gone to seek out holy places,
	Wel fer in uncouthe lond	Far away in unfamiliar lands,
	And Herhaud after him is went	And Herhaud had gone after him
	For to seche him verrament.	To seek him out, in truth.
	Noither of hem Y no fond.	I found neither one of them.
	Ac this man ich have brought to thee	But I have brought this man to you
	That hath ben man of gret bounté	Who is a warrior of great skill
	That wele dar take on hond	And will take in hand the challenge
	Ogain the geaunt that is so fel	Against the giant who is so fierce,
	Al for to fende thee ful wel	All to defend you in full.
960	For drede wil he nought wond.”	He will not quaver in fear.”
	“Erl Jonas,” seyd the king,	“Earl Jonas,” said the king,
	“Loke with him be no feynting	“See that there is no cowardice in him
	That Y deseyved be.	So that I am not deceived.
	And yif ther be thou schalt anon	And if there is, you will at once
	Be honged and thi sones ichon.”	Be hanged along with each of your sons.”
	“Y graunt, sir,” than seyd he.	“I give my word, sir,” he then replied.
	The king cleped Sir Gyoun	The king called Sir Guy to him
	And asked him at schort resoun,	And asked him curtly,
	“What is thi name tel me?”	“What is your name, tell me?”
970	Sir Gii answerd to the king,	Sir Guy answered the king,
	“Youn,” he seyd, “withouten lesing	“Youn,” he said, “Without lying,
	Men clepeth me in mi cuntré.”	Is what men call me in my land.”
	“What cuntré artow?” the king sede.	“From what country are you?” the king said.
	“Of Inglond, so God me rede;	“From England, so God help me.
	Therin ich was yborn.”	I was born there.”
	“O we,” seyd the king, “artow Inglis knight?	“Ah!” said the king, “You are an English knight?
	Than schuld Y thurth skil and right	Then I should, by reason and right,
	Hate thee ever more.	Hate you forevermore.
	Knewe thou nought the gode Gii	Did you not know this good Guy
980	Or Herhaud that was so hardi?	Or Herhaud, who was so manly?
	Tel me the sothe bifore.	Tell me the truth to my face.
	Wele ought ich be Gyes fo man;	I should very well be Guy’s enemy.
	He slough mi brother Helmadan,	He killed my brother Helmadan.
	Thurth him icham forlore.	Because of him he is lost to me.
	“Min em he slough, the riche Soudan,	He killed my uncle, the rich sultan,
	Ate mete among ous everilkan.	At his dinner, among every one of us!
	Seyghe Y never man so bigin.	I never saw a man behave so!
	Y seyghe hou he his heved of smot	I saw how he struck his head off
	And bar it oway with him fot-hot	And carried it away with him in haste,
990	Maugré that was therinne.	Despite all who were there!
	After him we driven tho -	We chased after him then.
	The devel halp him thennes to go,	The devil helped him to get away;
	Y trowe he is of his kinne.	I believe he is of his kin.
	Mahoun gaf that thou wer he,	Mohammad grant that you were him!
	Ful siker might Y than be	I would then be fully certain
	The maistri forto winne.”	To win the victory.”
	Sir Gii answerd to the king,	Sir Guy answered the king,
	“Wel wele Y knowe withouten lesing	“So help me God, I know Herhaud
	Herhaud so God me rede	Very well, without a lie.
1000	And yif thou haddest her on here	And if you had one of them here,
	Of the maistri siker thou were	You would be sure of triumph

	The bateyl forto bede."	To command the battle."
	The king asked him anonright,	The king rounded on him at once,
	"Whi artow thus ivel ydight	"Then why are you so shabbily equipped
	And in thus pouer wede?	And in these ragged clothes?
	A feble lord thou servest, so thenketh me,	You serve a feeble lord, it seems to me,
	Or oway he hath driven thee	Or he has driven you away
	For sum ivel dede."	For some evil deed."
	"Nay, sir, for God," quath Gii,	"No, sir, by God," replied Guy.
1010	"A wel gode Lord than serve Y.	"I serve the highest Lord of all.
	With Him was no blame.	I have no grievance with Him.
	Wel michel honour He me dede	He gave me great honor
	And gret worthschipe in everi stede	And lavish blessings in every place,
	And sore ich have Him grame;	And I have troubled Him sorely.
	And therfore icham thus ydight	And therefore I am dressed
	To cri Him merci day and night	To cry to Him for mercy day and night
	Til we ben frendes same.	Until we are at peace together.
	And mi Lord and Y frende be	And when my Lord and I are friends
	Ichil wende hom to mi cuntré	I will go home to my country
1020	And live with joie and game."	And live with joy and pleasure."[20]
	"Frende Youn," seyd the king,	"Youn, my friend," said the king,
	"Wiltow fight for mi thing	"Will you fight for my cause
	Other Y schal another purvay?"	Or should I hire another man?"
	"Therfor com ich hider," quath Gii,	"For this I have come," said Guy.
	"Thurth Godes help and our Levedi	"Through God's help and our Lady,
	As wele as Y may.	I will do as well as I can.
	Bot first th'erl Jonas and his sones	But first the earl and his sons
	Schal be deliverd out of prisones	Will be released out of prison
	This ich selve day."	This same day."
1030	The king answerd, "Y graunt thee.	The king answered, "I grant it.
	Mahoun he mot thine help be	May Mohammad, who is
	That is mi lord verray."	My true lord, be your support."
	"Nay," seyd Gii, "bot Marie sone	"No," said Guy, "only Mary's son
	He mot to help come	May be of any help,
	For Mahoun is worth nought."	For Mohammad is worth nothing."
	"Frende Youn," seyd the king,	"My friend Youn," said the king,
	"Understond now mi teling,	"Understand now what I tell you
	Al what ich have ythought	And all that I have planned.
	Yif that thou may overcom the fight	If you can prevail in the fight
1040	And defende me with right	And defend me with justice
	The wrong is on me sought,	Against the wrong put on me,
	So michel Y schal for thee do	I will do so much for you
	That men schal speke therof evermo	That men will speak of it forevermore
	As wide as this warld is wrought.	As far as this world is created.
	"Alle the men that in my prisoun be	All the men who are in my prison
	Thai schul be deliverd for love of thee	Who are counted as Christians,
	That Cristen men be told.	From here to India,
	Fram henne to Ynde that cité	Will be released for love of you.
	Quite-claym thai schul go fre	They will go free by pardon,

[20] Like Sir Amiloun's trick of impersonating Amis, or Odysseus' ruse of calling himself 'Nobody' to the Cyclops, Guy indulges in a clever speech with a double meaning. Yet here the secondary meaning of 'Lord' piously describes his heavenly reconciliation with God.

1050	Bothe yong and old.	Both young and old.
	And so gode pes Y schal festen anon	And I will establish such a firm peace
	That Cristen men schul comen and gon	That Christian men can come and go
	To her owhen wille in wold."	By their own will in the world."
	"Gramerci," than seyd Sir Gii,	"My gracious thanks," said Sir Guy.
	"That is a fair gift sikerly,	"That is a fair gift, certainly.
	God leve thee it wele to hold."	May God grant that you hold to it."
	The king dede make a bathe anonright	The king had a bath drawn at once
	For to bathe Gii and better dight;	For Guy to be bathed and better dressed.
	In silk he wald him schrede.	He wanted him robed in silk.
1060	"Nay, sir," than seyd Sir Gii,	"No, sir," Sir Guy said,
	"Swiche clothes non kepe Y	"So help me God, I have no use
	Also God me rede	For such clothes,
	To were clothes gold bigo	To wear gold-embroidered finery.
	For Y was never wont therto	For it was never my desire
	No non so worthliche wede.	To have such rich garments.
	Mete and drink anough give me	Give me enough food and drink,
	And riche clothes lat thou be,	And put aside fine clothes;
	Y kepe non swiche prede."	I don't care for such flamboyance."
	And when the time com to th'ende	And when the time came
1070	That thai schuld to court wende	That they should go to the court
	Ther sembled a fair ferred.	Where there was a grand assembly,
	King Triamour maked him yare tho	King Triamour made himself ready,
	And Fabour his sone dede also	And his son Fabor did as well,
	With knightes stithe on stede.	With knights strong on their steeds.
	To courtward than went he	They set off for the court
	To Espire that riche cité	Of Speyer, that rich city,[21]
	With joie and michel prede.	With joy and great ceremony.
	To the Soudan thai went on heye	They went in haste to the sultan
	With wel gret chevalrie	With a large group of knights
1080	Bateyle forto bede.	To offer battle.
	Gii was ful wele in armes dight	Guy was well-prepared in arms
	With helme and plate and brini bright	With helmet, armor, and shining mail,
	The best that ever ware.	The best that ever was.
	The hauberk he hadde was Renis	The linked tunic he had was Rhenish;
	That was King Clarels, ywis,	It was King Clarel's, in fact,
	In Jerusalem when he was thare.	From Jerusalem when he was there.
	A thef stale it in that stede	A thief stole into that place
	And oway therwith him dede,	And took it away with him,
	To hethenesse he it bare,	Smuggling it into heathen lands.
1090	King Triamours elders it bought	King Triamour's forebears bought it
	And in her hord-house thai thought	And hoped to keep it forevermore
	To hold it ever mare.	In their treasure house.
	Sir Gii thai toke it in that plas.	There they gave it to Sir Guy;
	Thritti winter afrayd it nas;	It had been undisturbed for thirty years.
	Ful clere it was of mayle	The tunic was of gleaming mail;
	As bright as ani silver it was,	It was as bright as any silver.
	The halle schon therof as sonne of glas	It shone in the hall like the sun on glass,
	For sothe withouten fayle.	To speak the truth, without doubt.

[21] *Espire*: This is likely Speyer in southern Germany, near Stuttgart, and not simply 'spires' generically. The city is still called *Espira* in Spanish. See also line 1702.

	His helme was of so michel might	His helmet was so powerfully built
1100	Was never man overcomen in fight	That no man was ever overcome in combat
	That hadde it on his ventayle.	Who had it on his faceplate.
	It was Alisaunders the gret lording	It was Alexander the Great's
	When he faught with Poreus the king	When he fought with king Porus,[22]
	That hard him gan aseyle.	Who had battled him hard.
	A gode swerd he hadde withouten faile	He had a good sword, beyond a doubt;
	That was Ectors in Troye batayle,	It was Hector's from the Trojan battles,
	In gest as-so men fint.	As men can find in legends.
	Ar he that swerd dede forgon	Before he gave up that sword,
	Of Grece he slough ther mani on	He slaughtered many a Greek
1110	That died thurth that dint.	Who died through its blows.
	Hose and gambisoun so gode knight schold,	He had leg-guards and jacket,
	A targe listed with gold	As a good knight should, and around his neck
	About his swere he hint.	He bore a shield edged with gold.
	Nas never wepen that ever was make	There was never a weapon made
	That o schel might therof take	That could cut through that shield
	Namore than of the flint.	Anymore than it might a piece of flint.
	For King Triamours elders it laught,	What King Triamour's forefathers obtained,
	King Darri sum time it aught,	And King Darius owned for a time,
	That Gii was under pight.	Protected Sir Guy underneath.
1120	Ich man axe other bigan	Every man began to ask the other
	Whennes and who was that man	Who that man was, and from where,
	That with the geaunt durst fight.	Who dared to fight with the giant.
	King Triamour seyd with wordes fre	King Triamour said with noble words,
	"Sir Soudan, herken now to me	"Sir Sultan, hear me now,
	Astow art hendy knight.	If you are a gracious knight.
	To thi court icham now come	I have now come to your court
	To defende me of that ich gome	To defend myself from that creature
	That is so stern of sight.	Who is so dreadful to see.
	"This litel knight that stont me by	This little knight who stands by me
1130	Schal fende me of that felonie	Will defend me from that felony
	And make me quite and skere."	And make me free and clear!"
	"Be stille," seyd the Soudan tho,	"Be quiet," replied the sultan then.
	"That batail schal wel sone be go	"The battle will start at once,
	Also brouke Y mi swere!"	As sure as I have head and neck!"
	He dede clepe Amorant so grim	He called for Amorant, so grim,
	And Gii stode and loked on him	And Guy stood and looked at him,
	Hou foule he was of chere.	Seeing how foul he was in appearance.
	"It is," seyd Gii, "no mannes sone,	"It is," Guy said, "no son of a man.
	It is a devel fram helle is come,	It is a devil come from Hell.
1140	What wonder doth he here?	What wonders does he intend here?
	"Who might his dintes dreye	He is so strong in deeds,
	That he no schuld dye an heye	Who could endure his blows
	So strong he is of dede?"	Without having to die hastily?"
	Than speken thai alle of the batayle,	Then they all conferred on the battle,
	Where it schuld be withouten fayle	Where it should be beyond a doubt.
	Thai token hem to rede.	They took themselves into counsel,
	Than loked thai it schuld be	And then decided that it should be

[22] Alexander battled the Indian leader Porus at the Hydaspes river, in modern Pakistan, in 326 B.C. Alexander prevailed but lost his beloved horse Bucephalus.

	In a launde under the cité;	On a plain below the city.
	Thider thai gun hem lede.	They began to lead themselves there.
1150	With a river it ern al about,	A river ran all around it.
	Therin schuld fight tho knightes stout;	There the sturdy knights would fight;
	Thai might fle for no nede.	They could not flee for any need.
	Over the water thai went in a bot,	Over the water they went in a boat.
	On hors thai lopen fot-hot	The knights, so keen in spirit,
	Tho knightes egre of mode.	Galloped impatiently on horses.
	Thai priked the stedes that thai on sete	They spurred the steeds that they sat on
	And smiten togider with dentes grete	And clashed together with great blows
	And ferd as thai wer wode	And warred as if they were berserk
	Til her schaftes in that tide	Until the moment that their lances
1160	Gun to schiver bi ich a side	Began to splinter on each side
	About hem ther thai stode.	About them where they stood.
	Than thai drough her swerdes grounde	Then they drew their sharpened swords
	And hewe togider with grimli wounde	And hacked at each other with grisly wounds
	Til thai spradde al ablode.	Until they were covered with blood.
	Sir Amoraunt drough his gode brond	When he had lost his lance,
	That wele carf al that it fond	Sir Amorant drew his best blade
	When he hadde lorn his launce.	That easily carved all that it found.
	That never armour might withstond	No armor that was ever made
	That was made of smitthes hond	From a smith's hand might withstand it,
1170	In hethenesse no in Fraunce.	In heathen lands or in France.
	It was Sir Ercules the strong	It was owned by Hercules the strong,
	That mani he slough therwith with wrong	Who killed many with it in wickedness
	In batayle and in destaunce.	In battle and in armed combat.
	Ther was never man that it bere	There was never a man who bore it
	Overcomen in batayle no in were	Who was overcome in battle or in war
	Bot it were thurth meschaunce.	Unless it was through treachery.
	It was bathed in the flom of Helle,	It was bathed in the streams of Hell
	Agnes gaf it him to wille	Where a goddess gave it to him to wield[23]
	He schuld the better spede.	So that he would have better fortune.
1180	Who that bar that swerd of might	Whoever bore that sword of command
	Was never man overcomen in fight	Was never defeated in a fight by man
	Bot it were thurth unlede.	Unless it was through deceitfulness.
	Ther worth Sir Gii to deth ybrought	Sir Guy would have been brought to death there
	Bot yif God have of him thought,	Had God not thought of him,
	His best help at nede.	His best help in time of need.
	Togider thai wer yern heweinde	They were briskly clashing together
	With her brondes wele kerveinde	With their blades sharpened well,
	And maden her sides blede.	And they made their sides bleed.
	Sir Amoraunt was agreved in hert	Sir Amorant was distressed at heart
1190	And smot to Gii a dint ful smert	And struck a stinging blow on Guy
	With alle the might he gan welde	With all the might he could muster,
	And hitt him on the helme so bright	And hit him on the shining helmet
	That alle the stones of michel might	So that all the stones of great value
	Fleyghe doun in the feld.	Fell down onto the field.

[23] *Agnes gaf it him*: The identity of *Agnes* is unknown. TEAMS posits that the English scribe heard line 8467 of *Gui de Warewic*, "Une deuesse la li dona" ("a goddess gave it to him"), and misheard *une deuesse*, 'a goddess,' as 'Agnes.' Hercules was not unconditionally good and was also known for cheating and murder. The scribe might also have heard *ogress*.

	Al of the helme the swerd out stint	The sword struck down all of the helmet,
	And forth right with that selve dint	And that same blow sheared away
	Other half fot of the scheld	A foot and a half of the shield,
	That never was atamed ar than	Which had never been conquered before
	For knight no for no nother man	By knight or by any other man,
1200	No were he never so beld.	No matter how bold he was.
	The sadelbowe he clef atuo,	He split the saddle pommel in two;
	The stedes nek he dede also	He broke the steed's neck as well
	With his grimli brond;	With his fearsome blade.
	Withouten wem or ani wounde	Without any injury or damage,
	Wele half a fot into the grounde	The sharp sword plunged down
	The scharp swerd it wond.	Well more than half a foot into the earth.
	Sir Gii to grounde fallen is,	Sir Guy was brought to the ground.
	He stirt up anon, ywis,	He jumped up at once, in truth,
	And loked and gan withstond.	And looked and stood firmly.
1210	Anon right in that ich stede	Immediately at that moment
	To God almighten he bad his bede	He made his prayer to God Almighty
	And held up bothe his hond.	And held up both his hands.
	Sir Gii anon up stirt	Sir Guy rose up at once
	As man that was agremed in hert;	Like a man enraged in heart.
	Nought wel long he lay.	He did not lie down for long.
	"Lord," seyd Gii, "God Almight	"Lord," said Guy, "God Almighty,
	That made the therkenes to the night	Who made the darkness into night,
	So help me today.	So help me today!
	Scheld me fro this geaunt strong	Shield me from this strong giant
1220	That Y no deth of him afong	So that I do not suffer death from him,
	Astow art lord verray.	For you are truly the Lord."
	That dint," he seyd, "was ivel sett	He then said to Amorant, "That blow
	Wele schal Y com out of thi dett,	Was foully struck. I will repay you well,
	Yif that Y libbe may."	If I may live to do it."
	Gii hent his swerd that was ful kene	Guy raised his keen sword
	And smot Amoraunt with hert tene	And with a furious heart he struck Amorant
	A dint that sat ful sore	With a blow that fell sorely,
	That a quarter of his scheld	So that he made a quarter of his shield
	He made to fleye in the feld	Fly to the ground
1230	Al with his grimli gore.	With his deadly blade.
	The stedes nek he smot atuo,	He struck the steed's neck in two,
	Amoraunt to grounde is fallen tho,	And Amorant was thrown to the ground.
	Wo was him therfore.	He was in distress over it.
	Than were on fot tho knightes bold,	Then those bold knights were on foot,
	Fight o fot yif thai wold -	And would fight on their feet if they could,
	Her stedes thai han forlore.	Now that they had lost their horses.
	Amoraunt with hert ful grim	Amorant, with a savage heart,
	Smot to Gii, and Gii to him	Struck at Guy, and Guy at him,
	With strokes stern and stive.	With strokes that were harsh and stiff.
1240	Hard thai hewe with swerdes clere	They hacked so fiercely with shining blades,
	That helme and swerd that strong were	Their helmets and swords which were so strong
	Thai gun hem al todrive.	Were broken into pieces.
	Hard foughten tho championes	The champions fought so hard
	That bothe plates and hauberjouns	That both their armor and mailcoats
	Thai gun to ret and rive;	Began to split and crack.
	And laiden on with dintes gret	They fought on with merciless blows.
	Aither of hem so other gan bete	Both of them beat on the other
	That wo was hem olive.	So that it was torment to remain alive.

	Sir Amoraunt was agreved strong	Sir Amorant was strongly vexed
1250	That o man stode him tho so long,	That one man had withstood him so long.
	To Gii a strok he raught	He reached a blow toward Guy
	And hit him on the helme so bright	And hit him on the shining helmet
	That al the floures fel doun right	With a thundering stroke
	With a ful grimly draught.	So that all the jeweled flowers fell right off.
	The cercle of gold he carf ato	He carved in two the band of gold
	And forth with his dint also,	And yet continued forward with his stroke
	Ther bileved it nought.	And did not hold back there.
	On the scheld the swerd doun fel	The sword came down on the shield
	And cleve it into halvendel;	And cleaved it into halves,
1260	Almost to grounde him brought.	Almost bringing him to the ground.
	What with the swerdes out draweing,	But in drawing out the sword,
	And with his hetelich out braiding	And with his hotly disengaging it,
	Ther fel a wonder cas.	There was a wondrous happening.
	Sir Gii fel on knes to grounde	Sir Guy fell on his knees to the ground
	And stirt up in that selve stounde	And got up in the same moment
	And seyd, "Lord, ful of grace,	And said, "Lord, full of grace,
	Never dint of knight non	Never before has the blow of any knight
	No might me are knele don	Made me kneel down
	In no stede ther Y was."	In any place where I was!"
1270	Sir Gii hent up his swerd fot-hot,	Sir Guy flung up his sword in haste
	Amoraunt on the hod he smot	And struck Amorant on the hood
	That he stumbled in the place.	So that he stumbled in his tracks.
	He hit him on the helme an heyghe	He hit him on the helmet in a rush
	And with that dint the swerd it fleyghe,	And with that blow the sword passed on;
	Bi the nasel it gan doun founde	Along the nose-guard it moved down
	And so it dede bi the ventayle	And did the same at the face-guard,
	And carf it ato saunfaile	And carved them in two, beyond doubt,
	And into his flesche a wounde.	And cut a wound into his flesh.
	His targe with gold list	His shield with its golden rim
1280	He carf atuo thurth help of Crist	Was cut into two through the help of Christ.
	He cleve that ich stounde.	He cleaved it in the same instant.
	So heteliche the brond out he plight	So violently did he draw the blade out
	That Amorant anonright	That Amorant at once
	Fel on knes to grounde.	Fell on his knees to the ground.
	So strong batayle was hem bituene,	There was such a furious fight between them
	So seyd thai that might it sene,	That those who could observe it
	That seye thai never non swiche;	Said they had never seen one like it.
	That never was of wiman born	There were never two knights
	Swiche to knightes as thai worn	Born of women as they were
1290	That foughten togider with wreche	Who fought together with such rage
	On a day bifor the nativité	On the day before the nativity
	Of Seyn Jon the martir fre	Of Saint John the righteous martyr,
	That holy man is to seche.	To whom holy men appeal.[24]
	Togider fought tho barouns bothe	Both of the warriors fought together,
	That in hert wer so wrothe,	Who were so wrathful in heart.
	Of love was ther no speche.	There were no words of affection!

[24] *Seyn Jon the martir fre*: There is a John the Martyr (d. about 362), but TEAMS believes John the Baptist is more likely here, a highly popular saint who was, significantly, also martyred by beheading. His nativity is traditionally celebrated on June 24.

	Sir Amoraunt withdrough him	Sir Amorant withdrew himself
	With loureand chere wroth and grim,	With a glowering face, angry and grim.
	For the blod of him was lete,	For his blood was flowing;
1300	That drink he most other his liif forgon	He had to drink or else lose his life.
	So strong thrust yede him opon	Thirst ravaged him strongly,
	So michel was his hete.	For he was badly overheated.
	"Fourti batayls ichave overcome	"I have prevailed in forty battles,
	Ac fond Y never er moder sone	But I never before met any mother's son
	That me so sore gan bete.	Who beat on me so sorely.
	Tel me," he seyd, "what artow?	Tell me," he said, "who are you?
	Felt Y never man ar now	I never felt any man before now
	That gaf dintes so grete.	Who gave such hard blows.
	"Tel me," he seyd, "wennes thou be?	Tell me," he said, "where are you from?
1310	For thou art strong, so mot Y the,	For you are strong, as I live and die,
	And of michel might."	And of great might."
	Sir Gii answerd withouten bost,	Sir Guy answered without boasting,
	"Cristen icham wele thou wost	"I am a Christian, you know well,
	Of Inglond born, Y plight.	Born in England, I assure you.
	King Triamour me hider brought	King Triamour brought me here
	For to defenden him yif Y mought	To defend him if I might
	Of that michel unright	From that great injustice
	That ye beren on him with wough	That you charge on him wrongly,
	That Fabour never Sadony slough	For Fabor never murdered Sadok,
1320	Noither bi day no night."	Neither by day or night."[25]
	"O artow Inglis?" seyd Amorant.	"Ah, are you English?" said Amorant.
	"Now wald mi lord Ternagaunt	"Now if my lord Termagant would grant
	That thou were Gii the strong.	That you were Guy the strong!
	Mahoun gaf that thou wer he,	Mohammad grant that you were him!
	Blithe wald Y than be	I would be happy then
	Batail of him to fong;	To face him in battle.
	For he hath destrud al our lawe	For he has fought against our religion.[26]
	His heved wald ichave ful fawe	I would very gladly have his head
	Or heighe on galwes hong;	Or see it hung high on the gallows.
1330	For kever schal we never er more	We will never again recover
	That he hath don ous forlore	What he has caused us to lose
	With wel michel wrong.	With shameful wickedness!
	"With michel wrong and michel wough	With injustice and with great woe
	Fourti thousend of ous he slough	He slaughtered forty thousand of us
	In Costentin on a day.	In Constantinople on one day.
	He and Herhaud his felawe	He and his comrade Herhaud
	Michel han destrud our lawe	Have done great damage to our faith,
	That ever more mon Y may.	Which I could lament for ever more!
	Yif he wer slain with brond of stiel	If he were slain with a blade of steel,
1340	Than were Y wroken on him ful wel	Then I would be fully avenged on him
	That han destrud our lay."	Who has injured our religion."
	Sir Gii answerd, "Whi seistow so?	Sir Guy answered, "Why do you say so?

[25] Fabor certainly does murder Sadok, though he is provoked. Either the poet errs or wants Sir Guy to be innocent of that fact to heighten his altruism. Otherwise Guy knowingly champions a guilty man, Triamour, even if for the purposes of aiding Jonas.

[26] Amorant is referring to an episode in the Couplet *Guy of Warwick*, 2869-4096, where Guy defends Constantinople from a Saracen invasion. The Muslims do 'recover' Constantinople in 1453.

	Hath Gii ani thing thee misdo?”	Has Guy done *you* any wrong?”
	Amoraunt seyd, “Nay,	Amorant said, “No,
	“Ac it wer gret worthschip, ywis,	But it would bring great honor, indeed,
	To alle the folk of hethenisse	To all the people of the caliphate
	That Y hadde so wroken mi kende.	For me to avenge my brothers.
	Cristen,” he seyd, “listen to me,	Christian,” he said, “listen to me.
	The weder is hot astow may se,	As you can see, the weather is hot.
1350	Y pray thee, leve frende,	I ask of you, good friend,
	Leve to drink thou lat me gon	That you give me time to go drink,
	For the lordes love thou levest on,	For the love of the gods you believe in,
	Astow art gode and hende.	If you are good and noble.
	For thrist mi hert wil tospring	For my heart will burst from thirst,
	And for hete withouten lesing	And because of heat, without a lie,
	Mi live wil fro me wende.	My life will depart from me.
	“And yif Y schal be thus aqueld	And if I am killed in this way,
	Thurth strong hete in the feld	Overcome by heat on the field,
	It were ogain thee skille.	It would demean your battle skills.
1360	Unworthschipe it war to thee -	It would not be praiseworthy to you.
	It were thee gret vileté	It would stain you with great villainy
	In wat lond thou com tille.	In whatever land you come to.[27]
	Ac lete me drink a litel wight	But let me drink a little bit
	For thi lordes love ful of might	For your lord’s love, full of might,
	That thou lovest with wille	That you love with all your will;
	And Y thee hot bi mi lay	And I promise you by my faith,
	Yif thou have ani threst today	If you have any thirst today
	Thou shalt drink al thi fille.”	You will drink your fill.”
	Sir Gii answerd, “Y graunt thee	Sir Guy answered, “I grant it to you
1370	And yete today thou yeld it me	If you yield it back to me today
	Withouten ani fayle.”	Without failure.”
	And when he hadde leve of Sir Gii	And when he had consent from Sir Guy,
	He was ful glad sikerli,	He was very glad, for certain.
	No lenger nold he dayle.	He did not delay any longer.
	To the river ful swithe he ran,	He ran quickly to the river.
	His helme of his heved he nam	He took off his helmet from his head
	And unlaced his ventayle.	And unlaced his face-piece.
	When he hadde dronken alle his fille	When he had drunk all his fill,
	He stirt up with hert grille	He started up with a savage heart
1380	And Sir Gii he gan to asayle.	And began to attack Sir Guy.
	“Knight,” he seyd, “yeld thee bilive	“Knight,” he said, “surrender yourself fast,
	For thou art giled, so mot Y thrive.	For as I live and die, you are tricked.
	Now ichave a drink	Now that I have a drink
	Icham as fresche as ich was amorwe.	I am as fresh as I was in the morning.
	Thou schalt dye with michel sorwe	You will die in great sorrow
	For sothe withouten lesing.”	In truth, without a lie.”

[27] This battle sequence is the longest and most detailed of these romance texts. Armor was heavy and built for mounted charges, not day-long combat in a Mediterranean summer. The danger of becoming overheated would be a very real one, and is used here to increase Guy’s nobility when his sense of fair play is deceived. The line between genteel chivalry and naivety could be a delicate one in literature. In *The Battle of Maldon*, Byrthnoth permits the invading Vikings time to regroup on shore when the tide comes in, and the English are defeated. The nuance of the poet’s word-choice, *ofermode*—pride, recklessness, or sporting courtesy—is still debated.

	Than thai drowen her swerdes long	Then they drew their long swords,
	Tho knightes that wer stern and strong	Those knights who were stern and strong,
	Withouten more dueling	Without more delay,
1390	And aither gan other ther asayle	And each assaulted the other.
	And ther bigan a strong bataile	And there was again a ferocious battle
	With wel strong fighting.	With furious fighting.
	Amoraunt was ful egre of mode	Amorant was keen in spirit
	And smot to Gii as he wer wode -	And struck at Guy as if he were mad.
	Ful egre he was to fight -	He was so eager to fight
	That a quarter of his scheld	That he made a quarter of his shield
	He made it fleye into the feld	Fly onto the field.
	And of his brini bright.	And on Guy's gleaming coat of mail
	Of his scholder the swerd glod doun	The sword streaked down his shoulder
1400	That bothe plates and hauberjoun	So that he carved both armor and mail
	He carf atuo, Y plight.	Into two, I swear,
	Al to the naked hide, ywis,	Almost to the naked skin.
	And nought of flesche atamed is	But no flesh was pierced
	Thurth grace of God almight.	Through the grace of God Almighty.
	The scharp swerd doun gan glide	The sharp sword glided down
	Fast bi Sir Gyes side -	Close along Sir Guy's side,
	His knew it com ful neye -	Coming very near his knee
	That gambisoun and jambler	So that it split in two
	Bothe it karf atuo yfere;	Both his jacket and leg-armor together.
1410	Into th'erthe the swerd it fleye	The sword was thrust into the earth
	Withouten wem or ani wounde	Half a foot into the ground
	Half a fot into the grounde,	Without any damage or injury;
	That mani man it seye.	That was seen by many men.
	And when Gii seye that fair grace	And when Sir Guy saw that fair blessing
	That nothing wounded he was	So that he had no wounds,
	Jhesu he thanked on heye.	He thanked Jesus on high.
	And when Gii feld him so smite	And when Guy felt himself hit so,
	He was wroth ye mow wite;	He was angered, you might be sure;
	To Amoraunt he gan reken	He charged on Amorant.
1420	He hent his brond with wel gode wille	He grasped his blade with firm will
	And stroke to him with hert grille;	And struck at him with raging heart,
	His scheld he gan tobreken.	Shattering his shield.
	So hetelich Gii him smot	Guy hit him in such frenzy
	That into the scholder half a fot	That the good sword ran
	The gode swerd gan reken.	Half a foot into the shoulder.
	And with that strok Gii withdrough	With that stroke Guy withdrew.
	Weri he was forfoughten ynough,	He was weary enough of fighting
	To Amoraunt he gan speken.	And began to address Amorant.
	"Sir Amoraunt," than seyd Gii,	"Sir Amorant," said Guy,
1430	"For Godes love now merci	"For God's love, have mercy now
	Yif that thi wille be.	If it be your will.
	Ichave swiche thrist ther Y stond	I have such thirst where I stand
	Y may unnethe drawe min hond	I can hardly lift my hand;
	Therfore wel wo is me.	Therefore woe is me!
	Yeld me now that ich dede,	Grant me now that same favor:
	Y gaf thee leve to drink at nede.	I gave you leave to drink in your need.
	Astow art hende and fre,	If you are courteous and noble,
	Leve to drink thou lat me go	Give me space to go drink
	As it was covenaunt bituen ous to	As it was agreed between us.
1440	For Godes love Y pray thee."	For God's love, I beseech you."

	"Hold thi pes," seyd Amoraunt,	"Shut your mouth," said Amorant.
	"For bi mi lord Sir Ternagaunt	"By my lord Sir Termagant,
	Leve no hastow non.	I will give you no relief.
	Ac now that Y the sothe se	But now that I see the truth,
	That thou ginnes to feynt thee	That you are becoming faint,
	Thine heved thou schalt forgon."	You will soon be without your head."
	"Amoraunt," seyd Gii, "do aright,	"Amorant," said Guy, "act rightly.
	Lete me drink a litel wight	Let me drink a little bit
	As Y dede thee anon	As I did for you before
1450	And togider fight we;	And we will fight together.
	Who schal be maister we schal se	We will see who will be master,
	Wiche of ous may other slon."	And which of us will slay the other."
	"Hold thi pays," seyd Amoraunt,	"Hold your tongue," said Amorant.
	"Y nil nought held thee covenaunt	"I won't hold my agreement with you
	For ful this toun of gold,	For a town full of gold.
	For when ichave thee sleyn now right	For after I have slain you soon,
	The Soudan treweli hath me hight	The sultan has faithfully promised me
	His lond gif me he schold	That he will give me his land
	Ever more to have and hold fre	Evermore to have and hold free,
1460	And give me his douhter bright o ble,	And give me his daughter with the fair face,
	The miriest may on mold.	The merriest maid on earth.
	When ichave thee sleyn this day	When I have killed you this day,
	He schal give me that fair may	He will give me that beautiful girl
	With alle his lond to hold.	With all his land to hold.
	"Ac do now wele and unarme thee	But now it would be best to unarm yourself
	And trewelich yeld thou thee to me	And yield yourself to me faithfully
	Olive Y lat thee gon.	And I will let you go alive.
	And yif thou wilt nought do bi mi red	And if you will not do as I advise,
	Thou schalt dye on ivel ded	You will die a foul death.
1470	Right now Y schal thee slon."	I will slay you right now."
	"Nay," seyd Gii, "that war no lawe.	"No," said Guy, "That would not be right.
	Ich hadde lever to ben todrawe	I would rather be dismembered
	Than swiche a dede to don.	Than do such a deed.
	Ar ich wald creaunt yeld me	Before I would grant myself defeated,
	Ich hadde lever anhanged be	I would rather be hanged
	And brent bothe flesche and bon."	And have both flesh and bone burned."
	Than seyd Amoraunt at a word	Then Amorant said, in few words,
	"Bi the treuthe thou owe thi lord	"By the loyalty you owe your lord
	That thou lovest so dere	That you love so dear,
1480	Tel me what thi name it be	Tell me what your name is
	And leve to drink give Y thee	And I will give you leave to drink
	Thi fille of this river.	Your fill of this river!
	Thou seyd thi name is Sir Youn;	You said your name is Sir Youn;
	It is nought so bi Seyn Mahoun,	It is not so, by Saint Mohammad!
	It is a lesing fere.	It is a lying trick.
	Yif thi name were Youn right	If your name was in fact Youn,
	Thou nere nought of so miche might	You would not be of so much might
	No thus unbiknowen here."	And still be unknown here!"
	"Frende," seyd Gii, "Y schal telle thee;	"Friend," said Guy, "I will tell you.
1490	Astow art hendi man and fre	If you are a noble and free-born man,
	Thou wray me to no wight.	Betray me to no one.
	Gii of Warwike mi name it is,	My name is Guy of Warwick.
	In Inglond Y was born, ywis.	I was indeed born in England.
	Lete me now drink with right."	Now let me rightly drink."

	When Amoraunt seye sikerly	When Amorant saw clearly
	That it was the gode Gii	That it was the good Guy
	That ogaines him was dight	Who was set against him,
	He loked on him with michel wrake,	He looked at him with great wrath,
	Sternliche with his eyghen blake	Coldly with his black eyes,
1500	With an unsemli sight.	With a hideous glare.
	"Sir Gii," he seyd, "welcom to me.	"Sir Guy," he said, "welcome!
	Mahoun, mi lord, Y thank thee	I thank Mohammad, my lord
	That ich have thee herinne.	That I have you here!
	Michel schame thou hast me don,	You have caused me great shame.
	Thi liif thou schalt as tite forgon,	You will in short time lose your life;
	Thi bodi schal atuinne	Your body will be cut in two.
	And thine heved, bi Ternagant,	And your head, by Termagant,
	Mi leman schal have to presaunt	Will be a present to my lover,
	That comly is of kinne.	Who is of a fine lineage.
1510	Hennes forward siker thou be	From here on you can be sure that
	Leve no tit thee non of me	I won't permit you to do anything,
	For al this warld to winne."	Not for all this world."
	"Allas," seyd Gii, "what schal Y don?	"Alas!" said Guy, "what will I do
	Now Y no may have drink non	Now that I cannot have a drink?
	Mine hert breketh ato."	My heart is breaking in two."
	Anon he bithought him thenne	At once he resolved to himself
	Right to the river he most renne;	That he must run straight to the river;
	He turned him and gan to go.	He turned away and began to go.
	Amoraunt with swerd on hond	Amorant, with his sword in hand,
1520	He thought have driven Gii to schond	Thought he had brought Guy to ruin
	With sorwe he wald him slo.	And that he would slay him in pain.
	Gii ran to the water right,	Guy ran straight into the water;
	Bot on him thenke God Almight	Unless he called on God Almighty
	Up cometh he never mo.	He would never come up again.
	Tho was Sir Gii in gret drede.	Sir Guy was then in great fear.
	In the water he stode to his girdel stede	He stood in the water up to his waist,
	And that thought him ful gode.	And it felt refreshing to him.
	In the water he dept his heved anon	At once he dipped his head in the water,
	Over the schulders he dede it gon	Diving in past the shoulders.
1530	That keled wele his blod.	That cooled his blood well.
	And when Gii hadde dronken anough	And when Sir Guy had drunk enough,
	Hetelich his heved up he drough	He hurriedly pulled his head up
	Out of that ich flod	Out of those waters.
	And Amoraunt stode opon the lond	Amorant stood upon the land
	With a drawen swerd in hond	With a sword drawn in hand
	And smot Gii ther he stode.	And struck Guy where he stood.
	Hetelich he smot Gyoun,	He hit Guy fiercely;
	Into that water he fel adoun	He fell down into the water
	With that dint unride	From that ugly blow
1540	That the water arn him about.	So that the water ran about him.
	Sir Gii stirt up in gret dout,	Sir Guy started up in great fear,
	For nothing he nold abide,	For he would delay for nothing,
	And schoke his heved as knight bold.	And he shook his head as a hardy knight.
	"In this water icham ful cold	"I am very cold from this water
	Wombe, rigge, and side	In my stomach, back, and sides;
	And no leve, sir, ich hadde of thee	And I had no permission from you.
	And therfore have thou miche maugré	Therefore, may you have great shame
	And ivel thee mot bitide."	And may evil fortune befall you."

	Sir Gii stirt up withouten fayl	Sir Guy jumped up, without fail,
1550	And Amoraunt he gan to asayl;	And began to attack Amorant.
	To fight he was ful boun.	He was very keen to fight.
	Hard togider thai gan to fight;	They again fought fiercely together.
	Of love was ther no speche, Y plight,	There were no words of affection, I guarantee,
	Bot heweing with swerdes broun.	But hacking with shining swords.
	"Amoraunt," than seyd Gii,	"Amorant," Guy said then,
	"Thou art ful fals sikerly	"You are completely false, for sure,
	And fulfilt of tresoun.	And filled full of treason.
	No more wil Y trust to thee	I will not trust you anymore
	For no bihest thou hotest me.	With any promise you make me.
1560	Thou art a fals glotoun."	You are a two-faced beast."[28]
	Hard togider thai gun fight	They battled together ferociously
	Fro the morwe to the night	From the morning to the night
	That long somers day.	All that long summer's day.
	So long thai foughten bothe tho	Both of them fought so long
	Wiche was the better of hem to	That no one could choose
	No man chese no may.	Which was the better of them.
	Bot at a strok as Amoraunt cast	But as Amorant thrust one stroke
	Sir Gii mett with him in hast	Sir Guy met with him in haste
	And taught him a sori play.	And taught him a painful lesson.
1570	The right arme with the swerd fot-hot	He slashed off his right arm with his sword,
	Bi the scholder of he it smot,	At the shoulder in a sudden stroke.
	To grounde it fleye oway.	It flew away to the ground.
	When Amoraunt feld him so smite	When Amorant felt himself struck so,
	In his left hond with michel hete	With great ferocity he hastily
	The swerd he hent fot-hot.	Grabbed the sword in his left hand.
	As a lyoun than ferd he,	He then fought like a lion.
	Thritti sautes he made and thre	He made thirty charges and three more
	With his swerd that wel bot.	With a sword that could bite well.
	Bot for the blod that of him ran	But because of the blood that ran from him,
1580	Amoraunt strengthe slake bigan.	Amorant's strength began to fade.
	When Gii that soth wot	When Guy realized the fact,
	That Amoraunt was faynting	That Amorant was faltering,
	Sir Gii him folwed withouten dueling;	Sir Guy followed him without delay
	That other hond of he smot.	And struck off his other hand.
	When Amoraunt had bothe hondes forlore	When Amorant had lost both hands
	A wreche he held himself therfore;	He considered himself finished;
	His wit was al todreved.	His wits were all lost.
	On Sir Gii he lepe with alle his might	He leaped with all his might on Sir Guy
	That almast he had feld him doun right,	So that he almost brought him down.
1590	And Sir Gii was agreved	But Sir Guy was alert
	And stirt bisiden fot-hot,	And jumped aside quickly,
	And Amoraunt in the nek he smot.	And he slashed Amorant in the neck.
	His might he hath him bireved;	He had deprived him of his force;
	He fel to grounde withouten faile	He fell to the ground without question.
	And Sir Gii unlaced his ventayle	Sir Guy unlaced his face-shield
	And he strok of his heved.	And he struck off his head.

[28] *Glotoun*: Cohen explains that giants are often called *gluttons* in medieval romance to emphasize their "gross, ingestive corporeality" in contrast to the hero's "Christian self-control." Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University Press, 1997), 105.

	Over the water he went in a bot	He went over the water in a boat
	And present therwith fot-hot	And quickly presented the head
	The king Sir Triamour.	To the king, Sir Triamour.
1600	The king Sir Triamour than	King Triamour then went
	Went to that riche Soudan	To that rich sultan
	And also his sone Fabour.	And also his son Fabor.
	Than was the Soudan swithe wo,	Then the sultan was in great sorrow;
	Quite-claim he lete hem go	He pardoned him and let them go
	With wel michel honour.	With great and stately honor.
	Into Alisaunder thai went that cité	They went into the city of Alexandria
	And ladde with hem Sir Gii the fre	And brought with them Sir Guy the brave
	That hadde ben her socour.	Who had been their champion.
	The king tok th'erl Jonas tho	The king then took Earl Jonas
1610	And clept him in his armes to	And embraced him in his two arms
	And kist him swete, ich wene,	And kissed him warmly, I believe,
	An hundred times and yete mo	A hundred times and more,
	And quite-claim he lete him go	And he pardoned and released him
	And his sones fiftene.	With his fifteen sons.
	"Erl Jonas," seyd the king,	"Earl Jonas," said the king,
	"Herken now to my teling	"Listen now to my speech
	And what ichil mene:	And to what I intend.
	For mi liif thou savedest me	Because you have saved my life,
	Half mi lond ich graunt thee	I will grant you half my land
1620	With this knight strong and kene.	With this knight, strong and keen.
	"Understond to me, sir knight,	Agree to me, sir knight,
	Mahoun gave ful of might	Who Mohammad filled with might,
	Thou wost duelle with me;	That you will stay with me.
	Thridde part mi lond Y give thee to,	I will give you a third part of my land;
	Michel honour ichil thee do,	I will do you great honor
	A riche prince make thee.	And make you a rich prince.
	Y nil nought thou forsake God thine;	I will not make you forsake your God!
	Thou art bileveand wele afine,	You are a devout and true believer;
	Better may no be."	There can be no one better."
1630	Sir Gii answerd him ful stille:	Sir Guy answered him gently:
	"Sir, of thi lond nought Y nille	"Sir, I tell you the truth,
	For sothe Y telle thee."	I want none of your land."
	That erl to Jerusalem went anon,	The earl at once set off for Jerusalem,
	Gii of Warwike with him gan gon	And Guy of Warwick went with him,
	And alle his sones on rawe.	And all his sons together.
	Th'erl wold yif he might	The earl wanted to, if he could,
	Wite the name of that knight	Learn the name of that knight
	Yif he him evermore sawe.	For if he ever saw him again.
	"In conseyl, sir knight," than seyd he,	"In confidence, sir knight," he said,
1640	"That thou Youn dost clep thee,	"Though you call yourself Youn,
	Thou no hatest nought so Y trowe.	I do not believe that is your name.
	For Jhesu love Y pray thee	For the love of Jesus, Who died
	That died on the Rode tre	On the wooden Cross, I ask you
	Thi right name be aknawe."	To reveal your real name."
	Sir Gii seyd, "Thou schalt now here	Sir Guy said, "You will now hear it,
	Sethen thou frainest me in this maner;	Since you have asked me in this manner.
	Mi name ichil thee sayn:	I will tell you my name.
	Gii of Warwike mi name is right,	My real name is Sir Guy of Warwick.
	Astow art hende and gentil knight	If you are a gracious and noble knight,
1650	To non thou schalt me wrayn.	You will not betray me to anyone.

	Batayl for thi love Y nam	For your love I faced battle
	And the geaunt overcam;	And overcame the giant;
	Therof ich am ful fain."	For that I am very glad."
	When th'erl seye it was Sir Gii	When the earl saw he was Sir Guy,
	He fel doun on knes him bi	He fell down by him on his knees
	And wepe with both his ayn.	And wept with both eyes.
	"For Godes love," he seyd, "merci.	"For God's love," he said, "thank you.
	Whi artow so pouer Sir Gii	Why are you so penniless, Sir Guy,
	And art of so gret valour?	When you are of such great valor?
1660	Here ich give thee in this place	I will give you here in this place
	Al th'erldam of Durras	All the earldom of Durrës,
	Cité and castel tour.	The city and the castle tower.
	Thi man ichil bicomen and be	I will become your man and serve you,
	And alle mi sones forth with me	And all my sons along with me
	Schal com to thi socour;	Will come to your support.
	For the priis of hethen lond	For you have won victory in heathen lands
	Thou hast thurth douhtines of hond	Through your bravery in arms
	Wonne with gret vigour."	And great vigor."
	"Erl Jonas," than seyd Sir Gii,	"Earl Jonas," Sir Guy then answered,
1670	"Mi leve frende, gramerci.	"My dear friend, kind thanks
	For thi gode wille	For your good will.
	Than schustow hire me al to dere	You would repay me far too dearly
	To give me thi lond in swiche maner;	To give me your lands in such a way.
	Therof nought Y nille.	I will have none of them.
	To your owen cuntré wendeth hom,	Make your way home to your country;
	God biteche Y you everichon;	May God be with each one of you.
	Mi way ichil fulfille."	I will fulfill my pilgrimage."
	Thai went and kist him everi man,	Every man went up and kissed him.
	Th'erl so sore wepe bigan	The earl began to weep so bitterly
1680	That might him no man stille.	That no man was able to calm him.
	Th'erl to Durras went anon	The earl went at once to Durrës
	And his sones everichon	With each one of his sons,
	Were scaped out of care.	Who had escaped out of danger.
	Gii than in his way is nome.	Guy then took his way.
	For that the geaunt was overcome	He was full of joy there,
	Ful blithe than was he thare.	For the giant had been overcome.
	Into Grece than went he	He went into Greece
	And sought halwen of that cuntré	And looked for the holy places of that land,
	The best that ther ware.	The best that there were.
1690	Sethe forth in his way he yede	After that he made his way
	Thurthout mani uncouthe thede,	Throughout many foreign places,
	To Costentyn he is yfare.	Traveling to Constantinople.[29]
	When Gii in Costentin hadde be	After Guy had gone to Constantinople,
	Out of that lond than went he	He then went out of that land,
	Walkand in the strete	Walking on the roadway
	On pilgrimage in his jurnay	On his journey of pilgrimage,
	His bedes bidand night and day	Reciting his prayers night and day

[29] *Costentine*: The poet could mean Cotentin, now the Cherbourg peninsula in Normandy. *King Richard* in Auchinleck has the king traveling "Bi Brandis & bi Costentine" (78), modern Brandis, near Leipzig, on the way to Marseilles. TEAMS feels that Constantinople is meant, which makes the most sense and explains why Guy travels there from Greece (1687-92) and calls it "biyond the Grekis Se" (2049).

	His sinnes forto bete.	To atone for his sins.
	In Almaine than went he, ywis,	Then he went to Germany, in fact,
1700	Ther he was sumtime holden of gret pris.	Where he was once held in great esteem.
	He com to a four way lete	He came to a four-way crossroads
	Biyonde Espire, that riche cité,	Outside of Speyer, that rich city.
	Under a croice was maked of tre,	Under a cross made from a tree,
	A pilgrim he gan mete,	He came across a pilgrim
	That wrong his honden and wepe sore	Who wrung his hands and wept bitterly
	And curssed the time that he was bore,	And cursed the time that he was born.
	"Allas!" it was his song.	"Alas!" was his refrain.
	"Wayleway," he seyd, "that stounde!	"Woe is me," he cried, "for that time!
	Wickedliche icham brought to grounde	I am wickedly brought to the earth
1710	With wel michel wrong."	With great and evil injustice!"
	Sir Gii went to him tho,	Sir Guy then went to him.
	"Man," he seys, "whi farstow so?	"Fellow," he said, "why do you act like this?
	So God geve thee joie to fong,	So God give you the hope of joy,
	Tel me what thi name it be	Tell me what your name is
	And whi thou makest thus gret pité,	And why you mourn so pitifully.
	Me thenke thi paynes strong."	It seems your suffering is strong."
	"Gode man," seyd the pilgrim tho,	"Good man," said the pilgrim,
	"What hastow to frein me so?	"What is your business in asking me so?
	Swiche sorwe icham in sought	I am afflicted with such sorrows
1720	That thei Y told thee alle mi care,	That even if I told you all my troubles,
	For thee might Y never the better fare;	I would fare no better for it.
	To grounde ich am so brought."	And so I am brought to the earth!"
	"Yis," seyd Gii, "bi the gode Rode,	"Indeed," said Guy, "by the holy Cross,
	Conseyl Y can give thee gode	I can give you wise advice
	And tow telle me thi thought,	If you tell me your thoughts.
	For oft it falleth uncouthe man	For often it happens that a stranger
	That gode conseyle give can,	Can give the best counsel.
	Therfore hele it nought."	Therefore do not hide your heart."
	"For God," he seyd, "thou seyst ful wel.	"By God," he said, "you are well-spoken.
1730	Sumtime ich was, bi Seyn Mighel,	At one time I was, by Saint Michael,
	An erl of gret pousté.	An earl of considerable power.
	Thurth al Cristendom, ywis,	Throughout all Christendom, in fact,
	Ich was teld a man of gret pris	I was spoken of as a man
	And of gret bounté;	Of great refinement and vast wealth.
	And now icham a wroche beggare.	And now I am a wretched beggar!
	No wonder thei icham ful of care	No wonder I am full of worries.
	Allas, wel wo is me."	Alas, woe is me."
	For sorwe he might speke namore;	He could not speak any more for sorrow.
	He gan to wepe swithe sare	He began to weep very bitterly
1740	That Gii hadde of him pité.	So that Guy had pity on him.
	Than seyd the pilgrim, "Thou hast gret wrong	Then the pilgrim said, "You do me wrong
	To frain me of mi sorwe strong	To ask me about my great sorrow
	And might nought bete mi nede.	And not help me in my need.
	To begge mi brede Y mot gon,	I must go to beg my bread,
	Sethen yistay at none ete Y non	For if I stay at home I do not eat,
	Also God me rede."	So help me God."
	"Yis, felawe," quath Gii, "hele it naught.	"Yes, brother," said Guy, "do not hide it.
	Telle me whi thou art in sorwe braught,	Tell me why you were reduced to misery,
	The better thou schalt spede	And you will fare better,
1750	And sethen we schul go seche our mete.	And then we will go find our dinner.
	Ichave a pani of old biyete,	I have a penny I got long ago,

	Thou schalt have half to mede."	And you will have half as your reward."[30]
	"Gramerci, sir," than seyd he,	"Kind thanks, sir," he said then,
	"And alle the soth Y schal telle thee.	"And I will tell you all the truth.
	Erl Tirri is mi name,	Earl Thierry is my name,
	Of Gormoys th'erls sone Aubri.	The son of Earl Aubrey of Worms.
	Ich hadde a felawe that hight Gii,	I had a friend named Guy,
	A baroun of gode fame.	A baron of wide renown.
	For the douk of Pavi Sir Otoun	When the duke of Pavia, Sir Otoun,
1760	Hadde don him oft gret tresoun	Committed a great treason against him,
	He slough him with gret grame.	He killed the duke in hot anger.
	Now is his neve th'emperour steward,	Now his nephew is the emperor's steward—
	His soster sone that hat Berard;	His sister's son, who is called Berard—[31]
	He has me don alle this schame.	And he has done me all this shame.
	"Th'emperour he hath served long	He has served the emperor for long,
	For he is wonderliche strong	As he is fearfully strong
	And of michel might.	And of great might.
	He no cometh in non batayle	He is so eager to fight
	That he no hath the maistri saunfayl,	That there's no battle he enters
1770	So egre he is to fight.	Where he doesn't have victory, without fail.
	In this warld is man non	In this world there is no man
	That ogaines him durst gon,	Who dares face against him,
	Herl, baroun, no knight,	Earl, baron, or knight;
	And he loked on him with wrake	He is so forbidding in appearance
	That his hert no might quake	That if he looked on anyone with wrath
	So stern he is of sight.	His heart would quake.
	"And for his scherewdhed Sir Berard	And for Sir Berard's craftiness
	Th'emperour hath made him his steward	The emperor has made him his steward
	To wardi his lond about.	To keep order about his land.
1780	Ther nis no douk in al this lond	There is no duke in all this country
	That his hest dar withstonde	Who might withstand his orders,
	So michel he is dout.	So greatly is he feared.
	Yif a man be loved with him	If a man is loved by him,
	Be he never so pouer of kin	No matter how poor a family he is from,
	And he wil to him lout	If he grovels to the steward
	He maketh hem riche anonright,	He will soon makes him rich—
	Douk, erl, baroun, or knight,	Duke, earl, baron, or knight—
	To held with him gret rout.	With a great retinue to stand with him!
	"And yif a man with him hated be	And if a man is hated by him,
1790	Be he never so riche of fe	No matter how wealthy in holdings he is,
	He flemeth him out of lond.	He banishes him out of the land.
	Anon he schal ben todrawe	He risks being dismembered
	Als tite he schal ben yslawe	As quickly as he might be slain,
	And driven him al to schond.	Or driven entirely to ruin.
	So it bifel our emperour	So it happened that our emperor
	Held a parlement of gret honour,	Held an assembly of stately honor,

[30] *Pani*: A medieval penny was not a trivial coin but enough for a peasant's dinner. It could be divided into halfpence (½d) and farthings (¼d). See also the note for *Amis and Amiloun*, 1821.

[31] As with Sir Bevis and Saber (see note to line 323), there is often a special closeness between nephews and maternal uncles in medieval literature. Some academics have posited that primitive Germanic culture was more matrilineal. See also Stephen O. Glosecki, "*Beowulf* and the Wills: Traces of Totemism?", *Philological Quarterly* 78:1/2 (1999): 15-47.

	For his erls he sent his sond.	And sent his summons to his earls.
	Y come thider with michel prede	I came forth with proud dignity
	With an hundred knightes bi mi side	With a hundred knights by my side
1800	At nede with me to stonde.	To stand with me in time of need.
	"And when Y come unto the court	And when I came into the court,
	The steward with wicked pourt	The steward, with wicked insolence,
	To me he gan to reke.	Hurried up to me.
	He bicleped me of his emes ded	He accused me of his uncle's death
	And seyd he was sleyn thurth mi red;	And said he was killed through my urging,
	On me he wald be wreke.	And that he would be avenged on me.[32]
	And when ich herd that chesoun	And when I heard that charge
	Of the doukes deth Otoun	Of Duke Otoun's death,
	Mine hert wald tobreke.	My heart felt like it would break!
1810	To th'emperour Y layd mi wedde an heighe	I hastened to give my word to the emperor
	To defende me of that felonie	To defend myself against the felony
	That he to me gan speke.	Of which he had accused me.
	"No wonder thei Y war fordredde;	It is no wonder that I was terrified.
	Th'emperour tok bothe our wedde	Though the emperor took both our pledges,
	As Y thee telle may	As I can tell you,
	For in alle the court was ther no wight,	In all the court there was no one,
	Douk, erl, baroun, no knight,	Duke, earl, baron, or knight,
	That durst me borwe that day.	Who dared act as guarantor for me that day.
	Th'emperour comand anon	The emperor commanded at once
1820	Into his prisoun Y schuld be don	That I should be put into his prison
	Withouten more delay.	Without any more delay.
	Berard went and sesed mi lond,	Berard went and seized my lands,
	Mine wiif he wald have driven to schond,	And would have brought my wife to shame
	With sorwe sche fled oway.	Had she not fled away in tears.
	"Than was ich with sorwe and care	There I was in misery and anguish,
	Among min fomen nomen thare	Standing among my enemies,
	And don in strong prisoun.	And then put in the strong prison.
	Min frendes token hem to rede,	My friends took counsel together.
	To th'emperour thai bisought and bede	They sought out and pleaded
1830	To pay for me ransoun.	With the emperor to pay ransom for me.
	Th'emperour and Sir Berard	The emperor and Sir Berard
	Deliverd me bi a forward	Released me on agreement
	And bi this enchesoun:	And by this condition:
	Y schuld seche mi felawe Gii	I should look for my brother Guy
	To defende ous of that felonie	To defend us from the felony
	Of the doukes deth Otoun.	Of Duke Otoun's death.
	"Out of this lond went Y me	I went out of these lands
	And passed over the salt se,	And passed over the salty sea,
	In Inglond Y gan rive;	And disembarked in England.
1840	At Warwike ichim sought,	I looked for him at Warwick.
	When Y com thider Y fond him nought	When I arrived there I did not find him.
	Wo was me olive.	It was woe to be alive!
	No Sir Herhaud fond Y nought tare;	Nor did I find Sir Herhaud there.

[32] While Berard acts wrongly and maliciously in blaming Sir Thierry, the right for close kin to avenge a death (the original sense of the word *vendetta*) was acceptable and only gradually superceded by modern practices of state monopoly on force. The Holy Roman Empire's reichstag at Worms still found it necessary to abolish blood feuds by edict (*Ewiger Landfriede)* in 1495.

	To seche Gyes sone he is fare	He is gone to seek Guy's son,
	That was stollen with strive.	Who was stolen by force.[33]
	Therfore Y wot that Gii is ded,	Thus I believe that Guy is dead.
	For sorwe can Y me no red -	I do not know where to turn for sorrow.
	Mine hert wil breke o five."	My heart will break into five!"
	Sir Gii biheld Tirri ful right	Sir Guy beheld Sir Thierry closely
1850	That whilom was so noble a knight	Who had once been so noble a knight
	And lord of michel mounde.	And a lord of great power.
	His bodi was sumtim wele yschredde,	His body, which was formerly finely attired,
	Almost naked it was bihedde	Looked as though it was almost naked,
	With sorwe and care ful bounde.	Overcome with sorrow and hardship.
	His legges that wer sumtime hosed wel	His legs, that were once sumptuously hosed,
	Tobrosten he seighe hem everidel.	Could be seen weathered all over.
	"Allas," seyd Gii, "that stonde!"	"Alas," Guy cried, "that moment!"
	For sorwe that he hadde tho	For the grief he had then
	Word might he speke no mo	He could speak no more words
1860	Bot fel aswon to grounde.	But fell faint to the ground.
	Sir Tirri anon com to him than	Sir Thierry came to him at once
	And in his armes up him nam	And took him up in his arms
	And cleped opon him thare.	And called to him there.
	"Man," he said, "what aileth thee?	"Friend," he said, "what troubles you?
	Thou art ivel at aise so thenketh me,	It seems to me you are ill at ease;
	Hard it is thi fare."	You have fared poorly."
	Sir Gii answerd therafter long,	Sir Guy answered after a long while,
	"This ivel greveth me so strong	"These evils grieve me so strongly
	In erthe Y wold Y ware,	That I wish I were in the ground!
1870	For sethen that Y was first man	For since I was first a man,
	Nas never sorwe on me cam	I have never felt such sorrow
	That greved me so sare."	That pained me so sorely!"
	"Than," seyd Tirri, "felawe, ywis,	"Friend, it is so," said Thierry.
	Today a yer gon it is	"Today a year has gone by
	Out of this lond Y went	Since I went out of this land
	To seche Gii mi gode frende.	To search for Guy, my good friend.
	Y no finde nought fer no hende,	I have found nothing near or far,
	Therfore icham al schent.	And so I am ruined.
	For now it is teld me our emperer	For now I am told that our emperor
1880	Hath taken a parlement of this maner	Has called a parliament over this matter,
	For mi love verrament	For my benefit, truly;[34]
	That douk no erl in his lond be	There is no duke or earl in his land
	That he no schal be at that semblé	Who will not be at that assembly
	For to here mi jugement.	To hear my judgment.
	"And now no lenge abide Y no may	And now I may not delay any longer
	That ne me bihoveth hom this day	For I am obliged to return home this day
	Other forto lese min heved.	Or else lose my head.
	Th'emperour ichave mi treuthe yplight	I have sworn my oath to the emperor
	Y schal bring Sir Gii tonight	That I will bring Sir Guy by tonight
1890	To fight ogain that qued	To fight against that fiend
	To fende ous of that felonie	To defend us from that charge

[33] Guy's son Reinbroun is kidnapped by merchants and found by Herhaud in other versions of the story.

[34] *For mi love verrament*: A curious line which is perhaps sarcasm, unless something more like 'concern' or 'attention' is intended by *love*.

	Ogain the douke Berard of Pavi	Against the duke, Berard of Pavia,
	Al of his emes ded.	Because of his uncle's death.
	Y wot wele yif Y thider fare	I know very well that if I go there
	Thai schal me sle with sorwe and care,	They will slay me with sorrow and pain;
	Certes Y can no red."	For sure, I know no solution."
	Gii biheld Tirri with wepeand eighe	Guy looked with weeping eyes upon Thierry,
	And seighe him al that sorwe dreighe	Who was beloved and dear to him,
	That was him lef and dere.	And saw him suffering all that anguish.
1900	"Allas," thought Gii, "that ich stounde	"Alas," thought Guy, "for the very moment
	That Tirri is thus brought to grounde;	That Thierry was brought to the ground.
	So gode felawes we were."	We were such loyal brothers."
	He thought, "Might Y mete that douke	He thought, "If I were to meet that duke,
	His heved Y schuld smite fro the bouke	I would strike his head off his shoulders
	Or hong him bi the swere.	Or hang him by the neck.
	Y no lete for al this warldes won	I won't hesitate, for all this world's wealth,
	That Y no schuld the traitour slon	To slay the traitor,
	To wreke Tirri mi fere."	To avenge Thierry my friend."
	"Tirri," seyd Gii, "lat be thi thought.	"Thierry," said Guy, "let your thoughts go.
1910	Ywis, it helpeth thee right nought,	In truth, they do not help you at all.
	For sorwe it wil thee schende.	They will ruin you for sorrow.
	To court go we bothe yfere,	We will go together to the court
	Gode tidinges we schul ther here	And we will hear good news there;
	Swiche grace God may sende.	God may send such grace to us.
	Have gode hert, dred thee no del	Take heart, and have no fear at all,
	For God schal help thee ful wel	For God is so caring and gracious
	So curteys He is and hende."	That he will help you in full.
	Up risen tho knightes tuo	Then the two knights rose up.
	With michel care and ful of wo	With great worries and heavy spirits,
1920	To courtward thai gan wende	They made their way to the court.
	And as thai went tho knightes fre	And as those noble knights
	To courtward in her jurné	Went to the court in their journey,
	Ful bold thai were and yepe.	They were brave and devoted.
	"Allas," Sir Tirri seyd tho,	"Alas," said Sir Thierry,
	"Ich mot rest er ich hennes go	"I must rest before I continue on,
	Or mi liif wil fro me lepe."	Or my life's breath will leap away from me."
	"For God, felawe," than seyd Gii,	"By God, brother," said Sir Guy,
	"Ly doun and Y schal sitt thee bi	"Lie down and I will sit by you
	And feir thine heved up kepe."	And support your fair head."
1930	And when he hadde thus yseyd	And after he said this,
	On Gyes barm his heved he leyd,	Thierry laid his head on Guy's lap
	Anon Tirri gan slepe.	And he soon fell asleep.
	And when Sir Tirri was fallen on slepe	And when Sir Thierry had fallen asleep,
	Sir Gii biheld him and gan to wepe	Sir Guy beheld him and began to weep
	And gret morning gan make.	And made great mourning.
	Than seighe he an ermine com of his mouthe,	Then he saw an ermine appear from his mouth,
	Als swift as winde that bloweth on clouthe	As swift as the wind that blows on clouds,
	As white as lilii on lake,	As white as a lily on the lake.[35]

[35] *An ermine com of his mouthe*: This bizarre scene would have been highly meaningful and symbolic. TEAMS notes that this is the only romance where an ermine emerges out of someone's mouth. The ermine was seen as embodying chastity and purity, and Queen Elizabeth I, the virgin queen, was painted holding an ermine by William Segar in 1585. Although Thierry is married, he is innocent of the murder.

	To an hille he ran withouten obade,	It ran without pausing to a hill
1940	At the hole of the roche in he glade;	And slipped into a cleft in the rock.
	Gii wonderd for that sake.	Guy was mystified on account of it.
	And when he out of that roche cam	And when it came out of that rock
	Into Tirries mouthe he nam,	And disappeared back into Thierry's mouth,
	Anon Tirri gan wake.	Thierry at once began to awaken.
	Sir Gii was wonderd of that sight	Sir Guy was amazed by the sight,
	And Tirri sat up anonright	And Thierry immediately sat up
	And biheld Gii opon.	And looked upon Guy.
	Than seyd Tirri, "Fader of Heven,	Then Thierry said, "Father of Heaven!
	Sir pilgrim, swiche a wonder sweven	Sir pilgrim, I dreamed just now
1950	Me met now anon,	Such a wondrous dream,
	That to yon hille that stont on heighe	That on that hill which rises above,
	That thou may se with thin eighe	Which you can see with your eye,
	Me thought that Y was gon	I dreamed that I was moving
	And at an hole in Y wond	And I went into a hole,
	And so riche tresour as Y fond	And I found treasure richer than
	Y trow in this world is non.	Any in the world, I believe.
	"Biside that tresour lay a dragoun	Beside that treasure lay a dragon,
	And theron lay a swerd broun,	And on it was a burnished sword
	The sckauberk comly corn.	With the scabbard ornately carved.
1960	In the hilt was mani precious ston,	In the hilt were many precious stones,
	As bright as ani sonne it schon	Shining as bright as any sun;
	Withouten oth ysworn.	No need to swear on it!
	And me thought Gii sat at min heved	And I dreamed Guy sat by my head
	And in his lappe me biweved	And he wrapped his coat over me[36]
	Astow dest me biforn.	As you did for me earlier.
	Lord merci, and it wer so	May the Lord be merciful! If it were so,
	Wele were me than bigo	I would have more riches
	That ever yete was Y born."	Than ever yet since I was born."
	"Now felawe," seyd Gii, "bi mi leuté	"Now, brother," said Guy, "By my honor,
1970	That sweven wil turn gret joie to thee	That dream will bring great joy to you
	And wele Y schal it rede.	And I will interpret it fully.
	Thurth Gii thou schalt thi lond kever.	Through God you will recover your lands.
	Trust wele to God thei thou be pouer	Trust well in God, though you are poor,
	The better thou schalt spede.	And you will fare all the better.
	To the hulle nim we the way	Now we will make our way to the hill
	Ther thee thought the tresour lay	Where you dreamed the treasure lay,
	And in thou schalt me lede.	And you will lead me inside.
	Now God that schope al mankinde	Now may God, who shaped all mankind,
	Wald we might that tresour finde	Permit that we might find that fortune.
1980	It wald help ous at nede."	It would help us in our need."
	Up risen tho knightes tuay	The two knights rose up
	And to the hille thai nom the way	And made their way to the hill,
	And in thai went ful even	And they went straight in
	And founde the tresour and the dragoun	And found the cache and the dragon
	And the swerd of stiel broun	And the sword of gleaming steel,
	As Tirri mett in his sweven.	Just as Thierry saw in his dream.
	Sir Gii drough out that swerd anon	Sir Guy drew out the sword at once,

[36] *Lappe*: Here Sir Guy's upper legs are not meant, but the older sense of the folds of his coat or skirt, which he wraps around Thierry as he sleeps.

	And alle the pleynes therof it schon	And all of its surfaces shone
	As it were light of leven.	As if it were sparks of lightning.
1990	"Lord," seyd Gii, "Y thanke Thi sond	"Lord," said Guy, "I thank You for Your gift.
	Y seighe never are swiche a brond;	I never before saw such a blade.
	Y wot it com fram Heven."	I know it comes from Heaven."
	Sir Gii gan the hilt bihold	Sir Guy inspected the hilt
	That richeliche was graven with gold,	Which was richly engraved with gold,
	Of charbukel the pomel.	With a pommel of carbuncle-stone.
	Into the sckaweberk ogain he it dede	He put it back into the scabbard
	And seyd to Tirri in that stede,	And said to Thierry in that moment,
	"Bi God and Seyn Mighel,	"By God and Saint Michael,
	Of alle this riche tresore	Of all this rich treasure,
2000	Y no kepe therof no more	I will keep no more of it
	Bot this brond of stiel."	Than this sword of steel."
	. . . . .	. . . . . .[37]
2005	To courtward tho knightes went	The two knights continued toward the court
	To aspie after the parlement;	To seek out the parliament.
	For drede wald thai nought lete.	They would not turn away out of dread.
	Ac Tirri was aferd ful sare	But Thierry was sorely afraid
	Of his fomen be knowen thare	Of being recognized by his foes
2010	In the cité yif he sete.	If he set foot in the city.
	Therfore thai toke her ostel gode	Therefore they took their lodgings
	At an hous withouten the toun stode	In an inn on the edge of the town
	Al bi a dern strete.	Along a secluded street.
	Of al night Gii slepe nought,	All night long Guy did not sleep,
	So michel his hert was ever in thought	So much was his heart always in thought
	With Douk Berard to mete.	On meeting Duke Berard.
	Erlich amorwe than ros Gii	Guy rose early in the morning,
	And bisought God and our Levedi	And prayed to God and our Lady
	He schuld scheld him fro blame	That they would shield him from sin,
2020	And seyd to Sir Tirri the hende,	And said to Sir Thierry the gracious,
	"Kepe me wele this swerd, leve frende,	"Keep this sword well for me, dear friend,
	Til Y sende therfore bi name,	Until I send for it by name,
	And Y schal go to court this day	And I will go to court today.
	And yif Y the douke mete may	And if I might encounter the duke,
	Y schal gret him with grame;	I will greet him with hostility.
	And yif he say ought bot gode,	And if he says anything lacking respect,
	Bi Him that schadde for ous His blod	By He who shed His blood for us,
	Him tit a warld schame."	He will be shamed in public for it."
	Gii goth to toun with michel hete,	Guy went to town with great haste.
2030	Th'emperour fram chirche he gan mete	He met the emperor returning from church
	And gret him with anour.	And greeted him with honor.
	"Lord," seyd Gii, "that with hond	"Lord," said Guy, "Who with His hand
	Made wode, water, and lond,	Made the woods, water, and land,
	Save thee, sir emperour.	Save you, Sir Emperor.
	Icham a man of fer cuntré	I am a man from distant lands.
	And of thi gode, *par charité*,	And from your bounty, for charity's sake,
	Ich axse to mi socour."	I ask for your assistance."
	Th'emperour seyd, "To court come	The emperor said, "Come to the court,

[37] The rhyme scheme (aabccbddbeeb) is broken here, suggesting three missing lines, although there is no break or visual damage in Auchinleck at this point.

	And of mi gode thou schalt have some	And you will have some of my help
2040	For love of Seyn Savour."	For love of our Holy Savior."
	To court thai went al and some,	To court they went, all and some.
	Th'emperour dede Gii biforn him come,	The emperor had Guy come before him.
	"Pilgrim," than seyd he,	"Pilgrim," he said then,
	"Thou art wel weri me thenketh now.	"You seem very weary to me.
	Fram wiche londes comestow?	From what lands have you come?
	For thi fader soule telle me."	For your father's soul, tell me."
	"Sir," seyd Gii, "ich understond	"Sir," said Guy, "I know
	Ichave ben in mani lond	That I have been in many lands
	Biyond the Grekis Se:	Beyond the Greek Sea:
2050	In Jerusalem and in Surry,	In Jerusalem and in Syria,
	In Costentin and in Perci	In Constaninople and in Persia
	A gode while have ich be."	I have journeyed a good while."
	"Sir pilgrim," seyd th'emperour fre,	"Sir pilgrim," said the noble emperor,
	"What speketh man in that lond of me	"What do men in those lands say about me
	When thou com thennesward?"	When you go there?"
	Sir Gii answerd, "Bi the gode Rode	Sir Guy answered, "By the Holy Cross,
	Men speketh thee ther ful litel gode	Men say very little good about you,
	Bot tidinges schrewed and hard;	Only reports that are cruel and hard;
	For thou hast schent so th'erl Tirri	For you have ruined the earl Thierry
2060	And other barouns that ben hendy	And other barons who were faithful
	For love of thi steward.	For the love of your steward.
	Gret sinne it is to thee	It is a great sin on you
	To stroye so thi barouns fre	To destroy your noble barons so,
	Al for a fals schreward."	All for a false rogue."
	When the douk herd him speke so	When the duke heard him say such things,
	As a wilde bore he lepe him to	He leaped at him like a wild boar
	His costes for to schawe,	Who would slice at his ribs.
	With his fest he wald have smiten Gii	He would have struck Guy with his fist
	Bot barouns held him owy,	Had not barons held him away,
2070	Wele tuenti on a rawe.	A good twenty in a row.
	He seyd to Gii, "Vile traitour,	He shouted at Guy, "Vile traitor!
	Ner thou bifor th'emperour	If you weren't before the emperor,
	Thei Y wende to ben tohewe	Even if I would be beheaded for it,
	Bi thi berd Y schuld thee schokke	I would shake you by your beard
	That al thi teth it schuld rokke,	So that all your teeth would be rocked,
	For thou art a kinde schrewe.	For you are an utter criminal!
	"Bi thi semblaunt se men may	By your looks men can see
	Thou hast ben traitour mani a day -	That you have been a traitor for many a day.
	God gif thee schame and schond.	God give you shame and disgrace!
2080	Yif that Y thee mai overgon	If I can get a hold of you,
	To wicked ded thou schalt be don	You will be put to a miserable death,
	As a traitour to ly in bond,	As a traitor to lie in shackles.
	In swiche a stede thou schalt be	You will be in such a place
	This seven winter no schaltow se	That for seven years you will not see
	Noither fet no hond.	Either your feet or hands!
	So schal men chasti foule glotuns	This is how men should punish foul wretches
	That wil missay gode barouns	For slandering good barons
	That lordinges ben in lond."	Who are lordings in their land."
	"Ow sir," seyd Gii, "ertow thas?	"Well, sir!" sniffed Guy. "Are you one of them?
2090	Y nist no nar hou it was	I didn't know who I was speaking to,
	Bi the gode Rode.	By the good Cross.
	And now Y wot that thou art he,	And now that I know that you are one,

	Thou art uncurteys so thenketh me.	It seems to me you lack all manners.
	Thou farst astow wer wode,	You carry on as if you were mad,
	And art a man of fair parage	Though you are a man of good parentage
	Ycom thou art of heighe linage	And come from high lineage
	And of gentil blod.	And of noble blood.
	It is thee litel curteysie	You show little grace
	To do me swiche vilanie	To do me such villainy
2100	Bifor th'emperour ther Y stode.	Before the emperor where I stand.
	"And for thee wil Y wond no thing,	And for you I will hold nothing back.
	Y schal telle thee the sothe withouten lesing	I will tell you the truth without lying
	Bifor his barouns ichon,	Before each of these barons,
	That with gret wrong and sinne, ywis,	That Earl Thierry has been dispossessed
	Th'erl Tirri deshirrite is	With great injustice and sin indeed,
	And other gode mani on.	Along with many other good men.
	A thousend men ichave herd teld	I have heard a thousand men say,
	Bothe in toun and in feld	Both in town and in the fields,
	As wide as ichave gon	As far and wide as I have gone,
2110	That he is giltles of that dede	That he is guiltless of that deed
	Thou berst on him with falshede,	Which you lay on him with deceit,
	Thin eme he schuld slon."	That he had killed your uncle."
	The douk Berrard was wroth,	Duke Berard was enraged;
	Bi Jhesu Crist he swore his oth.	He swore his oath by Jesus Christ:
	"Y wald that thou were Gii	"I wish that you were Guy
	Or that thou so douhti were	Or that you were so fearless
	Thou durst fight for him here	To dare to fight for him here!
	God gaf it and our Levedi."	May God and our Lady grant it!"
	Sir Gii answerd, "Bi Seyn Savour,	Sir Guy retorted, "By our Holy Savior,
2120	Drede thee nothing, vile traitour,	Have no doubt, foul traitor,
	Therto icham redy.	I am ready to do it.
	Bi thou wroth, be thou gladde,	Whether you like it or not,
	To th'emperour Y gif mi wedde	I pledge my oath to the emperor
	To fight for th'erl Tirri."	To fight for Earl Thierry."
	The douk Berard ther he stode	Duke Berard, where he stood,
	Stared on Gii as he wer wode	Glared at Guy as if he were a madman
	And egrelich seyd his thought.	And gushed his thoughts impatiently:
	"Pilgrim," he seyd, "Thou art ful stout,	"Pilgrim," he said, "you are very brazen.
	Ywis, thi wordes that er so prout	Indeed, your words that are so proud
2130	Schal be ful dere abought.	Will be paid for dearly.
	Y warn thee wele," he seyd tho,	I warn you well," he continued,
	"That thine heved thou schalt forgo	"You will lose your head
	Whereso thou may be sought."	Wherever you might be found."[38]
	Sir Gii seyd, "Than thou it hast	Sir Guy snipped, "When you have done it,
	Than make therof thi bast;	Then you can boast about it.
	For yete no getes thou it nought."	As of yet you have got nothing."
	Bifor th'emperour than come Gii	Guy then came before the emperor
	And seyd, "Sir Berard of Pavi	And said, "Sir Berard of Pavia
	Is a man of mighti dede,	Is a man of mighty deeds,

[38] Berard likely has the customary right to set the terms of the vendetta and to demand Thierry face him, and thus Guy's gambit of goading him into accepting Guy as a substitute. This *flyting* scene seemingly does not square with Guy's purported goals of penitence and humility, but the fun of his needling Berard was perhaps too much temptation for the poet to pass up.

2140	And fram fer cuntres comen icham	And I have come from faraway lands
	And am a sely pouer man;	And am a poor, simple man.
	Y no have here no sibbered	I have no family here,
	No Y no have wepen no armour bright;	Nor do I have weapons or shining armor.
	For the love of God Almight	For the love of God Almighty
	Finde me armour and stede."	Grant me armor and a steed."
	Th'emperour answerd, "Bi Jhesu,	The emperor answered, "By Jesus,
	Pilgrim, thou schalt have anow	Pilgrim, you will have enough
	Of al that thee is nede."	Of everything necessary for you."
	The douk Berrard thennes he went;	Duke Berard went away.
2150	His hert was in strong turment	His heart was in great torment;
	He no wist what he do might.	He did not know what he might do.
	Th'emperour cleped his douhter a mayde,	The emperor called the maid, his daughter:
	"Leve douhter," to hir he seyd,	"Dear daughter," he said to her,
	"Kepe this pilgrim tonight."	"Attend to this pilgrim tonight."
	Sche him underfenge ful mildeliche	She took charge of him with kindness
	And dede bathe him ful softliche,	And bathed him very gently,
	In silke sche wald him dight.	And wished to dress him in silk.
	Ac therof was nothing his thought;	But his intentions were not that,
	Bot of gode armour he hir bisought	Only to ask her for firm armor
2160	With the douke Berard to fight.	To fight with Duke Berard.
	Amorwe aros that emperour	In the morning the emperor rose
	Erls, barouns of gret honour,	With earls and barons of great honor.
	To chirche with him thai yede.	They went with him to church.
	And when the barouns asembled was	And when the barons were gathered,
	Than might men sen in that plas	Men could then see in that place
	Togider a fair ferred.	A fine assembly together.
	Thider com the douk Berard,	Duke Berard came forward,
	Prout and stern as a lipard,	As proud and stern as a leopard.
	Wele yarmed on stede	He was well-armed on horseback
2170	And priked right as he wer wode	And spurred on like he was berserk
	Among the barouns ther thai stode	Among the barons who stood there,
	Batayle forto bede.	In order to invite battle.
	The maiden forgat never a del	The maiden did not forget any detail.
	The pilgrim was armed ful wel	The pilgrim was armed in full
	With a gode glaive in honde	With a firm spear in hand
	And a swift-ernand stede;	And a swift-galloping steed.
	Al wrin sche dede him lede	She led him out fully equipped
	The best of that lond.	With the best of the land.
	Than Sir Gii him bithought	Sir Guy had remembered
2180	The gode swerd forgat he nought	And did not forget the good sword
	That he in tresour fond.	That he found in the treasure.
	He sent therafter priveliche -	He sent for it privately;
	No man wist litel no miche -	No man knew anything of it,
	And Tirri sent him the brond.	And Thierry sent him the sword.
	When that mayden hadde graithed Gii	After that maiden had prepared Guy
	Wele ydight and ful richely	He was equipped richly and finely;
	Men gan on him biheld.	Men began to behold him.
	Sche ledde him forth swithe stille,	She led him forth very demurely;
	To th'emperour with gode wille	With good faith, she delivered him
2190	Sche taught him forto weld.	To the emperor for the battle.
	Than seyd th'emperour hende and fre,	Then the emperor, noble and free, spoke:
	"Lordinges, listen now to me	"Lordings, listen to me now,
	Bothe yong and eld:	Both young and old.

	This knight that ye se now here	This knight that you see here
	Hath taken batail in strong maner	Has accepted battle with valor
	Al forto fight in feld.	In order to fight in the field.
	“This knight,” he seyd, “that stount me bi	This knight,” he said, “who stands by me
	Wil fight for th’erl Sir Tirri -	Will fight for Earl Thierry.
	For nothing wil he wond -	He will not fall back for anything,
2200	And defende him of that felonie	And he will defend him from that crime
	Ogain the douk Berard of Pavi	Against Berard, the duke of Pavia,
	That he berth him an hond;	Who accuses him with his own hand.
	For Tirri is out of lond went	For Thierry has gone out of the land
	To seche Gii verrament	To seek Guy, in truth,
	That for him might stond.	So that he might stand for him.
	This day is sett bituen hem tuo	This day is set between the two of them,
	Or be deshirrite forevermo	Or else he will be disinherited forevermore
	And flemed out of lond.	And exiled out of the land.
	“Bot now is comen here this knight,	But now this knight has come here
2210	Ogain Berard hath taken the fight	And has taken the fight against Berard.
	For nothing wil he flen.	He will not flee for anything.
	Ac, lordinges,” he seyd, “everichon	But, lordings,” he said, “all of you,
	Where the batayl schal be don	Confer on where the battle will be done,
	Loke where it may best ben.”	Where it may best take place.”
	Than loked thai it schuld be	They decided then that it should be
	In a launde under the cité.	On a plain below the city.
	Thider in thai went biden.	They went toward there to wait.
	Mani man bad God that day	Many men prayed to God that day
	Help the pilgrim as He wele may	To help the pilgrim as He might
2220	The douk Berard to slen.	In order to slay Duke Berard.
	On hors lopen tho knightes prest	The ready knights leaped on their horses
	And lopen togider til schaftes brest	And charged together until shafts
	That strong weren and trewe;	That were sturdy and firm split apart,
	And her gerthes brusten that strong were	And saddle straps that were strong burst;
	And tho knightes bothe yfere	And the knights were at the same moment
	Out of her sadels threwe.	Thrown out of their saddles.
	After thai drough her swerdes gode	After that they drew their good swords,
	And leyd on as thai were wode	Which were fine and new,
	That were gode and newe.	And laid on as if they were mad.
2230	And astow sest the fir on flint,	And as one sees the sparks from flint,
	The stem out of her helmes stint	They hacked at each other so feverishly
	So hetelich thai gun hewe.	That the steam rose from their helmets.
	Wele wer armed tho knightes stout	The stout knights were well armed,
	Bot he had more yren him about,	But that false Berard
	That fals Berardine.	Had more iron around him.
	Tuay hauberkes he was in weved	He was wrapped in two mail-coats
	And tuay helmes opon his heved	And on his head he had two helmets
	Was wrought in Sarayine.	Which were forged in Saracen lands.
	Opon his schulder henge a duble scheld	On his shoulder hung a double shield—
2240	Beter might non be born in feld,	No better one could be carried on the field—
	A gode swerd of stiel fine.	Matched with a rugged sword of fine steel.
	Mani man therwith his liif had lorn;	Many men had lost their life by it;
	It was sumtim therbiforn	Before then it was once owned
	The kinges Costentine.	By the kings of Constantinople.
	Strong batayl held tho knightes bold	The valiant knights fought hard combat
	That alle that ever gan hem bihold	So that any who ever looked upon them
	Thai seyden hem among	Said amongst themselves

	The pilgrim was non erthely man;	That the pilgrim was no earthly man;
	It was an angel from Heven cam	It was an angel come from Heaven
2250	For Tirri batayle to fong.	To stand for Thierry in battle!
	For mani gode erl and mani baroun	For Berard had brought down
	Berard hath ybrought adoun	Many a good earl and many a baron
	With wel michel wrong.	With great injustice.
	Therfore hath God sent, ywis,	Therefore God had sent, surely,
	An angel out of heven-blis	An angel out of Heaven's bliss
	To sle that traitour strong.	To slay that wicked traitor.
	Al the folk in that cité was,	All of the people in that city,
	Litel and michel, more and las,	Small and great, high and low,
	To se the batayl thai yede.	Had come there to see the battle.
2260	Bot Tirri in a chirche liis	But Thierry hid in a church
	And ever he bisought God, ywis,	And continually beseeched God, in truth,
	He schuld him help and spede.	That He would help and support him.
	When he herd telle that the pilgrim	When he heard the news that the pilgrim
	Faught ogain the douke Berardin	Was fighting against Duke Berard
	To help him at his nede.	To help him in his need,
	Wel fain he wald thider gon	He earnestly wished to go there;
	Bot for knoweing of his fon	But the thought of recognition
	Wel sore he gan him drede.	By his enemies filled him with terror.
	Ac natheles he ros up tho	But nonetheless he rose up then,
2270	With michel care and michel wo	And with great anxiousness and distress
	And thider he went wel swithe.	He went there very quickly.
	When he com to the plas	When he came to the place
	Ther the bataile loked was	Where the battle was decreed
	Amonges hem he gan lithe	He began to walk among the spectators.
	And when he seyghe the douk so strong	And when he saw the duke so strong
	And his armes tohewe among,	And his weapons repeatedly smashed,
	In his hert he was ful blithe.	In his heart he was full of joy.
	And tho he seyghe his blod spille,	And when he saw his blood spill out
	God he thonked with gode wille	He thanked God with firm will:
	. . . . .	. . . . . .[39]
2281	"Lord, merci," Tirri gan say,	"Lord, have mercy!" Thierry exclaimed,
	"This is nought the pilgrim Y met yisterday	"This is not the pilgrim I met yesterday
	That is so richeliche dight.	Who is so valiantly dressed.
	He was a feble pouer body	He was a feeble, poor fellow,
	Sely, messays, and hungri,	Simple, downtrodden, and hungry,
	And he is of michel might.	And this man is of great strength.
	Y trow non erthelich man it be,	I know it is no mortal man!
	On Gii Y thenke when ichim se	I am reminded of Guy when I see him,
	So douhti he was in fight.	He was so formidable in combat.
2290	Yif Gii mi felawe now ded nere	If my friend Guy were not dead now,
	Ich wald sigge that he it were	I would swear that it was him,
	So liche thai ben of sight."	They are so alike in appearance."
	Into chirche ogain he yede	He went back into the church
	And fel on knes in that stede	And fell on his knees in that place,
	And Jhesus Crist he bisought	And he called on Jesus Christ,
	He schuld help the pilgrim	That He would help the pilgrim
	That faught ogain Douk Berardin	Who was fighting against Duke Berard,

[39] Again there is no lacuna in the manuscript, but a line is missing from the rhyme scheme.

	That miche wo hath him wrought.	Who had brought him so much misery.
	Hard togider gun thai fight	They fought together fiercely
2300	Fro the morwe to the night	From the morning to the night
	That thai rest hem nought.	And they gave themselves no rest.
	And when hem failed light of day	And when the light of day failed the crowd,
	Thai couthe no rede what thai do may.	They could not decide what to do.
	To th'emperour thai hem brought.	They brought the warriors to the emperor.
	"Sir emperour," thai seyd anon,	"Sir Emperor," they said at once,
	"What schul we with this knightes don?	"What should we do with these knights?
	At thi wille schal it be."	It will be as you will."
	Th'emperour clept to him tho	The emperor then summoned
	Four barouns that his trust was to.	Four barons that he had trust in.
2310	"Lordinges," than seyd he,	"Lordings," he said,
	"Kepe me wele the Douk Berard,	"Keep Duke Berard well for me,
	And bring him tomorwe bi a forward,	And bring him tomorrow by your agreement,
	Open al your fe;	Upon forfeit of all your goods,
	And Y schal kepe the pilgrim tonight;	And I will keep the pilgrim tonight.
	Til tomorwe that it is day light	Until tomorrow when it is daylight,
	He schal bileve with me."	He will stay with me."
	Than departed this batayle,	They departed from the battleground.
	Tho four barouns withouten fayl	The four barons, without fail,
	Understode Berard to kepe	Agreed to keep Berard,
2320	And th'emperour toke the pilgrim	And the emperor took the pilgrim
	In a chaumber to loken him	To lock him in a chamber,
	With serjaunce wise and yepe.	With sergeants who were wise and alert.
	The douke Berard forgat him nought;	Duke Berard did not forget him;
	Of a foule tresoun he him bithought:	He devised a foul act of treachery.
	Four knightes he gan clepe.	He called four knights to himself.
	"For mi love," he seyd, "goth tonight	"For my love," he said, "go tonight,
	Ther the pilgrim lith ful right	Straight to where the pilgrim lies,
	And sleth him in his slepe."	And kill him in his sleep."
	Thai armed hem swithe wel	They armed themselves well,
2330	Bothe in iren and in stiel	Both in iron and in steel,
	And went hem forth in hast,	And went forth in haste.
	Into the chaumber thai went anon.	They immediately went into the chamber,
	The pilgrims kepers everichon	Where each of the pilgrim's keepers
	Lay and slepe ful fast.	Lay sleeping soundly.
	To the pilgrim thai went ful right	They went straight to the pilgrim
	And left up the bedde with her might	And lifted the bed with all their might,
	Tho four traitours unwrast.	Those four evil wretches.
	To the se thai beren him	They carried him to the sea,
	And bothe bed and the pilgrim	And both bed and pilgrim
2340	Into the see thai cast.	Were cast into the ocean.
	To Sir Berard thai went anon	They soon returned to Sir Berard
	And teld him hou thai hadden don,	And told him how they had made out;
	Therof he was ful fawe.	He was very pleased to hear it.
	"Sir," thai seyd, "be nought adred.	"Sir," they said, "have no fear.
	Bothe the pilgrim and the bed	We have thrown both the pilgrim
	Into the se we han ythrawe."	And the bed into the sea."
	The pilgrim waked and loked an heyghe,	The pilgrim woke up and gazed on high;

	The sterres on the heven he seighe,	He saw the stars in the heavens
	The water about him drawe.	As the water washed about him.[40]
2350	Thei he was ferd no wonder it nis;	If he was afraid, it is no wonder!
	Non other thing he no seyghe, ywis,	He saw no other thing, truly,
	Bot winde and wateres wawe.	But wind and water.
	"Lord," seyd Gii, "God Almight	"Lord," said Guy, "God Almighty,
	That winde and water and al thing dight	Who made wind and waves and all things,
	On me have now pité.	Have pity on me now.
	Whi is me fallen thus strong cumbring?	Why have I fallen into this dreadful trial?
	And Y no fight forto win nothing -	I do not fight to win anything,
	Noither gold no fe,	Neither gold nor possessions,
	For no cité no no castel -	For any city or any castle;
2360	Bot for mi felawe Y loved so wel	But only for my friend I loved so well
	That was of gret bounté,	Who was of great kindness.
	For he was sumtyim so douhti	For he was once so valiant
	And now he is so pouer a bodi.	And now he is so poor in body.
	Certes it reweth me."	Truly it fills me with remorse."
	Now herkeneth a litel striif	Now listen to a short tale
	Hou He saved the pilgrims liif,	About how Christ, who sits on His throne,
	Jhesu that sitt in trone,	Saved the pilgrim's life
	With a fischer that was comand	With a fisherman who was approaching,
	In the se fische takeand	Catching fish in the sea
2370	Bi himself alon.	By himself alone.
	He seth that bed floter him by	He saw that bed floating by him
	"On Godes half!" he gan to cri,	And began to call, "For the love of God!
	"What artow? Say me son."	Who are you? Tell me right away."
	The pilgrim his heved upplight	The pilgrim lifted up his head
	And crid to him anonright	And called to him immediately
	And made wel reweli mon.	And made a pitiful cry.
	"Gode man," than seyd he,	"Good man," he then said,
	"Y leve on God in Trinité	"As I trust in God in Trinity,
	The sothe thou schalt now sen.	You will now hear the truth.
2380	Understode thou ought of the batayl hard	Do you know anything about the hard contest
	Bituen the pilgrim and Sir Berard	Between the pilgrim and Sir Berard,
	Hou thai foughten bituen?"	How they fought between themselves?"
	The fischer seyd, "Y seighe the fight	The fisherman said, "I saw the battle
	Fro the morwe to the night,	From the morning to the night,
	For nothing wald thai flen.	For they would not retreat for anything.
	Th'emperour comand tho	Then the emperor commanded
	Thai schuld be kept bothe tuo	That both of them should be guarded
	Tomorwe bring hem oghen."	And brought back again tomorrow."
	"Icham," he seyd, "the pilgrim	"I am," he said, "the pilgrim
2390	That faught with the douke Berardin	Who fought with Duke Berard
	For Tirri the hendi knight.	For Thierry, the noble knight.
	Yistreven we wer deled ato,	Last night we were separated.
	In a chaumber Y was do	I was put away in a chamber
	With serjaunce wise and wight.	With sergeants who were wise and keen.
	Hou Ich com her no wot Y nought;	How I came here I do not know.

[40] As TEAMS notes, this scene forms "the structural mid-point of the narrative," as Guy contemplates the stars just as he does at the beginning of the story. The thematic difference is that Guy now lies in God's hands as opposed to acting entirely by his own volition.

	For His love that this warld hath wrought	For His love, who shaped this world,
	Save me yif thou might."	Save me if you are able."
	The fischer tok him into his bot anon	The fisherman quickly took him into his boat
	And to his hous he ladde him hom	And brought him home to his house
2400	And saved his liif that night.	And saved his life that night.
	Th'emperour ros amorwe, ywis,	The emperor rose in the morning, in fact,
	And at the chirche he herd his messe	And heard his mass at the church
	In the first tide of the day	In the first hours of the day.
	And into his halle he gan gon	And he went into his hall
	And after the steward he axed anon	And straightaway asked for the steward
	And the pilgrim withouten delay.	And the pilgrim, without delay.
	The four barouns forgat hem nought,	The four barons did not forget their duty;
	The douke Berard thai han forth brought	They brought Duke Berard forth,
	Redy armed to play.	Ready and armed for the play of battle.
2410	And the pilgrims kepers com everichon	And the pilgrim's keepers came, every one,
	And seyd to th'emperour, bi Seyn Jon,	And said to the emperor, by Saint John,
	The pilgrim was oway.	The pilgrim was gone.
	Th'emperour was wel wroth,	The emperor was very angry.
	Bi his fader soule he swore his oth	He swore his oath, that by his father's soul,
	Thai schuld ben hang and drawe.	They should be hanged and quartered.
	"For Godes love," he seyd, "Merci,	"For God's love," they pleaded, "have mercy.
	This douke Berard of Pavi	This Duke Berard of Pavia
	Hath him brought o dawe."	Has put him to death."
	Th'emperour seyd, "Bi Seyn Martin,	The emperor said, "By Saint Martin,[41]
2420	Hastow don this, fals Berardin,	Have you done this, cheating Berard,
	To don the pilgrim slawe?	To have the pilgrim killed?
	Yeld him dethes or lives to me	Present him to me, dead or alive,
	Or in mi court dempt thou schalt be	Or you will stand condemned in my court
	Thurth jugement of lawe."	Through the judgment of law."
	The douke Berard wex wroth and wo,	Duke Berard grew furious and upset;
	Th'emperour he answerd tho	He answered the emperor then
	With wel michel hete,	With burning rage,
	"Ichave served thee long, Sir Emperour,	"I have long served you, Sir Emperor,
	And kept thi londes with michel anour	And kept your lands with great honor,
2430	And now thou ginnest me threte.	And now you devise threats.
	Therof give Y nought a chirston.	I don't give a cherry-stone for it!
	Hom to Lombardy ichil gon	I will go home to Lombardy
	With alle the ost Y may gete.	With all the army I can raise.
	Y schal com into Almayn for al thi tene	I will return to Germany to hurt you.
	Of al thi lond siker mot thou ben	For all your land, you can be sure
	O fot Y no schal thee lete."	That I will not leave you with one foot!"
	When th'emperour herd that	When the emperor heard that
	And of his thretening undergat	And took in his threats,
	He bad with wordes bold	He ordered with bold words
2440	Out of his court he schuld gon	That he should get out of his court.
	And he answerd sone anon	And Berard answered right away
	That sikerliche he nold.	That he would certainly not.
	Ther com the fischer priveliche	The fisherman discreetly came in
	And puked th'emperour softliche,	And gently nudged the emperor;

[41] *Seyn Martin*: Saint Martin of Tours (316-397), who is perhaps a symbolic choice as he ended his life as a voluntary beggar himself when he retired from the bishopric to monastic life.

	His tale to him he told.	He told his tale to him.
	"Sir emperour," he seyd, "listen to me.	"Sir Emperor," he said, "listen to me.
	Of the pilgrim ichil telle thee	I will tell you about the pilgrim
	Yif thou me herken wold."	If you will give ear to me."
	"Fischer," seyd th'emperour fre,	"Fisherman," said the noble emperor,
2450	"Of the pilgrim telle thou me	"Tell me about the pilgrim,
	Yif thou the sothe can sayn."	If you can speak the truth."
	"For sothe," he seyd, "Y can ful wel	"For sure," he answered, "I can full well.
	Y schal thee leyghen never a del;	I will not lie to you about any detail;
	Therof icham ful fain.	About that I am very eager.
	Yistreven withouten lesing	Last night, without a lie,
	Y went to the se of fischeing	I went to the sea for fishing
	Mine nettes forto layn.	And to put out my nets.
	A bedde Y fond ther floterand	I found a bed floating there
	And theron a knight liggeand,	And a knight lying there on it,
2460	A man of michel mayn.	A man of great might.
	"And ich him axed what he were.	And I asked him who he was;
	He told me the sothe there	He told me the truth there
	With wordes fre and hende.	With words that were noble and dignified.
	'Icham,' he seyd, 'the pilgrim	'I am,' he said, 'The pilgrim
	That faught with the douke Berardin	That fought with Duke Berard
	Yisterday to the nende.'	Yesterday to the ninth hour.'
	Y tok him into mi bot anon	I took him into my boat at once
	And to min hous Y lad him hom	And brought him home to my house
	And kept him as mi frende.	And kept him as I would a friend.
2470	Yif thou levest nought he is thare	If you do not believe he is there,
	Do sum serjaunt thider fare	Have some officer sent forth
	And ther ye may him fende."	And there you will find him."
	Th'emperour sent after him tho	The emperor sent for him then.
	With the fischer and other mo	The fisherman and others with him
	And brought him saunfayle.	Went and brought him back, without fail.
	Thai were don togider blive	The two knights were immediately set together.
	With hard strokes forto drive	They began to assault each other,
	Thai gun hem to asayle.	Charging with hard strokes.
	Wel hard togider gun thai fight,	They fought together ferociously
2480	With her brondes that wer bright	With blades that were bright,
	Thai hewe hauberk of mayle.	Hacking at coats of mail.
	Thus togider gun thai play	In this way they battled together
	Til it was the heyghe midday	With fierce combat
	With wel strong batayle.	Until it was high noon.
	The douk Berard was egre of mode,	Duke Berard was in furious spirits;
	He smot to Gii as he wer wode	He struck at Guy as if he were berserk,
	His liif he wende to winne.	Hoping to take his life.
	He hit him on the helm on hight	He hit him on the helmet in a rush
	That alle the floures feir and bright	So that all the flowers, fair and bright,
2490	He dede hem fleyghe atuinne.	Were made to scatter apart.
	The nasel he carf atuo	He carved the nose-guard in two
	And the venteyle he dede also	And cut the face-guard as well
	Right to his bare chinne.	Right down to his bare chin.
	. . . . .	. . . . . .[42]

[42] For a third time the rhyme scheme is broken, but the manuscript has no defect.

	Sir Gii was wroth anon fot-hot	Sir Guy was instantly infuriated,
	And Berard on the helme he smot;	And he slammed Berard on the helmet.
	To stond hadde he no space	He had no space to withstand it,
2500	For bothe helmes he carf atuo	For he carved both helmets in two
	And his heved he dede also	And split his head as well
	In midward of the face.	In the middle of the face.
	Thurth al his bodi the swerd bot	Through all his body the sword ran
	Into the erthe wele half a fot,	Down into the earth a good half a foot;
	That seighe men in the place.	The men in that place saw that.
	Th[e s]oule went fro the bodi there,	The soul went out from the body there.
	Th[e fol]k of the cite wel glad were,	The people of the city were overjoyed;
	Th[ai] thonked our Lordes grace.	They gave thanks for our Lord's grace.[43]
	Bifor th'emperour than com Sir Gii,	Then Sir Guy came before the emperor:
2510	"Ichave wroken th'erl Tirri -	"I have avenged Earl Thierry
	The sothe thou might now sen -	You can now see the fact of that—
	And defended him of that felonie	And defended him from that crime
	Ogain the douke Berard of Pavi	Against Duke Berard of Pavia,
	That was so stout and ken.	Who was so determined and keen.
	Therfore the sothe ich ax thee	Therefore I ask the truth from you,
	Yif Tirri schal quite-cleymed be	Whether Thierry will be acquitted
	And have his lond ogen;	And have his land again.
	And whoso ther ogain withstond	And whoever stands against this
	He schal have schame of min hond	Will be shamed by my own hand,
2520	Wel siker may he ben."	He may be certain of that."
	Th'emperour seyd, "Sikerly	The emperor said, "For certain,
	Thou hast wroken th'erl Tirri;	You have vindicated Earl Thierry.
	Gret honour thou hast him don.	You have done him great honor.
	Therfore when he is come	Therefore, when he has come,
	His londes than al and some	He will have his lands,
	He schal have everichon."	All and some, every bit of them."
	Than was Gii glad and blithe	Then Guy was glad and joyful
	And kest of his armes also swithe,	And cast off his armor as quickly,
	After him he thought to gon.	Intending to go after him.
2530	Th'emperour wald clothe him in gold	The emperor wished to clothe him in gold
	Ac sikerliche he seyd he nold,	But he earnestly said he did not want it;
	His sclavain he axed anon.	He asked at once for his cloak.
	To toun he went in his way	He went on his way to town
	To finde Tirri yif he may	To find Thierry if he could,
	In sorwe and care ful bounde.	Who was in sorrow and burdened by cares.
	Into a chirche he him dede	He took himself into a church
	And fond him in a privé stede	And found him in a secluded place,
	Liand on knes to grounde.	Lying on his knees on the ground.
	"Arise up, Tirri," he seyd tho,	"Rise up, Thierry," he said.
2540	"To court thou schalt with me go	"Now that I have found you,
	Now ichave thee founde."	You will go to the court with me."
	Tirri anon his heved upbreyd	Thierry lifted up his head in alarm
	And seyd, "Pilgrim hastow me treyd?	And said, "Pilgrim, have you betrayed me?
	Allas, that ich stounde!	Alas, that very moment!
	"Allas, allas!" than seyd he,	Alas, alas!" he then said,
	"To what man may men trust be	"What man can one have trust in

[43] There is legitimate page damage here in the Auchinleck, and some letters have been reconstructed.

	To chese to his make?	To choose as his comrade?
	Thou that semed so stedefast	You, who seemed so steadfast,
	To th'emperour me wraied hast,	Have betrayed me to the emperor,
2550	To sle me thou hast take.	And have decided to kill me.
	In ivel time was it to me	It was an evil moment for me
	That Y mi name told to thee;	When I told you my name.
	Allas that ich sake."	Alas that I gave myself away!"
	For sorwe that he hadde tho	For the grief that he had then,
	O word no might he speke mo	He could not speak one more word,
	Bot stode and gan to quake.	But stood and began to quake.
	"Tirri," seyd Gii, "drede thee nothing,	"Thierry," said Guy, "have no fear.
	Thou schalt today here gode tiding	You will hear some good news today,
	Thurth grace of Godes sond.	Through the grace of God's command.
2560	The schrewed Douke Berard he is ded,	The evil Duke Berard is dead;
	Under the cité he is yleyde,	He is buried under the city.
	Y slough him with min hond."	I killed him with my own hand."
	Tho was Tirri glad and blithe,	Then Thierry was overjoyed and glad.
	To court he went also swithe	Just as quickly they went to the court;
	For nothing wald he wond.	They would not delay for anything.
	"Sir emperour," seyd Gii anon,	"Sir Emperor," said Guy straightaway,
	"Now is Tirri comen hom	"Now Thierry has come home
	To resceive his lond."	To receive his lands."
	Th'emperour on him gan bihold	The emperor began to look upon him
2570	And seyd to him with wordes bold,	And said to him with frank words,
	"Artow th'erl Tirri?	"Are you Earl Thierry?
	Where is now thi bold chere	Where is your bold manner now,
	That whilom so douhti were	You who used to be so courageous
	And holden so hardi?"	And considered so hardy?"
	"Ya, sir," he seyd, "icham he.	"Yes, sir," he said, "I am he.
	Whilom Y was of gret boundé	I was once of great ability
	And helden ful douhti	And respected for my manliness.
	And now ich have al forlorn	And now I have lost everything
	With miche sorwe on even and morn	To look for my friend Sir Guy,
2580	To seke mi felawe Sir Gii.	In great sorrow by evenings and mornings.
	"Ich have him sought in mani lond	I have looked for him in many lands
	Ac never man yete ich fond	But have never yet found anyone
	Can telle of him no sawe.	Who could tell any news of him.
	He is dede ich wot ful wel,	I know very well he is dead.
	God Almighti and Seyn Mighel	May God Almighty and Saint Michael
	To blis his soule drawe.	Carry his soul to bliss.
	Ac now is it told me this pilgrim	But now I am told that this pilgrim
	As slayn the douke Berardin;	Has killed Duke Berard.
	Therof icham ful fawe.	I am very pleased for it.
2590	Sir Emperour, Y bid merci,	Sir Emperor, I ask your mercy.
	For Godes love and our Levedi,	For the love of God and our Lady,
	Thou do me londes lawe."	Grant me my lands under law."
	Thritti erls wel curteys	Thirty earls, all courteous,
	And alle the lordinges of the paylais	And all the nobility in the palace
	And mani baroun afine	And many barons together
	Crid merci to th'emperour bold.	Cried for clemency to the brave emperor.
	Th'emperour gan him bihold	The emperor looked on him
	And seyd, "Tirri, frende min,	And said, "Thierry, my friend,
	Here Y sese thee in al thi lond	I hereby endow you with all your lands
2600	With worthschip to held in thine hond	To hold with honor in your hand,

	Bi God and Seyn Martine.	By God and by Saint Martin.
	Bifor mi barouns Y graunt thee	And in front of my barons I proclaim
	Steward of mi lond thou schalt be	That you will be steward of my land
	As was the douke Berardine.”	As Duke Berard was.”
	Th’emperour kist him ful swete,	The emperor kissed him in friendship
	Forgaf him his wrethe and his hete	And let go his wrath and his anger
	Bifor hem al there.	Before all of them there.
	When th’emperour and th’erl were at on	When the emperor and earl were at one,
	The lordinges everichon	Every one of the lordings
2610	Wele blithe of hertes were.	Was very pleased at heart.
	“Sir Tirri,” seyd th’emperour fre,	“Sir Thierry,” said the noble emperor,
	“For thi fader soule tel thou me	“If you are beloved and dear to me,
	Astow art me leve and dere,	On your father’s soul tell me,
	Whennes is this pilgrim?	Where is this pilgrim from?
	Is he thin em or thi cosyin	Is he your uncle or your cousin
	That faught for thee here?”	Who fought for you here?”
	“Sir Emperour,” seyd Sir Tirri,	“Sir Emperor,” said Sir Thierry,
	“So God me help and our Levedi	“So help me God and our Lady,
	For sothe withouten fayle	In truth without fail,
2620	Y no seighe never ere this pilgrim	I never saw this pilgrim before
	Bot this other day Y met with him	Except the other day when I met him
	And told him mi conseyl.	And told him my troubles.
	He swore as tite bi Seyn Jon	He swore as quickly that by Saint John,
	To thi court he wald gon	He would go to your court
	The douk Berard to asayle.	To confront Duke Berard.
	Ich wend wel litel than, Y plight,	I had little idea then, I swear,
	He hadde ben of michel might	He would be of such great strength
	To hold with him batayle.”	To prevail against him in battle.”
	Th’emperour dede as a gode man	The emperor did as a good man does
2630	And Tirri into his chaumber he nam	And took Thierry into his chamber
	And richeliche gan him schrede.	And had him dressed richly.
	He fond him wepen and armour bright	He gave him weapons and shining armor
	And al that schuld falle to knight	And all that befits a knight,
	And feffed him with prede	And furnished him with pride.
	And fond him hors and stedes gode	And he gave him a horse and fine steeds,
	Of al his lond the best stode	The best stock from all his lands,
	Hom with him to lede.	For him to lead home with him.
	Th’emperour wald the pilgrim athold	The emperor wished to keep the pilgrim also,
	Ac sikerliche he seyd he nold,	But he earnestly said he would not stay;
2640	With Tirri hom he yede.	He went home with Thierry.
	When Tirri was comen hom	When Thierry had arrived home,
	The pilgrim he wald anon	He immediately wished to give
	Sesen in al his lond.	All his lands to the pilgrim.
	And he forsoke it al outright	But Sir Guy refused it all outright,
	For riches loved he no wight	For he had no love at all for riches
	For to hold in hond.	To hold in his hand.
	Th’erl as swithe his sond he sent	Just as swiftly, the earl sent his word
	Over al his lond verrament	Over all of his lands, in truth,
	Til that his wiif he fond.	Until his wife should be found.
2650	Tho was sche founden in an ile	Soon she was found on an island,
	In a nunri that while	In a nunnery all that while,
	For doute of Berardes bond.	For fear of Berard’s rule.
	Tho was Tirri a noble man	Then Thierry was a noble man!
	In al that lond better nas nan	In all that land there were none better,

	As Y you tel may.	As I can tell you.
	Destrud were al his enemis,	His enemies were all destroyed.
	He liveth in michel joie and blis	He lived in great joy and peace,
	Also a prince in play.	Like a prince at his leisure.
	Anon Sir Gii him bithought	Soon Sir Guy resolved to himself
2660	That lenger wald he duelle nought;	That he would not dwell longer.
	To Sir Tirri on a day	One day with Sir Thierry
	He seyd to him in that tide,	He said to him at that time,
	"Here nil Y no lenger abide,	"I will no longer stay here.
	Ich mot wende in mi way.	I must go on my way."
	"O thing," he seyd, "Y pray thee,	"But one thing," he said, "I ask of you.
	Out of the cité go with me	If you are a gracious knight,
	Astow art hendi knight.	Go out of the city with me.
	Alon we shul go bothe yfere	We will go alone, the two of us,
	And swich tidinges thou schalt here	And you will hear such news
2670	Thou schalt have wonder, aplight."	That you will be amazed, in truth."
	Th'erl him graunt with hert fre	The earl agreed with a willing heart
	And went with him out of that cité	And went with him out of the city,
	In his way ful right.	Straight along his way.
	And when thai wer thennes half a mile	And when they were out half a mile,
	Ther thai duelled a litel while	Those men of great might
	Tho gomes of michel might.	Paused there for a little while.
	"Tirri," seyd Gii, "understond thou the,	"Thierry," said Guy, "Hear my words.
	Thou art unkinde so thenketh me	It seems to me that you are fickle
	For Gii thi gode fere;	Towards Guy, your loyal friend.
2680	Whi wiltow him knowe nought?	Why have you not recognized him?
	Ywis, thou art ivel bithought,	In truth, your memory serves you badly.
	No was he thee leve and dere?	Was he not beloved and dear to you?
	Thenke he slough the douk Otoun	Think of how he killed Duke Otoun
	And brought thee out of his prisoun	And delivered you out of prison
	And made thee quite and skere	And made you free and clear,
	And hou he fond thee ded almast	And how he found you nearly dead,
	As he rode thurth a forest	With a pitiable appearance,
	With a rewely chere.	As he rode through the forest.
	"And hou he socourd thi leman schene	And how he aided your shining lady,
2690	And al the fiften outlawes ken	And of the fifteen savage outlaws,
	He slough hem al on rawe	And how he slayed them in a row,
	And slough the four knightes radde	And swiftly killed the four knights.
	And thi bodi to toun ladde	And how he anxiously brought you to town
	To leche thi woundes ful fawe;	To have your wounds treated.
	And he socourd thi fader in wer	And he assisted your father in battle
	And halp thee bothe nere and fer	And helped you both near and far,
	Tho thou was fallen ful lawe.	Though you had fallen so low.
	And now Y slough Berard the strong.	And now I have killed Berard the strong.
	Icham Gii, thou hast wrong.	I am Guy. You do me wrong.
2700	Why niltow me nought knawe?"	Why do you not know me?"
	When th'erl herd him speke so	When the earl heard him speak so
	Wepen he gan with eyghen to	He began to weep with both eyes
	And fel aswon to grounde.	And fell faint to the ground.
	"For Godes love," he seyd, "merci.	"For God's love," he said, "forgive me.
	Ivel at ese now am Y	I am sick at heart now,
	In sorwe and care ful bounde.	In sorrow and overcome by guilt.
	Ful wele might Y knowe thee ar now,	I might have known you full well before.
	In al this warld was man bot thou	In all this world there is no man but you

	Ogain Berard durst founde.	Who would dare face against Berard!
2710	Merci, sir, *par charité*;	Mercy, sir, for charity's sake,
	That ich have misknowen thee	For my failure to recognize you!
	Allas, allas, that stounde!	Alas, alas, that time!
	"Merci!" he crid on his kne,	Forgive me!" he cried on his knee,
	Bothe for sorwe and for pité	Guy began to weep,
	Wepen he bigan.	Both in sadness and for compassion.
	He seyghe his legges brosten ich del	He saw Thierry's legs, blistered all over,
	That whilom wer yhosed ful wel	That once were elegantly clothed;
	More sorwe made never man.	No man ever made greater lamenting.
	Sir Gii went to him tho -	Sir Guy came near to him then,
2720	In his hert him was wo -	For his heart ached,
	And in his armes up him nam.	And took him up in his arms.
	Atuix hem was gret diol in that stounde,	There was grief between them at that moment.
	Bothe thai fel aswon to grounde	Both of them fell in a swoon to the ground,
	For sorwe thai wex al wan.	And they grew pale for sorrow.
	"Tirri," seyd Sir Gii tho,	"Thierry," Sir Guy finally said,
	"Thou schalt bileve and Y schal go;	"You shall stay and I will go.
	Y biteche thee heven-king	I entrust you to Heaven's king.
	Bot Ich have a sone, ywis -	But in truth, I have a son.
	Y not whether he knight is	I do not know whether he is a knight
2730	For he is bot a yongling -	For he is only a youngster.
	Yif he have ani nede to thee	If he ever has need of you,
	Help him for the love of me	For my love, help him,
	Y pray thee in al thing.	I ask you in every way.
	Ich hope he schal be a gode knight,	I hope that he will be a good knight.
	Y pray Jhesu ful of might	I pray to Jesus, full of might,
	He graunt him His blisceing."	That He will grant him His blessing."
	"Merci, sir," than seyd he,	"Mercy, sir," Thierry answered then.
	"For Godes love leve her stil with me	"For God's love, live here with me yet,
	Y pray thee *par amour*;	I ask you, for kindness' sake.
2740	Mi treuthe Y plight in thine hond	I pledge my oath with my hand
	Y schal thee sese in al mi lond	That I will endow you with all my land,
	Bothe in toun and tour.	Both in town and tower.
	Thi man Y wil be and serve thee ay	I will be your man and serve you forever,
	Ther while mi liif lest may	While my life might last,
	To hold up thin honour.	To protect your honor.
	And yif thou no wilt, ichil with thee go;	And if you will not, I will go with you.
	Ywis, ichave wele lever so	In faith, I would rather do so
	Than bileve with th'emperour."	Than stay with the emperor."
	"Do oway, Sir Tirri, therof speke nought,	"Enough, Sir Thierry, no more talk of it.
2750	Al idel speche it is thi thought.	Your speech is all foolish thoughts!
	Wende ogain hom now right	Go straight back home again.
	And be nought to prout Y thee rede	Do not be too proud, is my advice to you,
	To serve thi lord at al his nede	To serve your lord in all his needs.
	Thou prove with thi might.	Show this with all your might!
	Desirite no man of his lond;	Deprive no man of his land.
	Yif thou dost thou gos to schond	If you do, you will fall into shame.
	Ful siker be thou, aplight.	You will assuredly be miserable.
	For yive thou reve a man his fe	For if you rob a man of his goods,
	Godes face schaltow never se	You will never see God's face
2760	No com in heven-light.	Nor come into Heaven's light.
	"Bithenke thee wele of Douke Berard	Consider well Duke Berard,
	Hou prout he was for he was steward	How proud he was because he was steward,

	And flemed thee out of lond	And how he banished you out of the land
	And he now desirite is,	And is now disinherited,[44]
	With michel sorwe slayn, ywis,	And slain with great sorrow indeed,
	And schamelich driven to schond.	And driven to ruin in disgrace.
	Y schal gon and thou bileve schalt,	I shall go and you will stay.
	Y biteche thee God that al thing walt	I commend you to God, who rules all things
	And maked with His hond."	And made them with His hand."
2770	Thai kisten hem togider tho;	The two then kissed each other.
	Olive thai seyghen hem never eft mo	They never saw each other alive again,
	As the gest doth ous understond.	As the story has us understand.
	Gret sorwe thai made at her parting	They made great sorrow at their parting
	And kist hem with eighe wepeing;	And kissed with weeping eyes.
	Thai wenten hem bothe atuo.	They went their separate ways.
	Als swithe th'erl Tirri went him hom;	As swiftly, Thierry took himself home.
	Thre days he no ete mete non,	For three days he ate no food,
	In hert him was ful wo.	For he was inconsolable at heart.
	And when the countas sikerly	And when the countess heard it said
2780	Herd seyn it was Sir Gii	With certainty that it was Sir Guy
	That than was went hem fro	Who had then gone from them,
	Sche upbreyd hir lord day and night	She reproached her lord day and night
	That he no had holden him with strengthe	For not forcefully insisting he stay[45]
	And might / And laten him nought thennes gon.	And letting let him leave from there.
	Now went Gii forth in his way	Now Sir Guy went forth on his way
	Toward the see so swithe he may,	Toward the sea, as swiftly as he could.
	For Tirri he siked sare.	For Thierry he sighed bitterly.
	Into schip he went bilive,	He soon boarded a ship
	Over the se he gan drive,	And sailed over the sea
2790	Into Inglond he gan fare.	And traveled into England.
	The lond folk he axed anon	At once he asked among the people
	After King Athelston	About King Athelston
	In what cuntré he ware.	And which land he was in.
	"At Winchester verrament	"He's at Winchester, in truth,[46]
	And after his barouns he hath sent,	And he has sent for his barons,
	Bothe lasse and mare.	Both small and great.
	"Erls, barouns, and bischopes,	Earls, barons, and bishops,
	Knightes, priours, and abbotes	Knights, priors, and abbots,
	At Winchester thai ben ichon	Each one of them is at Winchester

[44] *And he now desirite is*: Duke Berard is of course more than disinherited, being dead. Presumably not only were his lands confiscated for high treason after threatening war against the emperor, but his descendents are permanently cut off from royal privilege. For a contemporary legal code concerning confiscation, see Nicole Clifton, trans., *Livre de Roi* (c. 1200), in *Crusader Institutions*, ed. Joshua Prawer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 433-4.

[45] 2783 is an especially long line, which is wrapped here into the next space. The line is a strange one as it suggests that Thierry's wife is advocating using force to detain and reward Guy.

[46] *Winchester*: Winchester was the capitol of England in the late Anglo-Saxon period, and for long after was only second in importance to London. In *Havelock*, Athelwold also rules from Winchester (158). Winchester tradition places the contest between Guy and Colbrand on a field near Hyde Abbey, of which only a gatehouse remains. For more historical clues, see also the TEAMS note and Velma Bourgeois Richmond, "The Legend of Guy of Warwick," in *Garland Studies in Medieval Literature* 14 (New York: Garland, 1996).

2800	And han purvayd withouten lesing	And has arranged, without a lie,
	Thre days to ben in fasting	To spend three days in fasting
	To biseke God in tron	To call on the throne of God,
	He sende hem thurth His swet sond	That through His sweet grace
	A man that were douhti of hond	He will send a man hardy in arms
	Ogain Colbrond to gon.	To face against Colbrand.
	Ther is the king and the barnage, ywis,	The king is there with the baronage, truly,
	For doute of her enemis	Because of fear of their enemies
	That wayt hem forto slon.	Who lie in wait to slaughter them.
	"For Sir Anlaf the king of Danmark	For Sir Anlaf, the king of Denmark,
2810	With a nost store and stark	Has come into England
	Into Inglond is come	With an army, fierce and strong,
	With fiften thousend knightes of pris,	And fifteen thousand picked knights.
	Alle this lond thai stroyen, ywis,	They are ravaging all the land, indeed,
	And mani a toun han nome.	And have taken many a town.
	A geaunt he hath brought with him	He has brought with him a giant
	Out of Aufrike stout and grim,	Out of Africa, strong and grim.
	Colbrond hat that gome.	Colbrand is the name of that creature.
	For him is al Inglond forlore	Because of him all England is lost
	Bot Godes help be bifore	Unless God's favor is before them
2820	That socour sende hem some.	To send them some help.
	"To the king he hath sent his sond	Anlaf has sent word to the king
	Forto yeld him al Inglond	To yield all of England to him
	And gif him trowage outright	And to give him outright tribute[47]
	Yif he no wil nought finde a baroun,	If he does not produce a baron,
	A geaunt other a championn,	A giant, or a champion,
	Ogain Colbrond to fight,	To fight against Colbrand,
	And therof thai han taken a day.	And for this they have set a day.
	Ac our king non finde may	But our king cannot find
	Erl, baroun, no knight,	Any earl, baron, or knight,
2830	No squier, no serjaunt non	No squire or any officer,
	Ogain the geaunt dar gon	Who dares fight against the giant,
	So grim he is of sight."	So fearsome is he to look upon."
	Than seyd Sir Gii, "Whare is Herhaud?	Then Sir Guy said, "Where is Herhaud,
	That in his time was so bald?"	Who was so bold in his time?"
	And thai answerd ful swithe.	And they answered promptly,
	"To seche Gyes sone he is fare	"He has set out to look for Guy,
	That marchaunce hadde stollen thare,	Who was stolen away by traders.
	For him he was unblithe."	For him he was inconsolable."
	"And where is th'erl Rohaut of pris?"	"And where is the renowned Earl Rohaud?"
2840	And thai answerd, "Dede he is -	And they answered, "He is dead—
	A gode while is go sithe -	It has been a good while since—
	And Feliis his douhter is his air,	And Felicia, his daughter, is his heir.
	So gode a levedi no so fair,	There's no lady so good or fair
	Ywis, nis non olive."	Indeed, none alive."
	Gii went to Winchester a ful gode pas	Guy went to Winchester in great haste
	Ther the king that time was	Where the king was at that time
	To held his parlement;	To hold his parliament.
	The barouns weren in the halle.	The barons were in the hall.

[47] *Trowage outright*: Tribute could be an extremely burdensome protection racket. In 1012, following a sack of Canterbury, King Athelred paid the Danes off with 17,900 kg of silver.

	The king seyd, “Lordinges alle,	The king said, “Lordings, all,
2850	Mine men ye ben verrament,	You are my men, truly.
	Therfore ich ax withouten fayl	Therefore I ask you, without fail,
	Of this Danis folk wil ous aseyl	About these Danes who are attacking us.
	Ich biseche you with gode entent,	I ask you, in good faith,
	For Godes love Y pray you	And for God’s love I beseech of you
	Gode conseyl give me now	That you will give me good counsel,
	Or elles we ben al schent.	Or else we will all be finished.
	“For the king of Danmark with wrong	For the king of Denmark,
	With his geaunt that is so strong	Along with his giant who is so strong,
	He wil ous al schende.	Will unjustly destroy us all.
2860	Therfore ich axi you ichon	Therefore I ask each one of you,
	What rede is best forto don	What course is the best to follow
	Ogaines hem forto wende?	To take against them?
	Yif he overcom ous in batayle	If they overcome us in battle
	He wil slen ous alle saunfeyle	They will slay us all, without doubt,
	And strouen al our kende.	And destroy all our people.
	Than schal Inglond evermo	Then England will forevermore
	Live in thraldom and in wo	Live in servitude and in woe
	Unto the warldes ende.	Until the end of the world.
	“Therfore ich axi you now right	Therefore I ask you right now
2870	Yif ye knowe our ani knight	If you know any knight of ours
	That is so stout and bold	Who is so stout and bold
	That the batayle dar take an hond	To dare to take in hand the battle
	To fight ogain Colbrond.	To fight against Colbrand.
	Half mi lond have he schold	He would have half my land,
	With alle the borwes that lith therto,	With all the cities that lie in it,
	To him and to his aires evermo	For him and his heirs forevermore,
	To have yive he wold.”	To have if he wanted.”
	Stil seten erls and barouns	The earls and barons sat silently,
	As men hadde schaven her crounes;	Like monks who had shaved their heads.
2880	Nought on answere nold.	No one would give an answer.
	“Allas,” seyd the king, “that Y was born.	“Alas that I was ever born!” said the king.
	Al mi joie it is forlorn,	“All my joy is lost;
	Wel wo is me olive.	It is woe to be alive!
	Now in al mi lond nis no knight	Is there no knight in all my land
	Ogains a geant to hold fight	Who will fight against the giant?
	Mine hert wil breken on five.	My heart will break into five!
	Allas of Warwike Sir Gii	Alas, Sir Guy of Warwick!
	Y no hadde geven thee half mi lond frely	If I had given you half my land freely,
	To hold withouten strive;	To hold without grievance,
2890	Wele were me than bifalle.	Then all would be well.
	Ac certes now the Danis men alle	But for sure now the Danish men
	To sorwe thai schul me drive.”	Will drive me to sorrow, all of them.”
	When it was night to bedde thai yede;	When it was night they went to bed.
	The king for sorwe and for drede	The king, for sorrow and for fear,
	With teres wett his lere.	Wet his face with tears.
	Of al that night he slepe right nought	All night long he had no sleep at all
	Bot ever Jhesu he bisought	But continually prayed to Jesus Christ,
	That was him leve and dere	Who was beloved and dear to him,
	He schuld him sende thurth His sond	That he would send through His grace
2900	A man to fight with Colbrond	A man to fight with Colbrand
	Yif it Is wille were.	If it were His will.
	And Jhesus Crist ful of might	And Jesus Christ, full of might,

	He sent him a noble knight	Did send him a noble knight,
	As ye may forward here.	As you will learn from here on.
	Ther com an angel fram heven-light	An angel from Heaven's light appeared
	And seyd to the king ful right	And spoke directly to the king
	Thurth grace of Godes sond.	Through the grace of God's command.
	He seyd, "King Athelston, slepestow?	He said, "King Athelston, are you asleep?
	Hider me sent thee King Jhesu	I am sent here by King Jesus
2910	To comfort thee to fond.	To attempt to comfort you.
	Tomorwe go to the north gate ful swithe,	Tomorrow, go quickly to the north gate.
	A pilgrim thou schalt se com bilive	When you have stood for a while,
	When thou hast a while stond.	You will see a pilgrim coming before long.
	Bid him for Seynt Charité	Ask him, for Saint Charity's sake,
	That he take the batayl for thee	To accept the battle for you
	And he it wil nim on hond."	And he will take it into his hand."
	Than was the king glad and blithe,	The king was glad and at peace then.
	Amorwe he ros up ful swithe	In the morning he hurriedly rose
	And went to the gate ful right.	And went straight to the gate.
2920	Tuay erls went with him tho	Two earls went there with him
	And tuay bischopes dede also.	And two bishops did as well.
	The weder was fair and bright.	The weather was fair and bright.
	Opon the day about prime	At the break of daylight,
	The king seighe cum the pilgrim	The king saw the pilgrim coming;
	Bi the sclavayn he him plight.	He grasped him by his cloak.
	"Pilgrim," he seyd, "Y pray thee	"Pilgrim," he said, "I ask you
	To court wende thou hom with me	To come home with me to the court
	And ostel ther al night."	And lodge there all night."
	"Be stille, sir," seyd the pilgrim,	"Let me be, sir," said the pilgrim,
2930	"It is nought yete time to take min in,	"It is not time yet to take my room,
	Also God me rede."	So may God help me."
	The king him bisought tho	The king then implored him,
	And the lordinges dede also,	And the lordings did as well,
	To court with hem he yede.	That he go with them to court.
	"Pilgrim," quath the king, "*par charité*,	"Pilgrim," said the king, "for charity's sake,
	Yif it be thi wil understond to me,	If it be your will, listen to me;
	Y schal schewe thee al our nede:	I will explain to you all our need.
	The king of Danmark with gret wrong	With great injustice the king of Denmark,
	Thurth a geaunt that is so strong	Through a giant who is so strong,
2940	Wil strou al our thede.	Will destroy all our nation.
	"And whe han taken of him batayle	And we have agreed to combat with him,
	On what maner, saunfayle,	The manner of which, without fail,
	Y schal now tellen thee.	I will tell you now.
	Thurth the bodi of a knight	This land will be spared
	Ogains that geaunt to hold fight	Through the body of a knight
	Schal this lond aquite be.	Who will face against the giant.
	And pilgrim for Him that dyed on Rode	Pilgrim, for He who died on the Cross,
	And that for ous schadde His blod	And who shed His blood for us
	To bigge ous alle fre,	To redeem us all into freedom,
2950	Take the batayle now on hond	Accept the battle into your hand,
	And save ous the right of Inglond	And save us the right of England
	For Seynt Charité."	For Saint Charity!"
	"Do way, leve sir," seyd Gii,	"Enough, good sir!" said Guy,
	"Icham an old man, a feble bodi;	"I am an old man with a feeble body;
	Mi strengthe is fro me fare."	My strength has gone from me."
	The king fel on knes to grounde	The king fell on his knees to the ground

	And crid him merci in that stounde	And begged for mercy in that place,
	Yif it his wille ware,	If it were his will,
	And the barouns dede also,	And the barons did the same.
2960	O knes thai fellen alle tho	They all fell to their knees
	With sorwe and sikeing sare.	With sorrow and bitter sighs.
	Sir Gii biheld the lordinges alle	Sir Guy looked upon all the lords,
	And whiche sorwe hem was bifalle,	And the woe that had befallen them,
	Sir Gii hadde of hem care.	And had compassion for them.
	Sir Gii tok up the king anon	Sir Guy brought the king to his feet
	And bad the lordinges everichon	And told the lordings, each of them,
	Thai schuld up stond,	That they should stand up,
	And seyd, "For God in Trinité	And said, "For God in Trinity,
	And forto make Inglond fre	And to make England free,
2970	The batayle Y nim on hond."	I will take the battle into my hand."
	Than was the king ful glad and blithe	Then the king was glad and at peace
	And thonked Gii a thousend sithe	And thanked Guy a thousand times
	And Jhesu Cristes sond.	And Jesus Christ's providence.
	To the king of Danmark he sent than	He then sent word to the king of Denmark
	And seyd he hadde founden a man	And said he had found a man
	To fight for Inglond.	To stand for England.
	The Danismen busked hem yare	The Danish quickly readied themselves
	Into batayle forto fare,	To go forward into battle.
	To fight thai war wel fawe.	They were very eager to fight.
2980	And Gii was armed swithe wel	And Guy was armed to the full
	In a gode hauberk of stiel	In a sturdy mail coat of steel,
	Wrought of the best lawe.	Fashioned in the finest manner.
	An helme he hadde of michel might	He had a helmet of great strength,
	With a cercle of gold that schon bright	With a circle of gold that shone bright
	With precious stones on rawe.	With precious stones in a row.
	In the frunt stode a charbukel ston	In the front stood a carbuncle stone,
	As bright as ani sonne it schon	Which shone as bright as any sun
	That glemes under schawe.	That gleams under shadows.
	On that helme stode a flour	On that helmet stood a flower
2990	Wrought it was of divers colour,	Which was crafted of various colors.
	Mirie it was to bihold.	It was beautiful to behold.
	Trust and trewe was his ventayle	His face-guard was firm and strong,
	Gloves and gambisoun and hosen of mayle	With gloves and jacket and mail-hose,
	As gode knight have scholde;	As a good knight should have.
	Girt he was with a gode brond	He was fitted with a good blade
	Wele kerveand biforn his hond;	Which would edge sharp before his hand,
	A targe listed with gold	And with a shield bordered with gold,
	Portreyd with thre kinges corn	Portrayed with three carved magi
	That present God when He was born,	Who brought gifts to God when He was born.
3000	Mirier was non on mold.	There were none more beautiful on earth!
	And a swift-ernand stede	And they led a fast-galloping steed,
	Al wrin thai dede him lede,	All outfitted, to him.
	His tire it was ful gay.	His attire was very handsome.
	Sir Gii opon that stede wond	Sir Guy mounted upon that steed
	With a gode glaive in hond	With a firm spear in hand
	And priked him forth his way.	And spurred forth on his way.
	And when he com to the plas	And when he came to the place
	Ther the batayl loked was	Where the battle was agreed,
	Gii light withouten delay	Guy dismounted without delay
3010	And fel on knes doun in that stede	And fell down on his knees in that place

	And to God he bad his bede	And made his prayer to God
	He schuld ben his help that day.	That He would be his help that day.
	"Lord," seyd Gii, "that rered Lazeroun	"Lord," said Guy, "who raised Lazarus,
	And for man tholed passioun	And suffered death for man,
	And on the Rode gan blede,	And bled on the Cross,
	That saved Sussan fram the feloun	Who saved Susanna from the lying men,[48]
	And halp Daniel fram the lyoun,	And protected Daniel from the lion,
	Today wisse me and rede.	Guide me and aid me today.
	Astow art mighti heven-king	As You are the mighty king of Heaven,[49]
3020	Today graunt me thi blisseing	Grant me Your blessing today
	And help me at this nede;	And help me in my need.
	And Levedi Mari ful of might	And Lady Mary, full of might,
	Today save Inglondes right	Save England today
	And leve me wele to spede."	And grant me grace to succeed."
	When the folk was samned bi bothe side	When the people were gathered on both sides
	The to kinges with michel pride	The two kings, with regal pride,
	After the relikes thai sende,	Sent for the holy relics,[50]
	The corporas and the Messe gere.	The altar cloth, and the implements of mass.
	On the halidom thai gun swere	On the sacred relics they swore
3030	With wordes fre and hende.	With words that were noble and devout.
	The king of Danmarke swore furst, ywis,	The king of Denmark swore first, in truth,
	Yif that his geant slayn is	That if his giant were slain
	To Danmarke he schal wende	He would return to Denmark
	And never more Inglond cum withinne	And never again come into England,
	No non after him of his kinne	Nor any of his kin after him,
	Unto the warldes ende.	Until the end of the world.
	Sethen swore the king Athelston	Then King Athelston swore
	And seyd among hem everichon	And said before every one of them
	Bi God that al may weld,	That by God, who rules all,
3040	Yif his man ther slayn be	If his man were slain there
	Or overcomen that men may se	Or overcome so that men might see him
	Recreaunt in the feld,	Defeated on the field,
	His man he wil bicom an hond	He would become Anlaf's man
	And alle the reme of Inglond	And all the realm of England
	Of him forto helde	Would be for him to hold,
	And hold him for lord and king	And he would obey him as lord and king.
	With gold and silver and other thing	He would yield great tribute to him
	Gret trowage him forto yelde.	With gold and silver and other goods.

[48] *That saved Sussan fram the feloun*: The reference is to an extra-biblical (but canonical for Catholics) addition to *Daniel* where two voyeurs watch a Hebrew wife, Susanna, bathing. The two threaten a false charge of adultery unless she has sex with them, without success. The young Daniel cleverly cross-examines the two in court, and when their stories conflict they are exposed and put to death. All three people—Lazarus, Susanna, and Daniel—are examples Guy appeals to of God aiding those facing extreme odds.

[49] *Astow art mighti heven-king*: The *Guy* poet seems to often use *astow* with the sense of 'if,' but here and in line 1221 where Guy is addressing God he is unlikely to be asking God to prove Himself, even rhetorically. *Deut*. 6:16: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

[50] If Anlaf was historically the Danish king Olaf Tryggvason, as scholars have suggested, having a Viking peaceably swear on holy relics would not have been far-fetched, as Tryggvason was a Christian. Colbrand, perhaps a slave or mercenary, swears by Apollyon (3187). See note.

	When thai had sworn and ostage founde	When they had sworn and exchanged hostages
3050	Colbrond stirt up in that stounde,	Colbrand started up at that moment;
	To fight he was ful felle.	He was fierce and keen to fight.
	He was so michel and so unrede	He was so monstrous and so ugly
	That non hors might him lede	That no horse might carry him,
	In gest as Y you telle.	As it is in the story as I tell you.
	So mani he hadde of armes gere	He had so much weaponry
	Unnethe a cart might hem bere	To kill the English
	The Inglisse forto quelle.	That his cart could barely hold it.
	Swiche armour as he hadde opon,	You never heard of anyone
	Ywis, no herd ye never non	Who had such armor upon him, indeed,
3060	Bot as it ware a fende of Helle.	Unless it were a fiend from Hell.
	Of mailes was nought his hauberk,	His coat was not of chain mail;
	It was al of another werk	It was of another kind of workmanship
	That mervail is to here.	That is astonishing to hear.
	Alle it were thicke splentes of stiel,	It was all thick plates of steel,
	Thicke yjoined strong and wel,	Tightly joined, strongly and firmly,
	To kepe that fendes fere.	To protect that devil's comrade.
	Hossen he hadde also wele ywrought	He had finely crafted leg hose as well;
	Other than splentes was it nought	It was nothing but steel plates,
	Fram his fot to his swere.	From his foot to his neck.
3070	He was so michel and so strong	He was so enormous and so strong
	And therto wonderliche long	And so incredibly tall;
	In the world was non his pere.	There was no one in the world his peer.
	An helme he hadde on his heved sett	He had a helmet set on his head,
	And therunder a thicke bacinet;	And underneath a thick subhelmet.[51]
	Unsemly was his wede.	His appearance was hideous!
	A targe he had wrought ful wel -	He had a shield that was skilfully wrought;
	Other metel was ther non on bot stiel -	It was huge and menacing.
	A michel and unrede.	He had no other metal on except steel.
	Al his armour was blac as piche	All his armor was as black as pitch;
3080	Wel foule he was and lothliche,	He was foul and loathsome,
	A grisely gom to fede.	A grisly creature to nourish.
	The heighe king that sitteth on heighe	The high king who sits on high
	That welt this warld fer and neighe	Who rules this world, near and far,
	Made him wel ivel to spede.	Made him a fearsome opponent to defeat.
	A dart he bar in his hond kerveand	He bore a cutting spear in his hand,
	And his wepen about him stondand	And his weapons stood about him,
	Bothe bihinde and biforn	Both behind and before him:
	Axes and gisarmes scharp ygrounde	Axes and halberds, sharply ground,
	And glaives forto give with wounde	And spears to give wounds with.
3090	To hundred and mo ther worn.	There were two hundred and more!
	The Inglis biheld him fast.	The English beheld him intently.
	King Athelston was sore agast	King Athelston was sorely afraid
	Inglond he schuld have lorn	That he would lose England,
	For when Gii seighe that wicked hert	For when Guy saw his wicked heart
	He nas never so sore aferd	He was never so sorely afraid

[51] *Bacinet*: A bascinet was an open-faced subhelmet, which became popular in the fourteenth century as full helmets could be unwieldy in hand-to-hand combat. Many of the military details in *Guy* are cheerfully anachronistic. Chain mail was in use, but Colbrand wearing plate armor in the eleventh century would have been impossible.

	Sethen that he was born.	In all the time since he was born.
	Sir Gii lepe on his stede fot-hot	Sir Guy leaped on his steed in haste
	And with a spere that wele bot	And with a spear that cut strong
	To him he gan to ride.	He began to ride to him.
3100	And he schet to Gii dartes thre,	The giant shot three spears at Guy.
	Of the tuay than failed he,	With the first two they failed him;
	The thridde he lete to him glide,	The third that he let fly
	Thurth Gyes scheld it glod	Pierced through Guy's shield
	And thurth his armour withouten abod	And through his armor without stopping,
	Bituene his arme and side	Between his arm and side,
	And quitelich into the feld it yede	And it went completely across the field,
	The mountaunce of an acre brede	The distance of an acre across,
	Er that it wald abide.	Before it would drop.
	Sir Gii to him gan to drive	He charged on Sir Guy
3110	That his spere brast afive	So that his spear burst into five pieces
	On his scheld that was so bounde;	Against his shield which was so firm.
	And Colbrond with michel hete	And Colbrand would have struck
	On Gyes helme he wald have smite,	On Guy's helmet with great fury,
	And failed of him that stounde;	But he missed in that moment.
	Bituix the sadel and the arsoun	The murderer's stroke cut down
	The strok of that feloun glod adoun	Between the saddle and the pommel,
	Withouten wem or wounde.	Without injury or wound to Guy.
	That sadel and hors atuo he smot,	But he cut the saddle and horse into two,
	Into the erthe wele half a fot	Slicing into the earth a good half a foot,
3120	And Gii fel doun to grounde.	And Guy fell down to the ground.
	Sir Gii as tite up stirt	Sir Guy started up just as quickly,
	As man that was agremed in hert,	As a man who was enraged in heart,
	His stede he hadde forlore.	For he had lost his steed.
	On his helme he wald hit him tho	He wanted to hit the giant on the helmet,
	Ac he no might nought reche therto	But he could not reach it
	Bi to fot and yete more,	By two feet and even more.
	Bot on his schulder the swerd fel doun	Yet the sword came down on his shoulder
	And carf bothe plates and hauberjoun	And carved both armor and mail coat
	With his grimli gore.	With his deadly weapon.
3130	Thurth al his armour stern and strong	Through all his armor, grim and strong,
	He made him a wounde a spanne long	He made a wound a hand-width's long;
	That greved him ful sore.	That grieved the giant sorely.
	Colbrond was sore aschame	Colbrand was greatly ashamed
	And smot Gii with michel grame.	And struck at Guy with hot rage.
	On his helm he hit him tho	He hit him on his helmet
	That his floures everichon	So that each one of his flowers
	And his gode charbukel ston	And his good carbuncle stone
	Wel even he carf atuo.	Were split evenly in two.
	Even ato he smot his scheld	He cut his shield squarely in two
3140	That it fleyghe into the feld.	So that it flew onto the field.
	When Gii seyghe it was so	When Guy saw what had happened,
	That he hadde his scheld forlorn,	That he had lost his shield,
	Half bihinde and half biforn,	With a half behind and half before him,
	In hert him was wel wo.	He was full of woe at heart.
	And Gii hent his swerd an hond	But Guy gripped his sword in hand
	And heteliche smot to Colbrond -	And ferociously struck at Colbrand,
	As a child he stode him under.	Standing under him like a child.
	Open the scheld he yave him swiche a dent	Upon the shield he gave him such a blow
	Bifor the stroke the fiir out went	That the sparks flew from the stroke

3150	As it were light of thonder.	As if it was lightning from thunder.
	The bondes of stiel he carf ichon	He cut each one of the steel bonds,
	And into the scheld a fot and half on	And with his sword he parted the shield,
	With his swerd he smot asunder,	Carving a foot and a half on into it.
	And with the out-braiding his swerd brast.	But on drawing it out his sword broke.
	Thei Gii were than sore agast	If Guy was sorely terrified then,
	It was litel wonder.	It would be little wonder.
	Tho was Gii sore desmayd	Guy was badly dispirited then
	And in his hert wel ivel ypayd	And in his heart felt displeased
	For the chaunce him was bifalle,	With the fortune that had befallen him.
3160	And for he hadde lorn his gode brond	For he had lost his good blade
	And his stede opon the sond	And his steed was upon the ground.
	To our Levedi he gan calle.	To our Lady he began to call.
	Than gun the Danis ost	Then the Danish host
	Ich puken other and make bost	Began to jostle each other and boast,
	And seyd among hem alle,	And talked among each other,
	"Now schal the Inglis be slain in feld;	"Now the English will be slain on the field!
	Gret trouage Inglond schal ous yeld	England will yield to us great tribute
	And evermore ben our thral."	And will be our servant forevermore."
	"Now, sir knight," seyd Colbrond,	"Now, sir knight," said Colbrand,
3170	"Thou hast lorn thi swerd in thine hond,	"You have lost the sword from your hand,
	Thi scheld and eke thi stede.	Your shield, and also your horse.
	Do now wele, yeld thee to me	Take the best course and yield to me
	And smertlich unarme thee;	And unarm yourself sharply.
	Cri merci Y thee rede.	I advise you to cry for mercy.
	And for thou art so douhti knight	And because you are so worthy a knight
	Thou durst ogain me held fight	That you dare to fight against me,
	To mi lord Y schal thee lede	I will take you to my lord
	And with him thou schalt acorded be,	And you will be reconciled to him.
	In his court he wil hold thee	He will hold you in his court
3180	And finde that thee is nede."	And supply you with your needs."
	"Do way," seyd Gii, "therof speke nought.	"Enough," said Guy, "Speak no more of that.
	Bi Him that al this world hath wrought	By Him who created all this world,
	Ich hadde lever thou were anhong.	I would prefer that you were hanged!
	Ac thou hast armes gret plenté,	But you have weapons in great plenty.
	Ywis, thou most lene me	Truly, you must lend me
	On of thine axes strong."	One of your strong axes."
	Colbrond swore bi Apolin,	Colbrand swore by Apollyon,[52]
	"Of al the wepen that is min	"Of all the weapons that are mine,
	Her schaltow non afong.	You will get nothing here.
3190	Now thou wilt nought do bi mi rede	If you will not do as I now advise,
	Thou schalt dye on ivel dede	You will die an unpleasant death
	Er that it be ought long."	Before very long."
	When Gii herd him speke so	When Guy heard him speak so,
	Al sone he gan him turn tho	At once he turned on his feet
	And to his wepen he geth	And went for the giant's weapons
	Ther his axes stode bi hemselve;	Where his axes stood by themselves.
	He kept on with a wel gode helve	He seized one with a fine, strong handle,

[52] *Apolin*: Apollyon, the angel of the bottomless pit of Hell. See also *Bevis*, 558. As usual, the poet groups together all non-Christians as having the same polytheistic deities. Colbrand may also be an African Saracen, as the Vikings traded in the mediterranean.

	The best him thought he seth,	The best that he thought he saw.
	To Colbrond ogain he ran	He ran back to Colbrand
3200	And seyd, "Traitour," to him than,	And then said to him, "Traitor!
	"Thou schalt han ivel deth.	You will have a shameful death!
	Now ich have of thi wepen plenté	From your weapons in plenty,
	Wherewith that Y may were me	I have what I need to defend myself,
	Right maugré al thin teth."	Despite all your blustering!"
	Colbrond than with michel hete	Colbrand then, in great rage,
	On Gyes helme he wald have smite	Would have struck on Guy's helmet
	With wel gret hert tene	With furious anger at heart.
	Ac he failed of his dint	But he missed in his blow
	And the swerd into the erthe went	And the sword went into the dirt
3210	A fot and more, Y wene.	A foot and more, I believe.
	And with Colbrondes out-draught	And with Colbrand's reach overextended,
	Sir Gii with ax a strok him raught	Sir Guy caught him with a stroke of his axe
	A wounde that was wele sene.	With a wound that was clear to see.
	So smertliche he smot to Colbrond	So sharply did he slash at Colbrand
	That his right arme with alle the hond	That his right arm with all the hand
	He strok of quite and clene.	Was cut off fully and cleanly.
	When Colbrond feld him so smite	When Colbrand felt himself injured so,
	He was wel wroth ye may wel wite,	He was incensed, you might well understand.
	He gan his swerd up fond	He picked up his sword
3220	And in his left hond op it haf	And with his left hand he heaved it up.
	And Gii in the nek a strok him gaf	But Guy gave him a stroke in the neck
	As he gan stoupe for the brond	As he was stooping for his blade
	That his heved fro the bodi he smot	So that he hacked his head from the body
	And into the erthe half a fot	And cut into the earth half a foot
	Thurth grace of Godes sond.	Through the grace of God's favor.
	Ded he feld the glotoun thare.	He felled the rogue dead there.
	The Denis with sorwe and care	The Danish, with sadness and regret,
	Thai dight hem out of lond.	Took themselves out of the land.
	Blithe were the Inglis men ichon.	Each one of the Englishmen were glad.
3230	Erls, barouns, and King Athelston,	Earls, barons, and King Athelston
	Thai toke Sir Gii that tide	Took Sir Guy on that day
	And ladde him to Winchester toun	And brought him to Winchester town
	With wel fair processioun	With a stately procession
	Over al bi ich a side.	At every place on each side.
	For joie belles thai gun ring	They rang bells for joy
	Te Deum laudamus thai gun sing	They sang *Te Deum Laudamus*[53]
	And play and michel pride.	And rejoiced with great pride.
	Sir Gii unarmed him and was ful blithe;	Sir Guy unarmed himself and was happy.
	His sclavain he axed also swithe,	Just as quickly, he asked for his cloak.
3240	No lenger he nold abide.	He would not stay any longer.
	"Sir pilgrim," than seyd the king,	"Sir pilgrim," the king said then,
	"Whennes thou art withouten lesing?	"Where are you from, without lying?
	Thou art douhti of dede,	You are courageous in deeds,
	For thurth douhtines of thin hond	For through the might of your hand
	Thou hast saved al Inglond.	You have saved all England.
	God quite thee thi mede,	May God give you your reward!

[53] *Te Deum laudamus*: "Thee God We Praise," an early Christian hymn used either in liturgy or in celebration.

	And mi treuthe Y schal plight thee,	And I will pledge you my oath
	So wele Y schal feffe thee	That I will endow you so well
	Bothe in lond and lede	Both in land and people,
3250	That of riches in toun and tour	That in riches in town and tower,
	Thou schalt be man of mest honour	You will be the man of highest honor
	That woneth in al mi thede."	Who lives in all my realm."
	"Sir King," seyd the pilgrim,	"Sir King," said the pilgrim,
	"Of alle the lond that is tin	"Of all the land that is yours,
	Y no kepe therof na mare	I do not want any of it.
	Bot now ichave the geant slain,	But now that I have slain the giant,
	Therof, ywis, icham ful fain,	For that, in truth, I am content.
	Mi way ichil forth fare."	I will go forth on my way."
	"Merci, sir," the king seyd than,	"Mercy, sir," the king then replied,
3260	"Tel me for Him that made man -	"for He who made man, tell me,
	For nothing thou ne spare -	And do not hold back for anything.
	Tel me what thi name it be,	Tell me what your name is,
	Whennes thou art and of what cuntré	Where you come from and what land,
	Or Y schal dye for care."	Or I will die for distress."
	"Sir King," he seyd, "Y schal tel it thee.	"Sir King," he said, "I will tell you.
	What mi right name it be	You will soon know
	Thou schalt witen anon;	What my rightful name is.
	Ac thou schalt go with me yfere	But the two of us will go together
	That no man of our conseyl here	So that no man will hear our conversation
3270	Bot thou and Y alon."	Except for you and I alone."
	The king him graunted and was blithe,	The king granted him that and was pleased.
	He comand his folk also swithe	He commanded his people as promptly
	No wight with him to gon.	That no one was to go with him.
	Out of the toun than went he	Out of the town they then went,
	Wele half a mile fram that cité	A full half a mile from the city,
	And ther made Gii his mon.	And there Guy made his request.
	"Sir King," seyd Gii, "understond to me.	"Sir King," said Guy, "understand me.
	O thing Y schal now pray thee	I will ask one thing of you now,
	Astow art curteys and hende:	If you are courteous and faithful.
3280	Yif Y mi name schal thee sayn	If I tell you my name,
	That to no man thou no schalt me wrayn	You must not reveal me to any man
	To this yere com to th'ende.	Until this year has come to the end.
	Gii of Warwike mi nam is right,	Guy of Warwick is my name, truly.
	Whilom Y was thine owhen knight	I was once your own knight
	And held me for thi frende;	And you held me as your friend.
	And now icham swiche astow may see.	And now I am such as you can see.
	God of Heven biteche Y thee,	I entrust you to God in Heaven,
	Mi way Y wil forth wende."	And I will go forth on my way."
	When the king seighe sikerly	When the king saw clearly
3290	That it was the gode Gii	That it was the good Guy
	That fro him wald his way	Who was departing from him,
	On knes he fel adoun to grounde,	He fell down on his knees to the ground.
	"Leve Sir Gii," in that stounde,	He cried out in that moment,
	"Merci," he gan to say.	"Dear Sir Guy, mercy!
	"For Godes love bileve with me	For God's love, stay with me
	And mi treuthe Y schal plight thee	And I give you my promise
	That Y schal this day	That on this day I will
	Sese and give into thine hond	Endow and give into your hand
	Half the reme of Inglond;	Half the realm of England!
3300	For Godes love say nought nay."	For God's love, do not say no."

	"Sir King," seyd Gii, "Y nil nought so.	"Sir King," said Guy, "I will not have it.
	Have thou thi lond for evermo	Have your land forevermore,
	And God Y thee biteche;	And I commend you to God.
	Ac yif Herhaud to this lond com	But if Herhaud comes to this land
	And bring with him Reynbroun mi sone	And brings with him my son Reinbroun,
	Help him Y thee biseche.	I ask that you help him.
	For thai er bothe hende and fre,	For they are both gracious and noble.
	On Herhaud thou might trust thee	You may place your trust in Herhaud
	To take of thine fon wreche."	To take revenge on your foes."
3310	Thai kisten hem togider tho	They then kissed together,
	Al wepeand thai wenten ato	And with weeping they separated
	Withouten ani more speche.	Without any more speech.
	The king wel sore wepe for pité	The king wept bitterly for regret
	And went him hom to his meyne	And went home to his household
	With a mournand chere.	With a grieving demeanor.
	His folk ogaines him gan gon	His people came to him
	And asked the king sone anon	And asked the king soon after
	What man the pilgrim were.	What man the pilgrim was.
	Thai seyd, "He is a douhti knight.	They said, "He is a valiant knight.
3320	Wald Jhesu ful of might	If only Jesus, full of might, would grant
	He wald leve with ous here."	That he would live here with us."
	The king seyd, "Al stille ye be.	The king said, "Be still, all of you.
	What he is your non schal wite for me,	None of you will learn from me who he is,
	Iwis, of al this yere."	In truth, for all this year."
	Sir Gii went in his way forth right,	Sir Guy went straight on his way,
	Oft he thonked God Almight	Constantly thanking God Almighty
	That the geaunt was slawe.	That the giant was defeated.
	To Warwike he went to that cité	He went to the city of Warwick,
	Ther he was lord of that cuntré	Where he was lord of that country,
3330	To hold with right lawe.	To hold rightfully.
	He nas knowen ther of no man	He was recognized there by no one
	When he to the castel gates cam,	When he came to the castle gates,
	Therof he was ful fawe.	For which he was very happy.[54]
	Among the pouer men he him dede	He mixed among the poor men
	Ther thai weren up in a stede	Who were there in one place
	And sett him on a rawe.	And seated in a row.
	And Feliis the countas was ther than.	And the countess, Felicia, was there.
	In this warld was non better wiman,	In this world there was no better woman,
	In gest as so we rede,	In the story as we read.
3340	For thritten pouer men and yete mo	For love of her lord, she cared for
	For hir lordes love sche loved so,	Thirteen poor men and more yet.
	Ich day sche gan fede	Each day she fed them[55]
	With than God and our Levedi	With the hope that God and our Lady

[54] Here begins another "returning hero in humble disguise" narrative. As TEAMS notes, the motif was popular in ancient literature from Odysseus' return to Ithaca to similar scenes in *King Horn* and *Bevis of Hampton*. Yet unlike the normal sequence where the hero secretly does reconnaissance and builds dramatic suspense, here Guy faces no danger and never reveals himself.

[55] *Ich day sche gan fede*: The act is not a dainty extravagance like Chaucer's Prioress feeding her dog with white bread (I.147). Woolgar notes that "Alms from the table were a major element in charity associated with the great household." C.M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 154, quoted in TEAMS.

	Schuld save hir lord Sir Gii	Would protect her lord, Sir Guy,
	And help him at his nede.	And help him in his need.
	Sche no stint noither day no night,	She did not cease either day or night.
	For him sche bisought God Almight	For him she looked to God Almighty
	With bedes and almos dede.	With prayers and charitable deeds.
	On a day the levedi went to mete	One day the lady went to dinner
3350	And bad men schuld biforn hir fete	And asked her men to bring
	Hir pouer men al biden.	Her poor men all together before her.
	And men brought hem everichon	And men brought each one of them,
	And Gii of Warwike was that on	And Guy of Warwick was one
	Of tho ich thritten.	Of those thirteen.
	In his hert he hadde gret care	In his heart he had great anxiety
	That he schuld be knawen thare	That he would be recognized there
	Of hem that hadde him sen;	By those who had seen him.
	Ac ther was non so wise of sight	But he was so thin and wretched
	That him ther knowe might	That there were none so discerning in sight
3360	So misais he was and lene.	Who might know him there.
	The levedi biheld him inliche	The lady examined him carefully,
	Hou mesays he was sikerliche.	Observing how desolate he truly was.
	Curteys sche was and hende,	She was courteous and generous.
	Of everich mete of everich dring	With every dish, with every drink,
	That sche ete of herself withouten lesing	That she ate herself, without a lie,
	Sche was him ful mende;	She was mindful of him.
	Of hire bere and of hir wine	She often sent him servings
	In hir gold coupe afine	Of her beer and of her wine,
	Oft sche gan him sende	In her fine gold cup,
3370	And bad him ich day com he schold,	And invited him to come each day.
	Mete and drink sche finde him wold	She would provide him with food and drink
	Unto his lives ende.	Until his life's end.
	Sir Gii thonked that levedi oft	Sir Guy thanked that lady often,
	Bot alle another was his thought	But his thoughts were all different
	Than he wald to hir say.	From what he said to her.
	When the grace were yseyd	When the grace was said
	And the bordes adoun layd	And the table laid down,[56]
	Out of toun he went his way.	He had made his way out of town.
	Into a forest wenden he gan	He traveled into a forest
3380	To an hermite he knewe er than	To find a hermit he had known before
	To speke him yif he may.	To speak with him if he might.
	And when he thider comen was	But when he had arrived there,
	The gode hermite thurth Godes grace	The good hermit, through God's grace,
	Was dede and loken in clay.	Was dead and buried in the earth's clay.
	Than thought Sir Gii anon	Then Sir Guy decided at once
	That wald he never thennes gon	That he would never go from there
	Therwhiles he war olive.	While he was still alive.
	With a prest he spac of that cuntray	He spoke with a priest of that country
	That dede him Servise ich day	Who performed Mass for him each day
3390	And of his sinnes gan schrive.	And absolved him of his sins.
	With him he hadde ther a page	With him there he had a page

[56] *The bordes adoun layd*: Medieval tables were not permanent fixtures, but could be quickly stored and assembled for meals. Chaucer's hungry Franklin is unusual in that his table "stood redy covered al the longe day" (I.354).

	That served him in that hermitage	Who served him in that hermitage
	Withouten chest and strive.	Without disagreement or strife.
	No lenger was he lives there	He lived there no longer
	Bot nighen monethes of a yere	Than nine months of a year,
	As ye may listen and lithe.	As you may listen and hear,
	In slepe as Gii lay anight	When, as Guy lay at night in sleep,
	God sent an angel bright	God sent a shining angel
	Fram Heven to him thare.	From Heaven to him there.
3400	"Gii," seyd the angel, "slepestow?	"Guy," said the angel, "Are you sleeping?
	Hider me sent thee King Jhesu	I am sent here by King Jesus
	To bid thee make thee yare,	To tell you to make yourself ready,
	For bi the eightenday at morwe	For by eight days from tomorrow
	He schal deliver thee out of thi sorwe	He will deliver you out of your sorrows
	Out of this warld to fare.	To travel out of this world.
	To Heven thou schalt com Him to	You will come to Him in Heaven
	And live with ous evermo	And live with us forevermore
	In joie withouten care."	In joy without worry."
	When Gii was waked of that drem	When Guy awoke from that dream,
3410	Of an angel he seighe a glem.	He saw the gleam of an angel.
	"What artow?" than seyd he.	"Who are you?" he said then.
	The angel answerd, "Fram Heven Y cam,	The angel answered, "I come from Heaven.
	Mighel is mi right nam.	Michael is my right name.
	God sent me to thee	God sent me to you
	To bid thee make thee redi way,	To tell you to be ready to go directly.
	Bi the eightenday thou schalt day	By the eighth day you will pass from here,
	Wel siker maughtow be.	You can be very certain.
	And Y schal feche thi soule ful even	And I will fetch your soul just so
	And bere it to the blis of Heven	And bear it to the bliss of Heaven
3420	With grete solempneté."	With great ceremony."
	The angel goth forth and Gii bileft stille,	The angel departed and left Guy in stillness.
	His bedes he bad with gode wille	He made his prayers with good will
	To Jhesu Heven-king.	To Jesus, Heaven's king.
	And when his term was nere gon	And when his time was nearly gone,
	His knave he cleped to him anon	He called his servant to him at once
	And seyd withouten lesing,	And said to him without lying,
	"Sone," he seyd, "Y pray now thee	"Son," he said, "I ask you now,
	Go to Warwike that cité	Go to the city of Warwick
	Withouten more duelling;	Without any more delay.
3430	And when thou comest ther Y thee biseche	And when you get there I implore you,
	Gret wele the countas with thi speche	Greet the countess well in your speech
	And take hir this gold ring.	And give her this gold ring.
	"And say the pilgrim hat hir biforn	And tell her the pilgrim who ate before her,
	That hir mete was to born	Who was invited to her dinner
	On the pouer mannes rawe,	In the company of the poor men,
	Gret hir wele in al thing	Greets her courteously in every way
	And sende to hir this gold ring	And sends her this gold ring,
	Yif that sche wil it knawe.	If she will recognize it.
	Als son as sche hath therof a sight	As soon as she has sight of it,
3440	Sche wil it knawe anonright	She will know it instantly
	And be therof ful fawe.	And be joyful for it.
	Than wil sche ax ware Y be.	Then she will ask where I am.
	Leve sone, for love of me,	Dear son, for my love,
	The sothe to hir thou schawe.	Show her the truth.
	"And say icham for Godes love	And say I have, for God's love,

	In the forest hermite bicome	Become a forest hermit
	Mine sinnes forto bete;	To atone for my sins.
	And bid hir for the love of me	And ask her, for her love of me,
	That sche com hider with thee	That she come here with you,
3450	For nothing sche no lete.	And that she delay for nothing.
	And when ye com ye finde me dede	And if you come and find me dead,
	Do me never hennes lede	Do not ever carry me away,
	Bot grave me here in grete.	But bury me here in the earth.
	And after sche schal dye, ywis,	After then she will die, certainly,
	And com to me into Heven-blis	And come into Heaven's bliss
	Ther joies her ful swete."	To hear sweet joys with me there."
	The knave went forth anon,	The servant boy went forth at once.
	Into Warwike he gan gon	He went into Warwick
	Bifor that levedi fre.	To appear before that noble lady.
3460	And when he hadde that levedi founde	And when he had found the lady,
	On knes he fel adoun to grounde	He fell to his knees on the ground
	And seyd, "Listen to me,	And said, "Listen to me.
	The pilgrim that ete thee biforn	The pilgrim that ate before you,
	That thi mete was to born	Who was given your food,
	An hermite now is he.	Is now a hermit.
	He greteth thee wele in al thing	He greets you well in every way
	And sent thee this gold ring	And sends you this gold ring
	In sum tokening to be."	As a token of him."
	The levedi tok that ring an hond	The lady took the ring into her hand
3470	And loked theron and gan withstond	And looked at it and paused
	The letters forto rede.	To read the letters.
	"Ow, certes," quath the levedi,	"Oh, for certain!" exclaimed the lady,
	"This ring Y gaf mi lord Sir Gii	"This is the ring I gave my lord Sir Guy
	When he fro me yede."	When he went from me!"
	For sorwe sche fel aswon, ywis,	She was overcome with grief, in truth,
	And when that sche arisen is	And when she arose
	To the knave sche gan spede.	She rushed up to the servant.
	"Leve sone," sche seyd, "Y pray thee	"Dear son," she said, "I beg of you,
	Wher is that pilgrim telle thou me	Where is that pilgrim? Tell me
3480	And gold schal be thi mede."	And gold will be your reward."
	"Madame," seyd the knave ful skete,	"My lady," said the servant quickly,
	"In the forest ichim lete,	"I left him in the forest.
	Right now Y com him fro.	Just now I came from him in the hermitage
	He is ner ded in the hermitage,	Where he is nearly dead.
	On his halve Y make the message;	On his behalf I brought the message.
	Ywis, he bad me so	In truth, he told me to do so
	And bad thou schust to him come,	And asked that you come to him,
	For that ich trewe love	For the same true love
	That was bituene you tuo	That was between you two.
3490	Do him never lede oway	Never have him taken away
	Bot biri him right ther in clay,	But bury him right there in the earth's clay.
	Olive sestow him no mo."	You will see him alive no more."
	The levedi was glad of that tiding	The lady was glad for that news
	And thonked Jhesu Heven-king	And thanked Jesus, Heaven's king,
	And was in hert ful blithe	And was overjoyed at heart
	That sche schuld sen hir lord Sir Gii;	That she would see her lord, Sir Guy.
	Ac for o thing sche was sori	But she was in anguish for one thing,
	That he schuld dye so swithe.	That he should die so soon.
	Thai made hem redi forto wende	They made ready to go

3500	With knightes and with levedis hende.	With knights and with lovely ladies.
	On a mule thai sett hir sithe	They set her on a mule,
	And with al the best of that cité	And with all the finest of the city
	To th'ermitage went sche	She went to the hermitage,
	As ye may listen and lithe.	As you may listen and learn.
	To th'ermitage when thai come	When they had come to the hermitage
	Ther thai light al and some	They dismounted, all and some,
	And in sche went wel even.	And she went straight inside.
	When that sche seighe hir lord Sir Gii	When she saw her lord, Sir Guy,
	Sche wept and made doleful cri	She wept and made a doleful cry
3510	With a ful reweful steven.	With a mournful voice.
	Sir Gii loked on hir thare,	As Sir Guy looked on her there,
	His soule fram the bodi gan fare.	His soul began to pass from his body.
	A thousand angels and seven	A thousand angels and seven
	Underfenge the soule of Gii	Received the soul of Guy
	And bar it with gret molodi	And bore it with great melody
	Into the blis of Heven.	Into the bliss of Heaven.
	Than was that levedi ful of care	Then the lady was full of grief,
	For hir lord was fram hir fare,	For her lord had gone from her,
	"Allas!" it was hir song.	And "Alas!" was her refrain.
3520	Sche kist his mouthe, his chin also,	She kissed his mouth, and his chin as well,
	And wepe with hir eighen to	And wept with both her eyes
	And hir hondes sche wrong.	And wrung her hands.
	Gret honour dede our Lord for Gii:	Our Lord performed a great honor for Guy.
	A swete brathe com fram his bodi	A sweet scent came from his body
	That last that day so long	That lasted all that day,
	That in this world spices alle	So that of all the spices in this world,
	No might cast a swetter smalle	None could have cast a sweeter fragrance
	As then was hem among.	Than was among them.
	The levedy as tite dede send hir sond	The lady swiftly sent her summons
3530	After bischopes, abotes of the lond,	To the bishops and abbots of the land,
	The best that might be founde,	The best that might be found.
	And when thider was com that fair ferred	And when that fair company had arrived
	To Warwike thai wald him lede	To Warwick, they wished to honor him
	As lord of michel mounde.	As a lord of great authority.
	Bot al the folk that ther was	But all the people who were there
	No might him stir of that plas	Could not move him from that place
	Ther he lay on the grounde.	Where he lay on the ground.
	An hundred men about him were	A hundred men were around him
	No might him nought thennes bere	But could not bear him away
3540	For hevihed that stounde.	From there for his heaviness.
	Than seyd the levedi, "Lete him be stille;	Then the lady said, "Let him be.
	Never more remoun him Y nille	I will never have him moved
	No do him hennes lede.	Or allow him to be taken away.
	He sent me bode with his page	He sent me his decree with his page
	To biri him in this hermitage	To bury him in this hermitage,
	Simpliche withouten prede."	Simply, without showiness."
	Thay tok a through of marbel ston	They took a box of marble stone
	And leyd his bodi therin anon	And laid his body inside,
	Atird in knightes wede.	Attired in knight's clothes.
3550	Fair servise than was thare	There was a stately funeral
	Of bischopes, abbotes that ther ware,	With the bishops and abbots who were there,
	And clerkes to sing and rede.	And clerks to sing and read.
	When thai hadde birid his bodi anon,	When they had buried his body,

	The gret lordinges everichon	Every one of the great lords
	Hom thai gun wende,	Left to go home.
	Ac the levedi left stille thare;	But the lady still remained
	Sche nold never thennes fare,	And would never leave from there.
	Sche kidde that sche was kende.	She showed that she was faithful.
	Sche lived no lenger sothe to say	She lived little longer, truth be told,
3560	Bot right on the fiftenday	But right on the fifteenth day
	Sche dyed that levedi hende	That gracious lady died[57]
	And was birid hir lord by	And was buried beside her lord.
	And now thai er togider in compeynie	And now they are united together
	In joie that never schal ende.	In joy that will never end.
	When Sir Tirri herd telle this	When Sir Thierry heard it said
	That Gii his fere ded is	That Guy, his friend, was dead
	And birid in the clay,	And buried in the earth,
	He com to this lond withouten lesing	He came to this land, without a lie,
	And bisought Athelston the king	And implored Athelston the king
3570	His bodi to leden oway.	For his body to transport away.
	He it graunted him ful yare,	He willingly granted it to Thierry.
	Into Lorain with him gan fare	He traveled with the body into Lorraine,
	Into his owhen cuntray.	Into his own country.[58]
	An abbay he lete make tho	He had an abbey founded there
	Forto sing for hem to	To sing prayers for Guy and his lady
	Ever more til Domesday.	Evermore until Judgment Day.
	Now have ye herd lordinges of Gii	Now you have heard, sirs, about Guy,
	That in his time was so hardi	Who during his days was so valiant
	And holden hende and fre,	And admired as gracious and noble.
3580	And ever he loved treuthe and right	He forever loved truth and justice
	And served God with al his might	And with all his might he served God,
	That sit in Trinité.	Who sits in Trinity.
	And therfore at his ending-day	And thus on his last day
	He went to the joie that lasteth ay	He went to the joy that lasts forever
	And evermore schal be.	And evermore shall be.
	Now God leve ous to live so	Now may God help us to live
	That we may that joie com to.	So that we may come to that bliss!
3588	*Amen, par charité.*	For the sake of God's love, amen.

[57] Felicia lives another fifteen days, the same length of time that she and Guy were together in marriage (221).

[58] The last scene is somewhat puzzling, as both Guy and Felicia gave orders not to be moved, but it fits the conventional romance ending of being sung over in prayer by clerics, in the same way that *Amis and Amiloun* and *Bevis of Hampton* close.

Numerological and Structural Symbolism in the Stanzaic *Guy of Warwick*

Lévi-Strauss argued that binaries are a natural means of structuring experience, and medieval romance often employs them as useful narrative apparatuses. *Amis and Amiloun* has corresponding names and subplots, and *Havelock* has two parallel kings and usurping stewards. Broadly, medieval romance commonly builds itself on dual halves dealing with the hero's exile and return. The use of matching narrative patterns also has meaning in the Auchinleck stanzaic *Guy of Warwick*. Burton argues that the poem can be interpreted as corresponding halves in which Guy first seeks out and achieves marital bliss in Felice and then attains heavenly bliss in God.[1] The scene in the stanzaic *Guy* where the hero gazes prayerfully at the stars while marooned at sea on his bed (2347-64) similarly forms "the structural mid-point of the narrative,"[2] matching Guy's soul-searching contemplation of the heavens at the beginning of the story. Christians and pagans form an additional good/evil binary throughout romance, and in *Bevis of Hampton* confusing the binary's limits brings particular dangers to the hero.

Such binaries may serve no purpose beyond apposition in rhetoric or contrast or completion in narrative, and triple sequences might also simply fulfill the seemingly basic human need to derive a sense of series or predictability from disconnected events. Triplets are used in music, jokes, and stories to form familiar groupings and fairy tales often employ sets of three whether the tale features pigs, bears, or blind mice. Within romance, repetition has narrative functions of emphasis and perhaps political submeanings. Wittig suggests that "within the repeated patterns of formulaic language

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[1] Julie Burton, "Narrative Patterning and *Guy of Warwick*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 22 (1992): 110.

[2] Alison Wiggins, Stanzaic *Guy of Warwick* (TEAMS), note to line 2347-48.

there is a kind of psychological comfort, an assurance that the social institutions in which the audience has invested itself are stable and secure,"[3] and Crane cites *King Horn* as a narratively repetitive poem endorsing a conservative view of kingship.[4] Yet the stanzaic *Guy* seems to call special attention to triple sequences and numbers in themselves as signifiers. In key places the poet wants us to see that he uses a number purposefully for levels of interpretation above the narrative. Thus I would like to examine how *Guy* uses numerological symbolism to overlay additional meaning in the text.

In the stanzaic *Guy* the protagonist undergoes three armed battles. Earl Jonas laments to Guy that his heart will break into three pieces (864) after relating that he fought three hundred Saracens (619) and was taken prisoner. Colbrand throws three spears at Guy (3100). At what point do such numbers cease being meaningful and become random or metrical decisions? Finding numerical symbolism risks overanalysis by reading in significances that the poet may not have intended or contemplated. Such critical decisions must remain somewhat speculative, but one approach which may be helpful is to point out those places in the texts where the poet seems to emphasize a numerical grouping of subplots for thematic purposes or where a number reference goes suspiciously beyond metrical fit or capriciousness and implies a secondary meaning supported by the text as a whole.

Numerous precedents exist for numerological significations in medieval literature based on the central importance of numbers to medieval aesthetics and thought.

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[3] Susan Wittig, *Stylistic and Narrative Structures in the Middle English Romances* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 44, quoted in Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 30.

[4] Crane, 30.

Mathematics encompassed more than its modern utilitarian functions and described eternal correspondences in nature, such as that between seven spheres, seven days of the week, and seven musical notes.[5] The early church fathers Christianized the pagan numerology of Pythagoras and its Babylonian practitioners, situating numbers as a means of comprehending the intelligent plan of God's creation. Augustine equated numbers with wisdom, Boethius established the quadrivium based on four fields of mathematical pursuit, and Macrobius called numbers "the first example of perfect abstraction."[6] Arithmetic crossed what would now be rigid disciplinary divides between the sciences and humanities until eventually shedding its theological dimensions in later centuries, but in the medieval period literary allegory was read as multiple levels of meaning forming a sophisticated numerical structure, giving what Peck calls delight through "proportion and symmetrical conjunction."[7]

The eternal beauty of numbers informs the higher levels of meaning of numerous medieval poems as a controlling structural device. Dante's tripartite division in *The Divine Comedy* suggests the Christian Trinity and threes abound as perfect numbers. The comedy has three sections, Hell has three stages, and the meter is terza rima, first known in use from the work. Dante has three escorts who also imply identification with the Trinity.[8] *Pearl* employs twelves rather than threes and dates much later than Auchinleck

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[5] Russell A. Peck, "Number as Cosmic Language," in *Essays in the Numerical Criticism of Medieval Literature*, ed. Carolyn D. Eckhardt (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1980), 18.

[6] Macrobius, *Somnium Scipionus*, quoted in Peck, 15. Peck has extended discussions of Augustine's writings about numbers (especially pages 17, 30) and Boethius (21).

[7] Peck, 48.

[8] T. K. Seung, "The Epic Character of the *Divina Commedia* and the Function of Dante's Three Guides," *Italica* 56:4 (1979): 353.

Guy,[9] but displays an unparalleled technical precision in its numerical religious significations:

> …the New Jerusalem has twelve tiers in its foundation and is also twelve furlongs long; the poem itself, 1212 lines long, is a composite of twelves. Concepts of perfection and blemish parlayed through the image of the pearl are also graphed through number. Comprising twenty sets of five, the stanzas are grouped to add up to 100, a number of perfection.[10]

In turning from *Pearl* to *Guy* the reader sees a crossing of genres, as *Guy* is neither extended religious allegory nor a dream vision. The hero evolves as a character throughout the story to such an extent that Mehl classifies the work as a sort of proto-novel.[11] Yet the stanzaic *Guy* plainly borrows from hagiographic forms in the hero's representation as a penitential *miles Christi*, and the poem has a denouement very different from the usual romance frame of marriage and land. The story itself has apparent origins in eastern legends of St. Alexis rather than secular history or folktale. A close examination of the poem reveals that its narrative structure evokes numerological meanings supporting its homiletic purposes which lack the craftsmanship of the *Pearl* poet but are no less present or significant.

Much as *The Divine Comedy* has a triple division, reading the stanzaic *Guy* as a three-battle sequence evoking the perfection of the Trinity is consistent with Guy's exemplary service as a saintly knight-pilgrim. The claimed repetition of romance has

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[9] Bowers posits 1395 by finding thematic links between the poem and the Ricardian court, and few date *Pearl* to before the 1380s. John Bowers, "*Pearl* in Its Royal Setting: Ricardian Poetry Revisited," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 17 (1995): 111-55.

[10] Sarah Stanbury, ed., introduction to *Pearl* (TEAMS).

[11] Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), vi.

been adduced as evidence of its childishness or the poverty of the writer's ability or materials. However, when scenes are so close as to form clear groupings, something else is happening. Baugh catalogs thirty-five recurring actions in the three battle scenes of stanzaic *Guy*.[12] Although the following list alters sequence, using a few selected elements from Baugh's list suggests deliberate patterns:

They crash together		
and smiten togider with dentes grete (1157)	with hard strokes forto drive / thai gun hem to asayle (2477-9)	Sir Gii to him gan to drive / that his spere brast afive (3109-10)
Some armor jewels fly off		
alle the stones of michel might / fleyghe doun in the feld (1193-4)	alle the floures feir and bright / he dede hem fleyghe atuinne (2489-90)	his floures everichon / and his gode charbukel ston / wel even he carf atuo (3136-8)
Spear breaks, horse is killed		
the stedes nek he dede also (1202)	and lopen togider til schaftes brest (2222)	that sadel and hors atuo he smot (3118)
Both fight as if crazed		
and ferd as thai wer wode (1158)	leyd on as thai were wode (2228)	—
Prayers		
"Lord," seyd Gii, "God Almight" (1216)	"Lord, merci," Tirri gan say (2281)	to our Levedi he gan calle (3162)
Opponent taunts hero		
trewelich yeld thou thee to me (1466)	thi wordes that er so prout / schal be ful dere abought (2129-30)	do now wele, yeld thee to me (3172)
Opponent's limb chopped off		
the right arme with the swerd fot-hot (1570)	—	his right arme with alle the hond / he strok of quite and clene (3115-6)
Enemy decapitated		
he strok of his heved (1596)	bothe helmes he carf atuo / and his heved he dede also (2500-1)	his heved fro the bodi he smot (3223)

Baugh argues that such parallels indicate the formulaic phrasings of the minstrel. Ellis dismisses the complete *Guy of Warwick* as "one of the dullest and most tedious of

[12] Albert C. Baugh, "Improvisation in the Middle English Romance," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 103:3 (1959): 426-27.

our early romances,"[13] equally implying a lack of significance in the poem's triple battles. Yet again an incompetent poet might depict repeated narrative tropes with unimaginative blandness, but to have segments match so closely implies more intelligence. In each third of stanzaic *Guy* the hero encounters a helpless victim who makes an equivalent "woe is me" lament (550, 1737, 2883) and saves his life through defeat of an evil, deceitful foe in combat. Guy performs a Christlike descent into death to redeem Jonas from a "devel fram helle" (1139), as well as in saving Thierry and then all of England from enemies with equally Satanic attributes. In all three scenes Guy freely chooses to take on the battle for others, and in interceding for Thierry, Guy needs to goad and manipulate the hotheaded steward into letting him enter a dispute which is essentially not his business.

Moreover, each victim has to some extent sinned into their difficulties. Jonas acts pridefully against Triamour, displaying a certain hubris—"we suwed him with maistrie / into his owhen lond" (614-15). Thierry does not deserve the steward's malice but also betrays a slight "michel prede" (1798). Athelston's barons are cowards who shirk their duty and sit silently "as men hadde schaven her crounes" (2879) while the kingdom is threatened, much as Beowulf shames Unferth in stating that Grendel only prevails because "he hafað onfunden þæt he þa fæhðe ne þearf / atole ecgþræce eower leode / swiðe onsittan" ("he has found out that he need not fear much fight or any fierce storm of swords from your people!" 595-7). Guy undertakes the "punishment" of each sin, and his doing so three times has suggestive meaning. As Guy prepares to face Colbrand he

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[13] George Ellis, Introduction to *Guy of Warwick*, in *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances,* Vol. 2 (London: 1811), 4-5.

carries “a targe listed with gold / portreyd with thre kinges corn / that present God when He was born” (2997-9).

Numerous romances have some form of triple sequence, yet they usually lack either the hagiographic intent of *Guy* or close narrative equivalence in their groupings. In *King Horn* the hero fights three battles with Saracens, but the scenes do not match in sequence, length, or intensity. The first and third struggles are routine and brief compared to the heightened dramatic tension of the second battle in Ireland when Horn “bivo him sagh he stonde / that driven him of lond / and that his fader slogh” (“saw standing before him those who drove him out of his land and murdered his father,” 877-9). The hero of *Floris and Blancheflor* similarly stays with three hosts but Floris is a Muslim and has little interest in the poem beyond recovering his girlfriend. Only in the stanzaic *Guy* do the three parallel battles connect to the hero’s saintly signification.

A second aspect of the poem’s numerical meaning derives from its manuscript arrangement. The stanzaic *Guy* has dialectal as well as metrical differences from the couplet *Guy*. Mills argues that the poem derives from a different continental version of *Gui de Warewic* and had a separate existence apart from the couplet section.[14] Yet the two portions of *Guy* and *Reinbroun* are clearly intended in a three-part continuum by their linear foliation while still being neatly parsable into separate tales, which is what Auchinleck intends in its formatting. Folio 146b of *Guy of Warwick* has a richly decorated *G* for “God graunt hem heven-blis” (1) and has the abrupt change from couplet to stanza form to indicate a transition into the second part of the tale. 167r has a decorated

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[14] Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows, and Carol M. Meale, ed., *Romance in Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), 215, quoted in Wiggins, TEAMS.

image and a title with *explicit* to indicate the beginning of *Reinbroun*.[15] Moving *Reinbroun* to a separate poem in the codex additionally makes this linear configuration clearer by allowing the poet's focus to remain uncluttered on Guy's parallel search for Felice/grace.[16] Yet the unique three-part division of the poem in Auchinleck might also suggest a numerical representation of the Trinity in miniature just as Dante ostensibly intends in his three comedies.

Single and recurring numbers within *Guy* are additionally invested with numerological meanings which support the poem's hagiographic themes. Christian scripture uses *forty* as an indefinite number but often employs it to denote times of trial: the ark floats forty days, Christ is tempted forty days, and the Hebrews wander the desert forty years. Similarly, Jonas has a year and forty days to find a challenger (770), Amoraunt has killed men in forty battles (1303), and Guy defeats forty thousand Saracens in battle (1334), all situations requiring fortitude. Guy appears in Felice's court as a beggar in a group of thirteen (3353) and his meekness unsubtly suggests Christ and his disciples. *Seven* has biblical associations with perfection and totality,[17] being the number of the days of creation and the seven seals of Revelation. In the text "a thousand angels and seven" (3513) carry away Guy's soul. The poet might simply use the number conventionally. Mirroring Bevis' seven-year captivity, the steward threatens Guy with "seven winter" (2084) of imprisonment in his histrionic fury. Yet these *seven*s all seem

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[15] *Reinbroun*, at *The Auchinleck Manuscript*, *National Library of Scotland*, accessed 19 November 2010 at http://auchinleck.nls.uk/mss/reinbrun.html

[16] Julie Burton, "Narrative Patterning and *Guy of Warwick*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 22 (1992): 110.

[17] See Peck, 61 for a list of theological and traditional associations with *seven*. Peck calls seven "a uniquely strong number because it is indivisible." The seven deadly sins are perilous but also suggest a sort of perfective trial.

thematically linked by the tempering and testing each hero undergoes through these trials, much as Jacob must work for Rachel for the same period (Gen. 29:20).

The ten incidences of the number *fifteen* in the poem remain puzzling. Earl Jonas has fifteen sons (580), they defeat fifteen emirs (604), Guy kills fifteen outlaws (2690), and Guy forces the expulsion of Anlaf's fifteen thousand knights (2812) in defeating Colbrand. Couplet *Guy* also has six *fifteen*s. Signally, Guy and Felice's wedding feast, their time spent together as husband and wife, and the period of time which Guy predeceases Felice are all fifteen day spaces (211, 221, 3560). The poet twice uses the formula "on the fiftenday" to stress the ends of these periods. The matching numbers underscore the closure effected by paralleling the couple's marital happiness with their sanctified reunion at the moment of Guy's death. Yet the repeated use of *fifteen* as a determiner lacks a clear theological signification. A clue might be found in scholastic traditions involving *five,* which had special meaning as a "golden number" for Pythagorus and for Macrobius. One of its significations was the Pentateuch but also flesh and marriage,[18] and Fleissner posits that Chaucer gives the Wife of Bath five husbands for such a reason.[19] Now our argument becomes rather strained. But could *Guy*'s numerical symbolism of the Trinity come into play if we notice 3 x 5 = 15? Such a conclusion might help to explain the poet's use of *fifteen* in exactly such moments where the poet stresses the perfection and completion of the action or time period.

Felice, Guy, and Reinbroun recall but ultimately do not stand for the elements of the Trinity any more than St. Bernard, Virgil, and Beatrice "are" Father, Son, and Holy

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[18] Peck, 24.

[19] Fleissner, 129.

Ghost, and the poet might have thought the idea blasphemous. Doob gives the name *situational allegory* to the medieval device of giving characters temporary significations within narrative scenes. Thus "it is action and plot that matters in this type of allegory" which "adds richness to people or events without rigidly defining them."[20] Felice moves Guy to selfless acts and reunites with him as his soul passes from his body (3512), but her allegorical connection to the Holy Trinity is otherwise limited. She has the nurturing, feminine presence of Beatrice but lacks understanding of Guy's mission, questioning why he cannot seek grace while remaining with her and proposing that "chirches and abbays thou might make" (331) instead. Guy also suggests a Christ-like example but does not represent Christ. Although his cause is righteous Guy shows little saintly humility in nastily taunting the stupid steward into challenging him to combat, and he kills without regret where he needs to. The poet's strength is Guy's human touches which give his piety a personal intimacy.

Romance may have hagiographic influences but is not hagiography, a distinction medieval churchmen did not fail to point out strenuously. Rather, much of *Guy*'s popularity owed to the hero's identity as a national hero. For much of the medieval period the fight between Guy and Colbrand was treated as actual history.[21] The poem's continued popularity into later centuries partly derived from its perceived historical roots in the real Warwickshire, where Guy's alleged weapons were displayed to visitors. Wilcox reads the poem as a means of working through the moral and military failures of

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[20] Penelope B.R. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 168.

[21] Ronald S. Crane, "The Vogue of *Guy of Warwick* from the Close of the Middle Ages to the Romantic Revival," *PMLA* 30:2 (1915): 127.

the crusades by re-enacting them in an idealized past where Guy turns down booty instead of disgracefully fighting for it.[22] Yet the stanzaic *Guy* clearly has a homiletic tone in Guy's search for penitence, and setting the story in a partly historical England might have made its didactic resonance even stronger.[23]

This rather risky speculation on the stanzaic *Guy of Warwick* attempts to find meaning and value in one of the more dispensable romances in this collection, a poem reflecting the reality that medieval interests are not modern ones. As Dr. Johnson might say, few ever wished it longer. Numerological meanings in literature, so vital then, now "seem irksome to a modern sensibility."[24] Yet the poem was popular and has numerous rhetorical echoes in *Sir Thopas*, resulting in thorny but necessary questions of how Chaucer and his audience might have perceived *Guy*. We know that Chaucer was fond enough of numbers to write his *Treatise on the Astrolabe* for their calculation, and he would have developed a knowledge of numerology both from his translation of Boethius and through his interests in alchemy and astrology.[25] He exhibits a masterful familiarity with such models in his Parson who begins his prologue with a complex mathematical metaphor linking the sun's position at "degreës nyne and twenty" (X.4) to his pilgrims and he has protagonists such as Nicholas (I.3209) and the Man of Law (II.7-14) who also share his interest in mathematics.

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[22] Rebecca Wilcox, "Romancing the East: Greeks and Saracens in *Guy of Warwick*," McDonald, Nicola, ed., *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 221.

[23] David Klausner, "Didacticism and Drama in *Guy of Warwick*," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 6 (1975): 117.

[24] Peck, 50.

[25] R. F. Fleissner, "The Wife of Bath's Five," *Chaucer Review* 8:2 (1973): 132.

In a pre-printing era when manuscripts were produced as unique artifacts rather than being "published" in the modern sense,[26] scribes were less anxious to produce a standard text, particularly a romance, freeing themselves to innovate based on their own interpretation of the poem's themes. The Auchinleck *Guy of Warwick* displays a unique structuring of content in its triple division and meaningful use of numerology. *Guy of Warwick* will never be accused of the sophistication of *Pearl*, but Chaucer might have noticed and appreciated the intelligent use of numbers in *Guy*. As a final and very tentative conjecture, although *Sir Thopas*' fit headings themselves are editorial, Chaucer in turn gives the poem three sections, perhaps humorously placing the hero within his own trivial *Divine Comedy*.

[26] Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 10.

CHAPTER 7

Havelock the Dane

Havelock the Dane survives in one unique manuscript: Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 108 (c. 1300), with fragments in Cambridge University Library Add. 4407. I take as my text source Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds. *Havelock the Dane*. *Four Romances of England.* Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999. http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/danefrm.htm. Selected editions include Walter William Skeat, ed. *The Lay of Havelock the Dane* (1868), French & Hale, eds., *Middle English Metrical Romances* (1930), Thomas J. Garbáty, ed., *Medieval English Literature* (1984) and G.V. Smithers, ed., *Havelock* (1987).

1	Herkneth to me, gode men -	Pay attention to me, good men,
	Wives, maydnes, and alle men -	Wives, maidens, and everyone else
	Of a tale that ich you wile telle,	To a tale that I will tell you
	Wo so it wile here and therto dwelle.	For whoever wants to stay and hear it.
	The tale is of Havelok imaked:	The story is about Havelock,
	Whil he was litel, he yede ful naked.	Who when he was little went half-naked.
	Havelok was a ful god gome -	Havelock was a good man,
	He was ful god in everi trome;	The best in every company.
	He was the wicteste man at nede	He was the bravest man in need
10	That thurte riden on ani stede.	Who might ride on any steed!
	That ye mowen now yhere,	So that you may hear me,
	And the tale you mowen ylere,	And so that you might know the tale,
	At the biginnig of ure tale,	At the beginning of our story,
	Fil me a cuppe of ful god ale;	Fill me a cup of your best ale.
	And wile drinken, her I spelle,	And while drinking, while I tell it,
	That Crist us shilde alle fro helle.	May Christ shield us all from Hell!
	Krist late us hevere so for to do	May Christ protect us forever
	That we moten comen Him to;	So that we might come to Him,
	And, witthat it mote ben so,	And, so that it may be so,[1]
20	Benedicamus Domino!	Let us praise the Lord!
	Here I schal biginnen a rym;	Here I'll begin the rhyme,

[1] *And, witthat it mote ben so*: TEAMS connects line 19 to 20, whereas Skeat feels that 19 continues 18. Skeat gives the word division as *and wit that it mote ben so*, "and see that it may be so." Walter W. Skeat, ed., *The Lay of Havelock the Dane* (London: Early English Text Society, 1868).

	Krist us yeve wel god fyn!	And may Christ give us a good end!
	The rym is maked of Havelok -	The rhyme is about Havelock,
	A stalworthi man in a flok.	A steady man to have in a group.
	He was the stalwortheste man at nede	He was the hardiest man in need
	That may riden on ani stede.	Who might ride on any steed.
	It was a king bi are dawes,	There was a king in days of old,
	That in his time were gode lawes	Who in his time made good laws
	He dede maken and ful wel holden;	And observed them well.
30	Hym lovede yung, him lovede holde -	He was loved by young, loved by old,
	Erl and barun, dreng and thayn,	By earl and baron, vassal and retainer,[2]
	Knict, bondeman, and swain,	Knight, bondsman, and servant,
	Wydues, maydnes, prestes and clerkes,	Widows, maidens, priests, and clerks,
	And al for hise gode werkes.	And all for his good works.
	He lovede God with al his micth,	He loved God with all his might,
	And Holy Kirke, and soth ant ricth.	And the holy church, and truth and justice.
	Ricthwise men he lovede alle,	He loved all righteous men,
	And overal made hem for to calle.	And everywhere had them at his call.
	Wreieres and wrobberes made he falle	He made traitors and robbers fail,
40	And hated hem so man doth galle;	And hated them like men hate bitter drink.
	Utlawes and theves made he bynde,	Outlaws and thieves were bound,
	Alle that he micte fynde,	Any that he might find,
	And heye hengen on galwe-tre -	And hung high on the gallows tree.
	For hem ne yede gold ne fee!	He took neither gold nor any bribe from them.
	In that time a man that bore	In that time a man who bore
	Wel fifty pund, I wot, or more,	Upwards of fifty pounds, I guess, or more,
	Of red gold upon hiis bac,	Of red gold on his back,
	In a male with or blac,	In a pouch, white or black,
	Ne funde he non that him misseyde,	Would not meet anyone who would mistreat him,
50	Ne with ivele on hond leyde.	Or lay hands on him with evil intent.
	Thanne micthe chapmen fare	Back then merchants could travel
	Thuruth Englond wit here ware,	Throughout England with their wares,
	And baldelike beye and sellen,	And boldly buy and sell,
	Overal ther he wilen dwellen -	Anywhere they wanted to stay.
	In gode burwes and therfram	In fine towns and in the countryside
	Ne funden he non that dede hem sham,	They would not meet anyone to cause them harm
	That he ne weren sone to sorwe brouth,	Who would not soon be brought to ruin,
	And pouere maked and browt to nouth.	Made poor, and reduced to nothing for it.
	Thanne was Engelond at hayse -	England was at ease then.
60	Michel was swich a king to preyse	There was much to praise about such a king
	That held so Englond in grith!	Who held England in such peace.
	Krist of hevene was him with -	Christ in Heaven was with him;
	He was Engelondes blome.	He was England's bloom!
	Was non so bold louerd to Rome	There was no lord as far as Rome
	That durste upon his bringhe	Who dared to bring to his people
	Hunger ne here - wicke thinghe.	Hunger, invasion, or wicked causes.
	Hwan he fellede hise foos,	When the king defeated his enemies,
	He made hem lurken and crepen in wros -	He made them lurk and creep in corners.

[2] *Dreng and thayn*: The list seems to be in decreasing level of social rank from nobility (earl and baron), to non-noble landholders, down to non-free peasants (bondsmen). The food chain is complicated and evolves between Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, but Skeat states that a *dreng* held land in exchange for military service and a thane provided lesser services (note for line 31, page 88).

	The hidden hem alle and helden hem stille,	They all hid themselves and kept quiet,
70	And diden al his herte wille.	And did all his heart's will.
	Ricth he lovede of alle thinge -	But he loved justice above all things.
	To wronge micht him noman bringe,	No man could corrupt him into wrong,
	Ne for silver ne for gold,	Not for silver or for gold,
	So was he his soule hold.	So faithful was he to his soul.
	To the faderles was he rath -	To the orphaned he was their protector;
	Wo so dede hem wrong or lath,	Whoever did them wrong or harm,
	Were it clerc or were it knicth,	No matter if they were a cleric or knight,
	He dede hem sone to haven ricth;	Was soon brought to justice by him.
	And wo dide widuen wrong,	And as for anyone who did widows wrong,
80	Were he nevre knicth so strong,	There was no knight so strong
	That he ne made him sone kesten	That he wouldn't soon have him thrown
	In feteres and ful faste festen;	Into fetters and fasten them tightly.
	And wo so dide maydne shame	And as for whoever shamed a maiden
	Of hire bodi or brouth in blame,	By her body, or brought her into blame,
	Bute it were bi hire wille,	Unless it was by her consent,
	He made him sone of limes spille.	He made him lose some of his limbs.[3]
	He was the beste knith at nede	The king was the best knight in need
	That hevere micthe riden on stede,	Who might ever ride on a steed,
	Or wepne wagge or folc ut lede;	Or hold a weapon, or lead out an army.
90	Of knith ne havede he nevere drede,	He was never so afraid of any knights
	That he ne sprong forth so sparke of glede,	That he would not spring forth like sparks from fire
	And lete him knawe of hise hand dede,	And let them know by the deeds of his hand
	Hu he couthe with wepne spede;	How he could be victorious with a weapon.
	And other he refte him hors or wede,	With others he took their horses or fine clothes,[4]
	Or made him sone handes sprede	Or made them quickly spread their hands,
	And "Louerd, merci!" loude grede.	And cry loudly, "Mercy, Lord!"
	He was large and no wicth gnede.	He was generous and by no means stingy.
	Havede he non so god brede	He never had bread so good
	Ne on his bord non so god shrede,	On his table or a morsel so fine
100	That he ne wolde thorwit fede	That he would not give it to feed
	Poure that on fote yede,	The poor who went on foot,
	Forto haven of Him the mede	In order to receive from Him the reward
	That for us wolde on Rode blede -	That He bled on the Cross for us to have—
	Crist, that al kan wisse and rede	Christ, who can guide and protect all
	That evere woneth in any thede.	Who ever live in any land.
	The king was hoten Athelwold.	The king was called Athelwold.
	Of word, of wepne, he was bold.	With speech and weapons he was bold.
	In Engeland was nevre knicth	In England there was never a knight
	That betere held the lond to ricth.	Who better held the land in justice.
110	Of his bodi ne havede he eyr	But he had fathered no heir
	Bute a mayden swithe fayr,	Except for a very fair maiden

[3] Although the Wife of Bath's knight is initially condemned to death for rape, sexual assault in Anglo-Saxon England was seen more as a property crime against the woman's family and would usually have resulted in a stiff fine. Here Athelwold's untypical strictness is lauded by the poet. See also the *Sir Degare* & *Orfeo* essay.

[4] *Other he refte him hors or wede*: A victorious army despoiled the defeated. French and Hale note, "The practice was deplored by moralists as unchristian, but is a matter of course in the romances" (TEAMS). Here Athelwold receives no censure. Walter Hoyt French and Charles Brockway Hale, eds., *Middle English Metrical Romances* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1930), 78.

	That was so yung that sho ne couthee	Who was so young that she could not
	Gon on fote ne speke wit mouthe.	Walk or speak with her mouth.
	Than him tok an ivel strong,	Then he was taken by a violent illness,[5]
	That he wel wiste and underfong	So that he knew well and understood
	That his deth was comen him on	That his death was coming.
	And saide, "Crist, wat shal I don?	And he said, "Christ, what should I do?
	Louerd, wat shal me to rede?	Lord, how should I be advised?
	I wot ful wel ich have mi mede.	I know full well I will have my reward,
120	Hw shal now my douhter fare?	But how will my daughter fare?
	Of hire have ich michel kare;	I have great concerns about her
	Sho is mikel in my thouth -	And she is much in my thoughts;
	Of meself is me rith nowt.	I have no worries about myself.
	No selcouth is thou me be wo:	It is no wonder for You that I am anxious.
	Sho ne can speke ne sho kan go.	She cannot speak, nor can she walk.
	Yif scho couthe on horse ride,	If she knew how to ride a horse,
	And a thousande men bi hire syde,	With a thousand men by her side,
	And sho were comen intil helde	And she came to age,
	And Engelond sho couthe welde,	She could rule England
130	And don hem of thar hire were queme,	And do to others as she pleased
	And hire bodi couthe yeme,	And would know how to rule her body.
	Ne wolde me nevere ivele like,	I would otherwise never be at ease,
	Ne though ich were in heveneriche."	Even if I were in Heaven's realm."[6]
	Quanne he havede this pleinte maked,	When he had made this plea,
	Therafter stronglike quaked.	He shivered strongly after.[7]
	He sende writes sone onon	At once he sent out writs
	After his erles evereichon;	To his earls, each one of them,
	And after hise baruns, riche and poure,	And to his barons, rich and poor,
	Fro Rokesburw al into Dovere,	From Roxburgh through to Dover,[8]
140	That he shulden comen swithe	That they should come quickly
	Til him, that was ful unblithe,	To him, as he was very ill,
	To that stede ther he lay	To the place where he lay
	In harde bondes nicth and day.	In hard bonds, night and day.
	He was so faste wit yvel fest	He was so trapped in death's grip
	That he ne mouthe haven no rest,	That he could have no rest.
	He ne mouthe no mete hete,	He could take no food,
	Ne he ne mouchte no lythe gete,	Nor might he have any comfort.
	Ne non of his ivel that couthe red -	No one could advise him in his gloom,
	Of him ne was nouth buten ded.	For he was little more than dead.
150	Alle that the writes herden	All who obeyed the writs

[5] *Him tok an ivel strong*: ME romance seems to regularly use such poetic formulas for illness. See also *Bevis of Hampton*, 179 where the queen fakes her oncoming death. Yet in *Amis and Amiloun*, 503 Amis suffers from a *malady*.

[6] The poet's predilection for extended negative constructions, combined with ME's tendency to pile on multiple negatives, sometimes results in confusing lines such as this. The poet may intend the *yif* in 126 to be more like *unless*, which would make the entire clause from 126 to 131 a conditional: "Unless she could rule England I would be unhappy even if I were in Heaven."

[7] French and Hale also note that the poet tends to omit pronouns (TEAMS). Again, combined with early ME's weak distinction between single and plural pronouns, at times referents are less than clear.

[8] *Rokesburw*: Roxburgh, about 70 km south of Edinburgh, was an often-disputed fort on the Scottish border. The expression suggests totality: "from sea to shining sea."

	Sorful and sori til him ferden;	Traveled to him in sorrow and grief.
	He wrungen hondes and wepen sore	They wrung their hands and wept bitterly,
	And yerne preyden Cristes hore -	And earnestly prayed for Christ's grace,
	That He wolde turnen him	That He would release him
	Ut of that yvel that was so grim.	From his illness which was so grim.
	Thanne he weren comen alle	When they had all come
	Bifor the king into the halle,	Before the king in the hall
	At Winchestre ther he lay,	Where he lay at Winchester,
	"Welcome," he sayde, "be ye ay!	"You are forever welcome!" he said.
160	Ful michel thank kan I you	"I give you great thanks
	That ye aren comen to me now."	That you have come to me now."
	Quanne he weren alle set,	When they were all seated
	And the king aveden igret,	And the king had greeted them,
	He greten and gouleden and gouven hem ille,	They wept and wailed and mourned,
	And he bad hem alle been stille	Until the king asked that they all be quiet,
	And seyde that greting helpeth nouth,	And said, "Crying does nothing to help,
	"For al to dede am ich brouth.	For I am brought to death.
	Bute now ye sen that I shal deye,	But now that you see that I am dying,
	Now ich wille you alle preye	I will ask you all now
170	Of mi douther, that shal be	About my daughter, who will be
	Yure levedi after me,	Your sovereign lady after me.
	Wo may yemen hire so longe,	Who will guard her for a time,
	Bothen hire and Engelonde,	Both her and England,
	Til that she be wman of helde	Until she is a woman of age,[9]
	And that she mowe hir yemen and welde?"	And can take care of and guide herself?"
	He answereden and seyden anon,	They answered and said at once,
	Bi Crist and bi Seint Jon,	By Christ and by Saint John,
	That th erl Godrigh of Cornwayle	That Earl Godrich of Cornwall
	Was trewe man wituten faile,	Was a faithful man, without doubt,
180	Wis man of red, wis man of dede,	A wise man in counsel, a wise man in deed,
	And men haveden of him mikel drede -	And men had great deference for him.
	"He may hire altherbest yeme,	"He can best take care of her,
	Til that she mowe wel ben quene."	Until she may be queen in full."
	The king was payed of that rede.	The king was pleased with that advice.
	A wol fair cloth bringen he dede,	He had a beautiful woolen cloth brought,
	And thereon leyde the messebok,	And laid the mass-book on it,
	The caliz, and the pateyn ok,	The chalice, and the Eucharist plate as well,
	The corporaus, the messe-gere.	And the communion cloth and vestments.
	Theron he garte the erl swere	Then he made the earl swear
190	That he sholde yemen hire wel,	That he would protect her well,
	Withuten lac, wituten tel,	Without fail, without reproach,
	Til that she were twelf winter hold	Until she was twelve years old[10]
	And of speche were bold,	And she was confident in speech
	And that she couthe of curteysye,	And could understand court etiquette
	Gon and speken of lovedrurye,	And the manners and speech of courtship,
	And til that she loven muthe	And until she might love

[9] *Wman*: The MED has no other text with this spelling of *woman*, and it is used again in 281. The scribe tends to omit letters. Alternatively, Skeat has *winan*.

[10] *Twelf winter hold*: A noble woman might have been eligible for marriage after first menstruation, between 12 and 15, although non-noble women would have married later. Shakespeare's Juliet is similarly fourteen. But note line 259 where Godrich cynically delays her advancement until age 20.

	Wom so hire to gode thoucte;	Whoever she felt seemed best to her;
	And that he shulde hire yeve	And that he would give to her
	The beste man that micthe live -	The highest man who might live,
200	The beste, fayreste, the strangest ok;	The best, fairest, and the strongest as well.
	That dede he him sweren on the bok,	All this the king had him swear on the book.
	And thanne shulde he Engelond	And then he would bestow
	Al bitechen into hire hond.	All of England into her hand.
	Quanne that was sworn on his wise,	When that was sworn in this way,
	The king dede the mayden arise,	The king had the maiden rise,
	And the erl hire bitaucte	And committed her to the earl
	And al the lond he evere awcte -	Along with all the land he ever owned,
	Engelonde, everi del -	Every part of England,
	And preide he shulde yeme hire wel.	And prayed that he would keep her well.
210	The king ne moucte don no more,	The king could do no more,
	But yerne preyede Godes ore,	But earnestly prayed for God's grace
	And dede him hoslen wel and shrive,	And took communion and confession,
	I wot fif hundred sithes and five,	Five hundred and five times, I know,
	And ofte dede him sore swinge	And repeatedly scourged himself severely,
	And wit hondes smerte dinge	And beat himself painfully with his own hands
	So that the blod ran of his fleys,	So that the blood ran from his flesh,
	That tendre was and swithe neys.	Which had been so tender and soft.
	He made his quiste swithe wel	He made his will out carefully,
	And sone gaf it everil del.	And soon after had every part affirmed.
220	Wan it was goven, ne micte men finde	When it was executed, no man could find
	So mikel men micte him in winde,	So much as a burial sheet to wrap him in
	Of his in arke ne in chiste,	Of his in any coffer or chest
	In Engelond, that noman wiste;	That anyone knew of in England.
	For al was yoven, faire and wel,	For everything was disposed of, fair and clear,
	That him was leved no catel.	So that no possessions were left to him.
	Thanne he havede been ofte swngen,	When he had been continually scourged,
	Ofte shriven and ofte dungen,	Confessed, and beaten,
	"In manus tuas, Louerde," he seyde,	He said, "Into your hands, Lord,"[11]
	Her that he the speche leyde,	And set aside his words then.
230	To Jesu Crist bigan to calle	He began to call on Jesus Christ,
	And deyede biforn his heymen alle.	And died before all of his noblemen.
	Than he was ded, there micte men se	When he was dead, men could see
	The meste sorwe that micte be:	The greatest sorrow that might be.
	Ther was sobbing, siking, and sor,	There was sobbing, sighing, and grief,
	Handes wringing and drawing bi hor.	Hands wringing, and clutching of hair.
	Alle greten swithe sore,	Everyone there wept bitterly,
	Riche and poure that there wore,	All the rich and poor that were there,
	And mikel sorwe haveden alle -	And all had great sorrow,
	Levedyes in boure, knictes in halle.	Ladies in chambers, and knights in the hall.
240	Quan that sorwe was somdel laten	When the mourning had subsided somewhat,
	And he haveden longe graten,	And they had wept a long time,

[11] *In manus tuas, Louerde*: Christ's last words before death, in Luke 23:46: "Into your hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit." The poet emphasizes Athelwold's Christian saintliness with the reference and with his final acts of charity, although unlike Christ, Athelwold's penitential scourging is voluntary. Self-flagellation for mortification of the flesh was practiced in some austere monasteries until it grew into extremes such as the Flagellants lay movement of the fourteenth century. The church largely suppressed the practice afterward.

	Belles deden he sone ringen,	They soon after rang bells,
	Monkes and prestes messe singen;	Monks and priests sang mass,
	And sauteres deden he manie reden,	And they read out many psalm books,
	That God self shulde his soule leden	Praying that God Himself would lead his soul
	Into hevene biforn his Sone,	Into Heaven before His Son
	And ther wituten hende wone.	To live with Them there without end.
	Than he was to the erthe brouth,	After the king was delivered to the earth,
	The riche erl ne foryat nouth	The powerful earl overlooked nothing
250	That he ne dede al Engelond	Until he soon had all of England
	Sone sayse intil his hond,	Seized into his hand.
	And in the castels leth he do	He placed in the castles
	The knictes he mighte tristen to,	The knights which he could trust,
	And alle the Englis dede he swere	And he forced all the English to swear
	That he shulden him ghod fey beren:	That they would act in good faith to him.
	He yaf alle men that god thoucte,	He gave men what seemed right to him,
	Liven and deyen til that him moucte,	To live and die as he saw fit
	Til that the kinges dowter wore	Until the king's daughter was
	Twenti winter hold and more.	Twenty years old or more.
260	Thanne he havede taken this oth	When the earl had received this oath
	Of erles, baruns, lef and loth,	From earls and barons, fair and foul,
	Of knictes, cherles, fre and thewe,	From knights and laborers, free and bound,
	Justises dede he maken newe	He had new justices appointed
	Al Engelond to faren thorw	To travel through all England
	Fro Dovere into Rokesborw.	From Dover into Roxburgh.[12]
	Schireves he sette, bedels, and greyves,	He ordained sheriffs, church officers, and reeves,
	Grith sergeans with longe gleyves,	And peace sergeants with long lances,
	To yemen wilde wodes and pathes	To guard the wild woods and paths
	Fro wicke men that wolde don scathes,	From wicked men who would commit harm,
270	And forto haven alle at his cri,	And to have all at his beck and call,
	At his wille, at hise merci,	At his will, and at his mercy,
	That non durste ben him ageyn -	So that no one would dare be against him,
	Erl ne barun, knict ne sweyn.	Not earl, baron, knight, or peasant.
	Wislike for soth was him wel	To be sure, in truth, he had an abundance
	Of folc, of wepne, of catel:	Of people, weapons, and possessions.
	Sothlike, in a lite thrawe	Truly, in a short while,
	Al Engelond of him stod awe -	All of England stood in awe of him;
	Al Engelond was of him adrad,	All of England was afraid of him,
	So his the beste fro the gad.	Like the cattle fears the prod.
280	The kinges douther bigan thrive	The king's daughter began to flower
	And wex the fairest wman on live.	And grew into the fairest woman alive.
	Of alle thewes was she wis	She was wise in all manners
	That gode weren and of pris.	That were good and were cherished.
	The mayden Goldeboru was hoten;	The maiden was called Goldeboro,
	For hire was mani a ter igroten.	And for her many a tear would be wept.
	Quanne the Erl Godrich him herde	When Earl Godrich heard about the maiden,
	Of that mayden - hw wel she ferde,	How well she was faring,
	Hw wis sho was, hw chaste, hw fayr,	How wise she was, how chaste, how fair,
	And that sho was the rithe eyr	And how she was the rightful heir

[12] The *Havelock* poet writes before the expansion of justices in the fourteenth century, but throughout the medieval period the English citizenry had mixed feelings about such appointments as they brought both order and oppression. For a more extensive discussion see the essay on *Gamelyn*.

290	Of Engelond, of al the rike;	Of England, of all the kingdom,
	Tho bigan Godrich to sike,	Then Godrich began to complain,
	And seyde, "Wether she sholde be	And griped, "Why should she be
	Quen and levedi over me?	Queen and lady over me?
	Hwether sho sholde al Engelond	Why should she have all England,
	And me and mine haven in hire hond?	And me and what's mine, in her hand?
	Datheit hwo it hire thave!	Damn whoever lets her have it![13]
	Shal sho it nevere more have.	She will never see it happen.
	Sholde ic yeve a fol, a therne,	Should I give a fool, a serving wench,
	Engelond, thou sho it yerne?	England, just because she wants it?
300	Datheit hwo it hire yeve	Damn whoever hands it to her
	Evere more hwil I live!	While I'm alive!
	She is waxen al to prud,	She has grown too proud
	For gode metes and noble shrud,	With the good food and royal clothes
	That hic have yoven hire to offte;	That I have too often given her.
	Hic have yemed hire to softe.	I have pampered her *too* well!
	Shal it nouth ben als sho thenkes:	It is not going to end as she thinks.
	Hope maketh fol man ofte blenkes.	Hope often makes a foolish man blind.
	Ich have a sone, a ful fayr knave;	I have a son, a handsome boy;
	He shal Engelond al have!	He shall have all England!
310	He shal king, he shal ben sire,	He shall be king! He will be sire,
	So brouke I evere mi blake swire!"	So long as I have a head on these shoulders!"
	Hwan this trayson was al thouth,	When this treason was all thought out,
	Of his oth ne was him nouth.	His oath no longer meant anything to him.
	He let his oth al overga.	He let his promise go entirely,
	Therof he yaf he nouth a stra,	And after then did not care a straw for it.
	Bute sone dede hire fete,	But before he would eat another thing,
	Er he wolde heten ani mete,	He ordered for her to be fetched
	Fro Winchestre ther sho was,	From where she was at Winchester,
	Also a wicke traytur Judas,	And just like a wicked traitor Judas,
320	And dede leden hire to Dovre,	He had her sent to Dover,
	That standeth on the seis oure,	Which stands on the seashore,
	And therhinne dede hire fede	And had her kept there
	Pourelike in feble wede.	In poverty and in wretched clothes.
	The castel dede he yemen so	He had the castle guarded
	That non ne micte comen hire to	So that none of her friends
	Of hire frend, with to speken,	Might come to speak with her,
	That hevere micte hire bale wreken.	Anyone who might ever avenge her wrong.
	Of Goldeboru shul we now laten,	We will now leave Goldboro for a while,
	That nouth ne blinneth forto graten	Who laments without ceasing,
330	Ther sho liggeth in prisoun.	Where she lies in prison.
	Jesu Crist, that Lazarun	May Jesus Christ, who brought Lazarus
	To live broucte fro dede bondes,	To life from the bonds of death,
	He lese hire wit Hise hondes!	Release her with His hands!
	And leve sho mote him yse	And grant that she might see him

[13] *Datheit*: The poet repeatedly uses this epithet, which is perhaps a corruption of *odium Dei habet*, "May he have the hate of God," or *Deu hat*, "God's hate," from Old French. Thomas J. Garbaty, *Havelock the Dane*, *Medieval English Literature* (Long Grove, Il: Waveland, 1984), note to 296. See also Denise Battaglia, Esther Kaufmann, *et al*., "You Can Say You to Me: English Politeness from the Middle Ages up to Now," conference paper, *eHistLing* 1 (2004), accessed 22 June 2010 at http://www.ehistling.meotod.de/data/papers/group_d_pub.pdf.

	Heye hangen on galwe tre	Hanging high on the gallows tree,
	That hire haved in sorwe brouth,	The man who brought her into sorrow,
	So as sho ne misdede nouth.	Even though she had done no wrong.
	Say we now forth in hure spelle!	Let us continue forth in our story.
	In that time, so it bifelle,	In that time, as it so happened,
340	Was in the lond of Denemark	In the land of Denmark there was
	A riche king and swythe stark.	A rich and very powerful king.
	The name of him was Birkabeyn;	His name was Birkabeyn.
	He havede mani knict and sweyn;	He had many knights and attendants;
	He was fayr man and wict,	He was a handsome and valiant man.
	Of bodi he was the beste knicth	He was the best knight in body
	That evere micte leden uth here,	Who ever might command an army,
	Or stede on ride or handlen spere.	Or ride a horse, or handle a spear.
	Thre children he havede bi his wif -	He had three children by his wife,
	He hem lovede so his lif.	And he loved them as much as his life.
350	He havede a sone, douhtres two,	He had a son and two daughters
	Swithe fayre, as fel it so.	Who were, as it happened, very beautiful.
	He that wile non forbere,	But death, who spares no one,
	Riche ne poure, king ne kaysere,	Neither rich nor poor, king nor emperor,
	Deth him tok than he best wolde	Took him when he would rather live;
	Liven, but hyse dayes were fulde,	But his days were complete,
	That he ne moucte no more live,	So that he could no longer remain,
	For gold ne silver ne for no gyve.	Not for gold, silver, or any gift.
	Hwan he that wiste, rathe he sende	When the king realized this he quickly sent
	After prestes, fer an hende -	For priests from near and far,
360	Chanounes gode and monkes bothe,	Canon priests and monks as well,[14]
	Him for to wisse and to rede,	To counsel and advise him,
	Him for to hoslen an for to shrive,	And to confess and absolve him
	Hwil his bodi were on live.	While his body was still alive.
	Hwan he was hosled and shriven,	When he was given the sacraments,
	His quiste maked and for him gyven,	With his will made and given for him,
	Hise knictes dede he alle site,	He had all his knights seated,
	For thoru hem he wolde wite	For through them he would know
	Hwo micte yeme his children yunge	Who might take care of his young children
	Til that he kouthen speken wit tunge,	Until they could speak with their tongues,
370	Speken and gangen, on horse riden,	Walk and talk, and rise horses
	Knictes and sweynes by here siden.	With knights and attendants by their sides.
	He spoken theroffe and chosen sone	He spoke of this matter and soon chose
	A riche man that under mone,	A powerful man who was the truest
	Was the trewest, that he wende -	Under the moon that he knew—
	Godard, the kinges owne frende -	Godard, the king's own friend—
	And seyden he moucthe hem best loke	And said he might care for them best[15]
	Yif that he hem undertoke,	If he committed himself to them,
	Til hise sone mouthe bere	Until his son could bear
	Helm on heved and leden ut here,	A helmet on his head and lead an army,
380	In his hand a spere stark,	With a strong spear in his hand,

[14] *Chanounes gode*: A canon was "a priest of a cathedral church or a member of a particular religious community" (TEAMS). Here they are regular clergy of enough authority to give confession to the king.

[15] *He moucthe hem best loke*: Who is speaking here is not clear, as the pronouns do not indicate. Likely the king is addressing Godard, referring back to the clause beginning on 372. But in 382, "He [the king] believed what he said," although this may refer to Godard's implied response.

	And king been maked of Denemark.	And be made king of Denmark.
	He wel trowede that he seyde,	The king believed what Godard said
	And on Godard handes leyde;	And laid hands on him
	And seyde, “Here biteche I thee	And said, “I here entrust to you
	Mine children alle thre,	Each of my three children,
	Al Denemark and al mi fe,	All Denmark, and all my properties,
	Til that mi sone of helde be,	Until my son is of age.
	But that ich wille that thou swere	But I want you to swear
	On auter and on messe gere,	On the altar and the church vestments,
390	On the belles that men ringes,	On the bells that men ring,
	On messe bok the prest on singes,	And on the hymnal from which the priests sing,
	That thou mine children shalt wel yeme,	That you will protect my children well,
	That hire kin be ful wel queme,	So that their family will be satisfied,
	Til mi sone mowe ben knicth.	Until my son can be a knight.
	Thanne biteche him tho his ricth:	Then endow him with his right:
	Denemark and that ther til longes -	Denmark and all that belongs to it,
	Casteles and tunes, wodes and wonges.”	Castles, towns, woods, and fields.”
	Godard stirt up and swor al that	Godard rose and swore everything
	The king him bad, and sithen sat	That the king asked him, and afterward sat
400	Bi the knictes that ther ware,	With the knights who were there,
	That wepen alle swithe sare	Who were all weeping very bitterly
	For the king that deide sone.	For the king, who soon died.
	Jesu Crist, that makede mone	May Jesus Christ, who makes the moon
	On the mirke nith to shine,	Shine on the darkest night,
	Wite his soule fro helle pine;	Protect his soul from Hell’s pains,
	And leve that it mote wone	And grant that it may dwell
	In heveneriche with Godes Sone!	In Heaven with God’s Son!
	Hwan Birkabeyn was leyd in grave,	When Birkabeyn was laid in his grave,
	The erl dede sone take the knave,	The earl immediately took the boy,
410	Havelok, that was the eir,	Havelock, who was the heir,
	Swanborow, his sister, Helfled, the tother,	Swanboro, his sister, and Hefled, the other,
	And in the castel dede he hem do,	And he had them put in the castle,
	Ther non ne micte hem comen to	Where none might come to them
	Of here kyn, ther thei sperd were.	From their relatives; there they were kept.
	Ther he greten ofte sore	They cried there miserably,
	Bothe for hunger and for kold,	Both from hunger and the cold,
	Or he weren thre winter hold.	Before they were even three years old.
	Feblelike he gaf hem clothes;	He gave them clothes grudgingly;
	He ne yaf a note of hise othes -	He didn’t care a nut about his oaths!
420	He hem clothede rith ne fedde,	He didn’t clothe or feed them properly,
	Ne hem ne dede richelike bebedde.	Or provide them with a royal bedroom.
	Thanne Godard was sikerlike	In that time Godard was surely
	Under God the moste swike	The worst traitor under God
	That evre in erthe shaped was.	Who was ever created on earth,
	Withuten on, the wike Judas.	Except for one, the wicked Judas.
	Have he the malisun today	May he have the curse today
	Of alle that evre speken may -	Of all who might ever pronounce them,
	Of patriark and of pope,	Of patriarchs and popes,
	And of prest with loken kope,	And of priests with buttoned cloaks,
430	Of monekes and hermites bothe,	Of both monks and hermits,
	And of the leve Holi Rode	And by the beloved Holy Cross
	That God himselve ran on blode!	That God Himself bled upon.
	Crist warie him with His mouth!	May Christ condemn him with His mouth!
	Waried wrthe he of north and suth,	May he be reviled from north to south,

	Offe alle men that speken kunne,	By all men who can speak,
	Of Crist that made mone and sunne!	By Christ, who made the moon and sun.
	Thanne he havede of al the lond	For after then he had all the land,
	Al the folk tilled intil his hond,	And all the folk, tilled into his hand,
	And alle haveden sworen him oth,	And all had to swear him oaths,
440	Riche and poure, lef and loth,	Rich and poor, fair and foul,
	That he sholden hise wille freme	That they would perform his will,
	And that he shulde him nouth greme,	And that they would not oppose him.
	He thouthe a ful strong trechery,	He worked up a villainous treachery,
	A trayson and a felony,	A treason and a felony,
	Of the children for to make -	To carry out on the children.
	The devel of helle him sone take!	May the devil soon take him to Hell!
	Hwan that was thouth, onon he ferde	When that was planned, he went on
	To the tour ther he woren sperde,	To the tower where they were kept,
	Ther he greten for hunger and cold.	Where they wept for hunger and cold.
450	The knave, that was sumdel bold,	The boy, who had more courage,
	Kam him ageyn, on knes him sette,	Came to him and set himself on his knees,
	And Godard ful feyre he ther grette.	And greeted Godard courteously.
	And Godard seyde, “Wat is yw?	Godard said, “What’s the matter with you?
	Hwi grete ye and goulen now?”	Why are you all bawling and yowling?”
	“For us hungreth swithe sore” -	“Because we are bitterly hungry,” he said.
	Seyden he, “we wolden more:	“We need more to eat.
	We ne have to hete, ne we ne have	We have no heat, nor do we have
	Her inne neyther knith ne knave	Either a knight or a servant in here
	That yeveth us drinke ne no mete,	Who gives us half the amount of food
460	Halvendel that we moun ete -	Or drink that we could eat.
	Wo is us that we weren born!	Woe is us that we were born!
	Weilawei! nis it no korn	Alas! Is there not even grain
	That men micte maken of bred?	That someone could make bread from?
	Us hungreth - we aren ney ded!”	We are hungry and we are nearly dead!”
	Godard herde here wa,	Godard heard their plea,
	Ther-offe yaf he nouth a stra,	And did not care a straw about it,
	But tok the maydnes bothe samen,	But lifted up both of the girls together,
	Al so it were up on hiis gamen,	Who were green and pale from hunger,
	Al so he wolde with hem leyke	As if it were a game,
470	That weren for hunger grene and bleike.	As if he were playing with them.
	Of bothen he karf on two here throtes,	He slashed both of their throats in two,
	And sithen hem al to grotes.	And then cut them to pieces.
	Ther was sorwe, wo-so it sawe,	There was sorrow in whoever saw it
	Hwan the children by the wawe	When the children lay by the wall,
	Leyen and sprawleden in the blod.	Sprawled in the blood.
	Havelok it saw and therbi stod -	Havelock saw it and stood there.
	Ful sori was that sely knave.	The innocent boy was full of grief.
	Mikel dred he mouthe have,	He must have been frozen in terror,
	For at hise herte he saw a knif	For he saw a knife pointed at his heart
480	For to reven him hise lyf.	To rob him of his life.
	But the knave, that litel was,	But the boy, who was so small,
	He knelede bifor that Judas,	Kneeled before that Judas,
	And seyde, “Louerd, mercy now!	And said, “Lord, have mercy now!
	Manrede, louerd, biddi you:	Lord, I offer you homage.
	Al Denemark I wile you yeve,	I will give you all of Denmark,
	To that forward thu late me live.	On the promise that you let me live.
	Here hi wile on boke swere	I will swear on the Bible right here
	That nevremore ne shal I bere	That I will never bear against you

	Ayen thee, louerd, sheld ne spere,	Shield or spear, Lord,
490	Ne other wepne that may you dere.	Nor any other weapon that might harm you.
	Louerd, have merci of me!	Lord, have mercy on me!
	Today I wile fro Denemark fle,	Today I will flee from Denmark
	Ne neveremore comen agheyn!	And never come back again.
	Sweren I wole that Bircabein	I will swear that Birkabeyn
	Nevere yete me ne gat."	Never fathered me."
	Hwan the devel herde that,	When the devil Godard heard that,
	Sumdel bigan him for to rewe;	He felt a slight twinge of guilt.
	Withdrow the knif, that was lewe	He drew back the knife, which was warm
	Of the seli children blod.	From the innocent children's blood.
500	Ther was miracle fair and god	It was a miracle, fair and bright,
	That he the knave nouth ne slou,	That he did not slay the boy,
	But for rewnesse him witdrow -	But out of pity he held back.
	Of Avelok rewede him ful sore,	He felt strong regret for Havelock,
	And thoucte he wolde that he ded wore,	And though he wished that he were dead,[16]
	But on that he nouth wit his hend	Godard not could bring himself
	Ne drepe him nouth, that fule fend!	To kill him with his own hand, the foul fiend!
	Thoucte he als he him bi stod,	Godard thought as he stood by him,
	Starinde als he were wod,	Staring out as if he were crazy,
	"Yif I late him lives go,	"If I let him go alive,
510	He micte me wirchen michel wo -	He might cause me great trouble.
	Grith ne get I neveremo;	I will never have peace,
	He may me waiten for to slo.	For he may bide his time to kill me.
	And if he were brouct of live,	And if his life were taken away,
	And mine children wolden thrive,	And my children were to thrive,
	Louerdinges after me	After my time they might be
	Of al Denemark micten he be.	Lords of all Denmark!
	God it wite, he shal ben ded -	God knows, he shall be killed.
	Wile I taken non other red!	I will take no other course!
	I shal do casten him in the she,	I will have him thrown into the sea,
520	Ther I wile that he drench be,	And there I'll have him drowned,
	Abouten his hals an anker god,	With a solid anchor about his neck,
	Thad he ne flete in the flod."	So that he can't float in the water."[17]
	Ther anon he dede sende	From there he immediately sent for
	After a fishere that he wende	A fisherman that he believed
	That wolde al his wille do,	Would do all his will,
	And sone anon he seyde him to:	And he said to him at once,
	"Grim, thou wost thu art my thral;	"Grim, you know you are my servant;
	Wilte don my wille al	Will you do all my will
	That I wile bidden thee?	That I order you to?
530	Tomorwen shal maken thee fre,	Tomorrow I will free you
	And aucte thee yeven and riche make,	And give you property, and make you rich,
	Withthan thu wilt this child take	Provided that you take this child
	And leden him with thee tonicht,	And bring him with you tonight.

[16] *And thoucte he wolde that he ded wore*: A difficult line. *Thoucte* is 'thought' (see 507) and probably not 'though' (ME *thagh, though*). Yet translating the entire sentence is difficult otherwise, unless Godard is so tormented at the moment that he wishes he were dead himself.

[17] Garbaty notes that Godard, like the pirates in *King Horn*, rationalizes that putting Havelock in the water removes his moral responsibility, as fate will be to blame if he dies. Godard still wants to give fate "a heavy helping hand" with an anchor (Garbaty, note to 519-22).

	Than thou sest the monelith,	When you see the moonlight,
	Into the se and don him therinne.	Go into the sea and throw him in it.
	Al wile I taken on me the sinne."	I will take on myself all the sin."
	Grim tok the child and bond him faste,	Grim took the boy and tied him up tightly,
	Hwil the bondes micte laste,	While the bonds might last,
	That weren of ful strong line.	Which were made of strong rope.
540	Tho was Havelok in ful strong pine -	Then Havelock was in great pain;
	Wiste he nevere her wat was wo!	He never knew before what torment was!
	Jhesu Crist, that makede go	May Jesus Christ, who makes the lame walk
	The halte and the doumbe speken,	And the dumb speak,
	Havelok, thee of Godard wreke!	Wreak revenge on Godard for Havelock![18]
	Hwan Grim him havede faste bounden,	When Grim had tied him up fast,
	And sithen in an eld cloth wnden,	And then bound him in an old cloth,
	He thriste in his muth wel faste	He tightly shoved in his mouth
	A kevel of clutes ful unwraste,	A gag of filthy rags,
	That he mouthe speke ne fnaste,	So that he could not speak or snort out
550	Hwere he wolde him bere or lede.	Wherever he might carry or lead him.
	Hwan he havede don that dede,	When he had done that deed
	Hwat the swike him havede he yede	And obeyed the traitor's orders,
	That he shulde him forth lede	That he should take him out
	And him drinchen in the se -	And soak him in the sea
	That forwarde makeden he -	In a bag, big and black,
	In a poke, ful and blac,	Which was the agreement they made,
	Sone he caste him on his bac,	He immediately threw him on his back
	Ant bar him hom to hise cleve,	And took him home to his hut.
	And bitaucte him Dame Leve	Grim entrusted him to his wife Leve,
560	And seyde, "Wite thou this knave,	And said, "Watch this boy[19]
	Al so thou wit mi lif save!	As if you were saving my life!
	I shal dreinchen him in the se;	I will drown him in the sea.
	For him shole we ben maked fre,	Because of him we will be made free,
	Gold haven ynow and other fe:	And have plenty of gold and other goods;
	That havet mi louerd bihoten me."	My lord has promised me this."
	Hwan Dame Leve herde that,	When Dame Leve heard this,
	Up she stirte and nouth ne sat,	She did not sit but jumped up,
	And caste the knave so harde adoun	And dropped the boy down so hard
	That he crakede ther his croune	That he banged his head
570	Ageyn a gret ston ther it lay.	Against a great rock laying there.[20]
	Tho Havelok micte sei, "Weilawei,	Then Havelock might have been heard saying
	That evere was I kinges bern -	"Alas that I was ever a king's son!
	That him ne havede grip or ern,	If only he had fathered a vulture or eagle,
	Leoun or wlf, wlvine or bere,	A lion or wolf, a she-wolf or bear,
	Or other best that wolde him dere!"	Or some other beast to harm Godard back!"[21]

[18] Significantly, the poet does not condemn Grim, who is ostensibly "only acting under orders." For an alternative interpretation of Grim which sees him as *too* enthusiastic in seeking advancement, see Maldwyn Mills, "Havelok and the Brutal Fisherman," *Medium Aevum* 36 (1967): 219-30.

[19] *Knave*: In early ME this simply meant 'boy.' Although the word had servile connotations, there was no pejorative nuance yet as there is later when Grim calls himself and Leve *cherles* in remorseful panic (621).

[20] *Ageyn a gret ston*: Among other uses, rocks were heated in ovens and used to keep beds warm at night. Alison scolds Absolon from her bedside window, "Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston" (*CT* I.3712), perhaps reflecting the same practice.

	So lay that child to middel nicth,	So the child lay there until midnight,
	That Grim bad Leve bringen lict,	When Grim asked Leve to bring a light
	For to don on his clothes:	In order to put on his clothes:
	"Ne thenkestu nowt of mine othes	"Don't you think anything of my oaths
580	That ich have mi louerd sworen?	That I have sworn to my lord?[22]
	Ne wile I nouth be forloren.	I will not be ruined!
	I shal beren him to the se -	I will take him to the sea—
	Thou wost that hoves me -	You know that's what I have to do—
	And I shal drenchen him therinne;	And I will drown him there in the water.
	Ris up swithe an go thu binne,	Get up quickly now and go in,
	And blow the fir and lith a kandel."	And stoke the fire and light a candle!"
	Als she shulde hise clothes handel	But as she was about to handle his clothes
	On for to don and blawe the fir,	To put them on him and kindle the fire,
	She saw therinne a lith ful shir,	She saw inside a shining light,
590	Al so brith so it were day,	As bright as if it were day,
	Aboute the knave ther he lay.	Around the boy where he lay.
	Of hise mouth it stod a stem	From his mouth a gleam stood out
	Als it were a sunnebem;	As if it were a sunbeam.
	Al so lith was it therinne	It was as light inside the hut
	So ther brenden cerges inne.	As if candles were burning there.
	"Jesu Crist!" wat Dame Leve,	"Jesus Christ!" exclaimed Dame Leve,
	"Hwat is that lith in ure cleve?	"What is that light in our hut?
	Ris up, Grim, and loke wat it menes!	Get up, Grim, and see what it means!
	Hwat is the lith, as thou wenes?"	What do you think the light is?"
600	He stirten bothe up to the knave	They both hurried up to the boy,
	For man shal god wille have,	For people are naturally good-willed,
	Unkeveleden him and swithe unbounden,	Ungagged him, and quickly untied him,
	And sone anon him funden,	And then immediately found on him,
	Als he tirveden of his serk,	As they pulled off the boy's shirt,
	On hise rith shuldre a kynmerk,	A royal birthmark on his right shoulder,
	A swithe brith, a swithe fair.	A mark so bright and so fair.
	"Goddot!" quath Grim, "this ure eir,	Grim said, "God knows, this is our heir
	That shal louerd of Denemark!	Who will be lord of Denmark!
	He shal ben king, strong and stark;	He will be king, strong and mighty,
610	He shal haven in his hand	And he will have in his hand
	Al Denemark and Engeland.	All of Denmark and England!
	He shal do Godard ful wo;	He will bring Godard great grief;
	He shal him hangen or quik flo,	He will have him hanged or flayed alive,
	Or he shal him al quic grave.	Or he will have him buried alive.
	Of him shal he no merci have."	He will get no mercy from him."
	Thus seide Grim and sore gret,	Grim said this and cried bitterly,
	And sone fel him to the fet,	And then fell at Havelock's feet
	And seide, "Louerd, have mercy	And said, "My lord, have mercy
	Of me and Leve, that is me bi!	On me and Leve, who is beside me!
620	Louerd, we aren bothe thine -	Lord, we are both yours—
	Thine cherles, thine hine.	Your peasants, your servants.
	Louerd, we sholen thee wel fede	Lord, we will raise you well

[21] This is again a surmisal taken from context, as the pronouns in early ME do not make it clear who Havelock is talking about.

[22] Presumably Leve's conscience bothers her and Grim needs to argue with her to justify his actions. The sentiment dovetails with line 601 and helps humanize the couple.

	Til that thu cone riden on stede,	Until you know how to ride a steed,
	Til that thu cone ful wel bere	Until you know well how to bear
	Helm on heved, sheld and spere.	A helmet on your head with shield and spear.
	He ne shall nevere wite, sikerlike,	Godard, that foul traitor,
	Godard, that fule swike.	Will never know, for sure.
	Thoru other man, louerd, than thoru thee	I will never be a free man, Lord,
	Shal I nevere freman be.	Except through you.
630	Thou shalt me, louerd, fre maken,	You, my lord, will release me,
	For I shal yemen thee and waken -	For I will protect and watch over you.
	Thoru thee wile I fredom have."	Through you I will have freedom."
	Tho was Haveloc a blithe knave!	Then Havelock was a happy lad.
	He sat him up and cravede bred,	He sat up and asked for bread,
	And seide, "Ich am ney ded,	And said, "I am nearly dead,
	Hwat for hunger, wat for bondes	What with hunger, what with the ropes
	That thu leidest on min hondes,	That you laid on my hands,
	And for kevel at the laste,	And at last because of the gag
	That in my mouth was thrist faste.	That was stuck fast in my mouth.
640	I was ther with so harde prangled	With all that I was so tightly pressed
	That I was ther with ney strangled!"	That I was nearly strangled!"
	"Wel is me that thou mayth hete!	Leve said, "God knows, I'm just pleased
	Goddoth!" quath Leve, "I shal thee fete	That you can eat. I will fetch you
	Bred an chese, butere and milk,	Bread and cheese, butter and milk,
	Pastees and flaunes - al with swilk	And meat pies and desserts.
	Shole we sone thee wel fede,	We'll soon feed you well with these things,
	Louerd, in this mikel nede.	My lord, in your great need.
	Soth it is that men seyt and swereth:	It's true what people say and swear;
	'Ther God wile helpen, nouth ne dereth.'"	'No one can harm whom God wishes to help.'"[23]
650	Thanne sho havede brouth the mete,	When she had brought some food,
	Haveloc anon bigan to ete	At once Havelock began to eat
	Grundlike, and was ful blithe.	Ravenously, and was very pleased;
	Couthe he nouth his hunger mithe.	He could not hide his hunger.
	A lof he het, I woth, and more,	He ate a loaf, I know, and more,
	For him hungrede swithe sore.	For he was half-starved.
	Thre dayes ther biforn, I wene,	For three days before then, I guess,
	Et he no mete - that was wel sene!	He had eaten nothing—that was clear to see!
	Hwan he havede eten and was fed,	When he had eaten and was content,
	Grim dede maken a ful fayr bed,	Grim made him a comfortable bed,
660	Unclothede him and dede him therinne,	Took his clothes off, and tucked him in,
	And seyde, "Slep, sone, with muchel winne!	And said, "Sleep, son, in great peace.
	Slep wel faste and dred thee nouth -	Sleep fast and do not be afraid of anything.
	Fro sorwe to joie art thu brouth."	You have been brought from sorrow to joy."
	Sone so it was lith of day,	Soon it was the light of day.
	Grim it undertok the wey	Grim made his way
	To the wicke traitour Godard	To the wicked traitor Godard,
	That was of Denemark a stiward	Who was the steward of Denmark,
	And saide, "Louerd, don ich have	And said, "My lord, I have done
	That thou me bede of the knave:	What you ordered me to do with the boy.
670	He is drenched in the flod,	He is drowned in the water,
	Abouten his hals an anker god -	With a firm anchor around his neck.

[23] *Ther God wile helpen, nouth ne dereth*: Apparently proverbial. Compare Thomas A. Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* (c. 1418), Book 2, *Humility*: "The malice of man cannot harm one whom God wishes to help."

	He is witerlike ded.	He is surely dead.
	Eteth he nevremore bred:	He will never eat any more bread!
	He lith drenched in the se.	He lies drowned in the sea.
	Yif me gold and other fe,	Give me gold and other goods
	That I mowe riche be,	So that I may be rich,
	And with thi chartre make fre;	And make me free with your signature.
	For thu ful wel bihetet me	You promised me these things in full
	Thanne I last spak with thee."	When I last spoke with you."
680	Godard stod and lokede on him	Godard stood and looked at him
	Thoruthlike, with eyne grim,	Thoroughly with stern eyes
	And seyde, "Wiltu ben erl?	And said, "So you want to be an earl?
	Go hom swithe, fule drit-cherl;	Get home quick, foul dirt-serf!
	Go hethen and be everemore	Get out of here and be forever
	Thral and cherl als thou er wore -	A slave and peasant as you were before!
	Shaltu have non other mede;	You will get no other reward.
	For litel I do thee lede	So help me God, it would take little
	To the galwes, so God me rede!	For me to send you to the gallows.
	For thou haves don a wicke dede.	You have done a wicked thing.
690	Thou mait stonden her to longe,	You stay here too long for your own good
	Bute thou swithe hethen gonge!"	Unless you get out of here fast!"
	Grim thoucte to late that he ran	Grim thought, too late, as he ran
	Fro that traytour, that wicke man,	From that traitor, that wicked man
	And thoucte, "Wat shal me to rede?	And pondered, "What will I do?
	Wite he him on live he wile bethe	If he knows he's alive, both of us will be
	Heye hangen on galwe tre.	Hanged high on the gallows tree.
	Betere us is of londe to fle,	It would be better for us to flee the land
	And berwen bothen ure lives,	And save both of our lives,
	And mine children and mine wives."	And my children's and my wife's."
700	Grim solde sone al his corn,	Soon after Grim sold all of his grain,
	Shep with wolle, neth with horn,	Sheep with wool, cattle with horns,
	Hors and swin, geet with berd,	Horses and pigs, goats with beards,
	The gees, the hennes of the yerd -	The geese, and the hens of the yard.
	Al he solde that outh douthe,	He sold all that could be sold,
	That he evre selle moucte;	Everything that had value,
	And al he to the peni drou.	And he converted it all to money.
	Hise ship he greythede wel inow;	He outfitted his ship well enough.
	He dede it tere an ful wel pike	He gave it tar and a full coat of pitch
	That it ne doutede sond ne krike;	So that it would never fear inlet or creek.
710	Therinne dide a ful god mast,	He installed a fine mast in it,
	Stronge kables and ful fast,	Fastened firmly with strong cables,
	Ores gode an ful god seyl -	Good oars, and a rugged sail.
	Therinne wantede nouth a nayl,	Nothing inside lacked even a nail
	That evere he sholde therinne do.	That he should have put into it.
	Hwan he havedet greythed so,	When he had equipped it so,
	Havelok the yunge he dede therinne,	He put young Havelock in it,
	Him and his wif, hise sones thrinne,	Himself and his wife, his three sons,
	And hise two doutres that faire wore.	And his two daughters, who were pretty girls.
	And sone dede he leyn in an ore,	And then he laid in the oars
720	And drou him to the heye see,	And drew them out to the high sea
	There he mith altherbeste fle.	Where he might best flee.
	Fro londe woren he bote a mile,	He was only a mile from land,
	Ne were it nevere but ane hwile	And it was no more than a short while

	That it ne bigan a wind to rise	When a breeze which men call
	Out of the north men calleth "bise,"	The North Wind began to rise[24]
	And drof hem intil Engelond,	And drove them on to England,
	That al was sithen in his hond,	Which would later all be in one hand,
	His, that Havelok was the name;	And that man's name would be Havelock.
	But or he havede michel shame,	But before then he would endure
730	Michel sorwe and michel tene,	Much shame, sorrow, and hardship.
	And yete he gat it al bidene;	And yet he got it all completely,
	Als ye shulen now forthward lere,	As you will all soon learn
	Yf that ye wilen therto here.	If you wish to hear about it.
	In Humber Grim bigan to lende,	Grim came to land in the Humber,
	In Lindeseye, rith at the north ende.	In Lindsay, right at the north end.[25]
	Ther sat his ship upon the sond;	There his fishing boat sat on the sand.
	But Grim it drou up to the lond;	But Grim drew it up onto the land,
	And there he made a litel cote	And built a little cottage there
	To him and to hise flote.	For him and his company.
740	Bigan he there for to erthe,	He began to live and work there,
	A litel hus to maken of erthe,	In a little house made of earth,
	So that he wel thore were	So that in their harbor there
	Of here herboru herborwed there.	They were well-sheltered.
	And for that Grim that place aute,	And because Grim owned that place,
	The stede of Grim the name laute,	It took the name of Grim's stead,
	So that Grimesbi it calleth alle	So that everyone calls it Grimsby[26]
	That theroffe speken alle;	Who speaks about the town.
	And so shulen men callen it ay,	And so men will always call it
	Bitwene this and Domesday.	Between now and Judgment Day.
750	Grim was fishere swithe god,	Grim was a skillful fisherman
	And mikel couthe on the flod -	And knew the waters well.
	Mani god fish therinne he tok,	He took plenty of good fish in,
	Bothe with neth and with hok.	Both with a net and with a hook.
	He tok the sturgiun and the qual,	He took sturgeons and whales,
	And the turbut and lax withal;	And turbot and salmon as well.
	He tok the sele and the hwel -	He caught seals and eels,
	He spedde ofte swithe wel.	And was often very successful.
	Keling he tok and tumberel,	He took cod and porpoise,
	Hering and the makerel,	Herring and mackerel,
760	The butte, the schulle, the thornebake.	Flounder, plaice, and skate.[27]

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[24] *Bise*: TEAMS notes that this Old French loanword for 'North Wind' is common in French literature but does not appear in any other English romance.

[25] The poet knows his geography. The Humber River moves into an inlet northwest of Grimsby. Present-day East Lindsey is slightly further south, near Louth. This would have been a trip southwest from Denmark of upwards of 6-700 km, a long voyage for a peasant fishing boat. A fast Viking longship traveling at 14 knots might have completed the trip in two days. Similarly, Grimsby to Lincoln (774) is a good day's walk at 55 km.

[26] "Grim's By," reflecting the Old Danish word for *village*, still traditionally claims its origins from the story of Grim. Grimsby's medieval seal had images of Grim, Havelock, and Goldeboru, though findings suggest that a small number of Romans occupied the area near Cartergate centuries earlier.

[27] Like lists of royalty in medieval romance, the fish here also seem to be ranked from highest to lowest. Sturgeon were a delicacy (as well as whales, curiously) whereas flounder and plaice were a staple now usually found in fish and chip dishes. Also see Skeat's note on fish as well as TEAMS' note referencing

	Gode paniers dede he make,	He made fine bread baskets,
	On til him and other thrinne	One for him and another three
	Til hise sones to beren fishe inne,	For his sons to carry fish in
	Up o londe to selle and fonge -	To sell and collect money for upland.
	Forbar he neyther tun ne gronge	He missed neither town nor farm
	That he ne to yede with his ware.	Wherever he went with his wares.
	Kam he nevere hom hand-bare,	He never came home empty-handed
	That he ne broucte bred and sowel	Without bringing bread and sauce
	In his shirte or in his cowel,	In his shirt or in his hood,
770	In his poke benes and korn -	And beans and grain in his bag.
	Hise swink he havede he nowt forlorn.	He never wasted his efforts.
	And hwan he took the grete lamprey,	And when he caught a great lamprey,[28]
	Ful wel he couthe the rithe wei	He knew the road very well
	To Lincolne, the gode boru;	To Lincoln, the fine town.
	Ofte he yede it thoru and thoru,	He often crossed it through and through,
	Til he havede wol wel sold	Until he sold everything as he wished[29]
	And therfore the penies told.	And had counted his pennies for it.
	Thanne he com thenne he were blithe,	When he returned from there he was glad,
	For hom he brouthe fele sithe	For many times he brought home
780	Wastels, simenels with the horn,	Cakes and horn-shaped breads,
	His pokes fulle of mele and korn,	With his bags full of flour and grain,
	Netes flesh, shepes and swines;	Ox-meat, lamb, and pork,
	And hemp to maken of gode lines,	And hemp to make fishing lines,
	And stronge ropes to hise netes,	And strong rope for his nets
	In the se weren he ofte setes.	Where he set them in the sea.
	Thusgate Grim him fayre ledde:	Thus Grim lived comfortably,
	Him and his genge wel he fedde	And he fed himself and his household well
	Wel twelf winter other more.	For a good twelve winters or more.
	Havelok was war that Grim swank sore	Havelock knew that Grim worked hard
790	For his mete, and he lay at hom -	For his dinner while he lay at home.
	Thouthe, "Ich am now no grom!	He thought, "I am no longer a boy.
	Ich am wel waxen and wel may eten	I am fully grown and can eat
	More than evere Grim may geten.	More than Grim could ever get.
	Ich ete more, bi God on live,	I eat more, by the living God,
	Than Grim an hise children five!	Than Grim and his five children.
	It ne may nouth ben thus longe.	God knows, it can't go on like this.
	Goddot! I wile with hem gange	I will go with them
	For to leren sum god to gete.	To learn some useful skill,
	Swinken ich wolde for my mete -	And I will labor for my dinner.
800	It is no shame for to swinken!	It is no shame to work!
	The man that may wel eten and drinken	It is a foul thing for a man who eats
	Thar nouth ne have but on swink long -	And drinks his fill who has not

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Luizza, who believes the fish symbolize an economy where goods and money have more value than "chivalric honor." Roy Michael Liuzza, "Representation and Readership in the ME *Havelok*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 93 (1994): 510.

[28] Lampreys are parasitic eels and are now seen as pests, but in the ancient and medieval world they were expensive dainties. Henry I is recorded by contemporary historians as dying from eating too many lampreys in rich sauces.

[29] *Til he havede wol wel sold*: The MS suggests that Grim is selling wool (*wol*), which is never mentioned. Other editors read *ful* or *al* instead of *wol*, which makes more contextual sense.

	To liggen at hom it is ful strong.	Worked hard for it to lie at home.
	God yelde him, ther I ne may,	God reward him more than I can
	That haveth me fed to this day!	For having fed me to this day!
	Gladlike I wile the paniers bere -	I will gladly carry the breadbaskets.
	Ich woth ne shal it me nouth dere,	I know it won't do me any harm,
	They ther be inne a birthene gret	Even if they are a great burden,
	Al so hevi als a neth.	As heavy as an ox.
810	Shal ich nevere lengere dwelle -	I will no longer linger here.
	Tomorwen shal ich forth pelle."	Tomorrow I will hustle forth!"
	On the morwen, hwan it was day,	In the morning when it was day
	He stirt up sone and nouth ne lay,	He got up at once and did not lie down,
	And cast a panier on his bac,	And he threw a basket on his back
	With fish giveled als a stac.	With fish heaped up like a stack.
	Al so michel he bar him one,	He carried as much by himself
	So he foure, bi mine mone!	As four men, by my word.
	Wel he it bar and solde it wel;	He carried it firmly and sold it well,
	The silver he brouthe hom ilk del,	And he brought home every bit of silver,
820	Al that he therfore tok -	All that he got for it.
	Withheld he nouth a ferthinges nok.	He did not hold back a penny's edge.[30]
	So yede he forth ilke day	He went out this way each day
	That he nevere at home lay -	And was so eager to learn his trade
	So wolde he his mester lere.	That he never idled at home again.
	Bifel it so a strong dere	But it so happened that a bad harvest
	Bigan to rise of korn of bred,	Brought a shortage of grain for bread,
	That Grim ne couthe no god red,	So that Grim could find no good solution
	Hw he sholde his meiné fede;	To how he should feed his household.
	Of Havelok havede he michel drede,	He was very anxious about Havelock,
830	For he was strong and wel mouthe ete	For he was strong and could eat
	More thanne evere mouthe be gete;	More than every mouth there could get.
	Ne he ne mouthe on the se take	Nor could Grim catch on the sea
	Neyther lenge ne thornbake,	Either cod or skate,
	Ne non other fish that douthe	Nor any other fish that would serve
	His meyné feden with he mouthe.	To feed his family.
	Of Havelok he havede kare,	He was very worried about Havelock
	Hwilgat that he micthe fare.	And how he might fare.
	Of his children was him nouth;	He did not think of his other children;
	On Havelok was al hise thouth,	All of his thoughts were on Havelock,
840	And seyde, "Havelok, dere sone,	And he said, "Havelock, dear son,
	I wene that we deye mone	I fear that we must all die from hunger,
	For hunger, this dere is so strong,	For this famine is so bad
	And hure mete is uten long.	And our food is long gone.
	Betere is that thu henne gonge	It would be better if you go on
	Than thu here dwelle longe -	Than to stay here for long.
	Hethen thou mayt gangen to late;	You might leave here too late.
	Thou canst ful wel the ricthe gate	You know very well the right way
	To Lincolne, the gode boru -	To Lincoln, the fine town,
	Thou havest it gon ful ofte thoru.	For you have been there often enough.
850	Of me ne is me nouth a slo.	As for me, my efforts aren't worth a bean.

[30] *A ferthinges nok*: A farthing was a quarter of a penny and the smallest coin. TEAMS explains that the idiom both meant 'to the last penny' and referred to the illegal practice of clipping the edges of coins to sell the silver as bullion. For this reason most modern coins have raised edges.

	Betere is that thu thider go,	It's better that you go there,
	For ther is mani god man inne;	For there are many good men in town
	Ther thou mayt thi mete winne.	And you might be able to earn your dinner there.
	But wo is me thou art so naked,	But woe is me! You are so poorly dressed,
	Of mi seyl I wolde thee were maked	I would rather take my sail and make
	A cloth thou mithest inne gongen,	Some clothing you can go in, son,
	Sone, no cold that thu ne fonge."	So that you need not face the cold."
	He tok the sheres of the nayl	He took the scissors off the nail,
	And made him a covel of the sayl,	And made him a cloak from the sail,
860	And Havelok dide it sone on.	And then put it on Havelock.
	Havede he neyther hosen ne shon,	He had neither hose nor shoes,
	Ne none kines other wede:	Nor any other kind of clothing.
	To Lincolne barfot he yede.	He walked barefoot to Lincoln.
	Hwan he cam ther, he was ful wil -	When he arrived there, he was at a loss.
	Ne havede he no frend to gangen til.	He had no friend to go to.
	Two dayes ther fastinde he yede,	For two days he wandered there fasting,
	That non for his werk wolde him fede.	For no one would feed him for his work.
	The thridde day herde he calle:	The third day he heard a call,
	"Bermen, bermen, hider forth alle!"	"Porters, porters, come here, all!"
870	Poure that on fote yede	The poor who went on foot
	Sprongen forth so sparke on glede,	Sprang forth like sparks from coals.
	Havelok shof dun nyne or ten	Havelock shoved aside nine or ten,
	Rith amidewarde the fen,	Right into the muddy swamp,
	And stirte forth to the kok,	And started forward to the cook.
	Ther the erles mete he tok	There he took charge of the earl's food
	That he bouthe at the brigge:	Which he was given at the bridge.
	The bermen let he alle ligge,	He left the other porters lying
	And bar the mete to the castel,	And delivered the food to the castle,
	And gat him there a ferthing wastel.	Where he was given a penny cake.[31]
880	Thet other day kepte he ok	The next day again he eagerly kept
	Swithe yerne the erles kok,	A lookout for the earl's cook,
	Til that he say him on the brigge,	Until he saw him on the bridge
	And bi him many fishes ligge.	Where many fish lay beside him.
	The herles mete havede he bouth	He had bought the earl's provisions
	Of Cornwalie and kalde oft:	From Cornwall, and continually called,
	"Bermen, bermen, hider swithe!"	"Porters, porters, come quickly!"
	Havelok it herde and was ful blithe	Havelock heard it and was glad
	That he herde "bermen" calle.	That he heard 'porters' called.
	Alle made he hem dun falle	He made everyone fall down
890	That in his gate yeden and stode -	Who walked or stood in his way,
	Wel sixtene laddes gode.	A good sixteen strong lads.
	Als he lep the kok til,	As he leaped up to the cook,
	He shof hem alle upon an hyl -	He shoved them down the hillside,
	Astirte til him with his rippe	Hurrying to him with his basket,
	And bigan the fish to kippe.	And began to scoop up the fish.
	He bar up wel a carte lode	He bore up a good cartload
	Of segges, laxes, of playces brode,	Of squid, salmon, and broad flatfish,
	Of grete laumprees and of eles.	Of great lampreys, and of eels.
	Sparede he neyther tos ne heles	He did not spare heel or toe

[31] *Ferthing wastel*: A loaf of bread baked from the finest white flour, the same that Chaucer's prioress extravagantly feeds her dogs with. During a food shortage it is a considerable treat.

900	Til that he to the castel cam,	Until he came to the castle,
	That men fro him his birthene nam.	Where men took his burden from him.
	Than men haveden holpen him doun	When men had helped take down
	With the birthene of his croun,	The load off his shoulders,
	The kok stod and on him low,	The cook stood and smiled on him
	And thoute him stalworthe man ynow,	And decided he was a sturdy enough man
	And seyde, "Wiltu ben wit me?	And said, "Will you stay with me?
	Gladlike wile ich feden thee:	I will be glad to keep you.
	Wel is set the mete thu etes,	The food you eat is well earned,
	And the hire that thu getes!"	As well as the wages you get!"
910	"Goddot!" quoth he, "leve sire,	Havelock said, "God knows, dear sir,
	Bidde ich you non other hire,	I will ask you for no other pay
	But yeveth me inow to ete -	But that you give me enough to eat.
	Fir and water I wile you fete,	I will fetch you firewood and water,
	The fir blowe and ful wele maken;	Raise the fire, and make it blaze.
	Stickes kan ich breken and kraken,	I can break and crack sticks,
	And kindlen ful wel a fyr,	And kindle a fire expertly,
	And maken it to brennen shir.	And make it burn brightly.
	Ful wel kan ich cleven shides,	I know well how to split kindling
	Eles to turven of here hides;	And how to skin eels from their hides.
920	Ful wel kan ich dishes swilen,	I can wash dishes well,
	And don al that ye evere wilen."	And do all that you ever want."
	Quoth the kok, "Wile I no more!	The cook said, "I can't ask for more!
	Go thu yunder and sit thore,	Go over there and sit,
	And I shal yeve the ful fair bred,	And I will bring you some good bread,
	And made the broys in the led.	And make you soup in the kettle.
	Sit now doun and et ful yerne -	Sit down now and eat your fill.
	Datheit hwo the mete werne!"	Damn whoever begrudges you food!"
	Havelok sette him dun anon	Havelock sat down at once,
	Al so stille als a ston,	As still as a stone,
930	Til he havede ful wel eten;	Until he had fully eaten.
	Tho havede Havelok fayre geten.	Havelock had done well then!
	Hwan he havede eten inow,	When he had eaten enough,
	He kam to the wele, water up drow,	He came to the well, drew up the water,
	And filde ther a michel so -	And filled a large tub there.
	Bad he non ageyn him go,	He asked no one to go with him,
	But bitwen his hondes he bar it in,	But he carried it in between his hands,
	Al him one, to the kichin.	All by himself, to the kitchen.
	Bad he non him water to fett,	He asked no one to fetch water for him,
	Ne fro brigge to bere the mete.	Nor to bring provisions from the bridge.
940	He bar the turves, he bar the star,	He bore turf for fuel, and grass for kindling.[32]
	The wode fro the brigge he bar,	He carried wood from the bridge;
	Al that evere shulden he nytte,	All that they might ever need,
	Al he drow and al he citte -	He hauled and he cut.
	Wolde he nevere haven rest	He would never have any more rest
	More than he were a best.	Than if he were a beast.
	Of alle men was he mest meke,	Of all men he was the most modest,
	Lauhwinde ay and blithe of speke;	Always laughing and friendly in speech.
	Evere he was glad and blithe -	He was forever glad and pleasant;

[32] *He bar the turves, he bar the star*: TEAMS explains that *turves* were cuts of turf or peat moss which were dried and then burned for fuel. *Star* was wild grass (possibly genus *hypoxis* or *aletris*), used for kindling.

	His sorwe he couthe ful wel mithe.	He could fully hide his sorrows.[33]
950	It ne was non so litel knave	There was no boy so little
	For to leyken ne for to plawe,	Who wanted to sport or have fun
	That he ne wolde with him pleye.	That he would not play with him.
	The children that yeden in the weie	For all the children who came his way,
	Of him he deden al here wille,	He did everything they wanted,
	And with him leykeden here fille.	And played with them to their fill.
	Him loveden alle, stille and bolde,	He was loved by all, meek and bold,
	Knictes, children, yunge and holde -	Knights, children, young, and old.
	Alle him loveden that him sowen,	All took to him who saw him,
	Bothen heye men and lowe.	Both high and low men.
960	Of him ful wide the word sprong,	Word spread far and wide of him,
	Hw he was mikel, hw he was strong,	How he was great, how he was strong,
	Hw fayr man God him havede maked,	How handsome a man God had made him,
	But on that he was almest naked:	Except that he was almost naked.
	For he ne havede nouth to shride	For he had nothing to wear
	But a kovel ful unride,	Except a rough cloak,
	That was ful and swithe wicke;	Which was so dirty and foul
	Was it nouth worth a fir-sticke.	That it was not worth a stick of firewood.
	The cok bigan of him to rewe	The cook began to feel sorry for him
	And bouthe him clothes al spannewe:	And brought him brand new clothes.
970	He bouthe him bothe hosen and shon,	He bought him both hose and shoes,
	And sone dide him dones on.	And soon made him put them on.
	Hwan he was clothed, osed, and shod,	When he was clothed, hosed, and in shoes
	Was non so fayr under God,	There was no one so handsome under God
	That evere yete in erthe were,	Who was ever yet on earth,
	Non that evere moder bere;	No one that any mother ever bore.
	It was nevere man that yemede	There was never a man who ruled
	In kinneriche that so wel semede	A kingdom who looked so much
	King or cayser for to be,	Like a king or emperor
	Than he was shrid, so semede he;	As he appeared when he was clothed.
980	For thanne he weren alle samen	For when they were all together
	At Lincolne at the gamen,	In Lincoln at the games,
	And the erles men woren al thore,	And the earl's men were all there,
	Than was Havelok bi the shuldren more	Havelock was taller by a head
	Than the meste that ther kam:	Than the greatest who were there.
	In armes him noman nam	In wrestling no man grappled him
	That he doune sone ne caste.	Whom he didn't soon throw down.
	Havelok stod over hem als a mast;	Havelock stood over them like a mast.
	Als he was heie, als he was long,	As high as he was, as long as he was,
	He was bothe stark and strong -	He was just as hardy and strong.
990	In Engelond non hise per	In England he had no equal in strength
	Of strengthe that evere kam him ner.	Among whoever came near him.
	Als he was strong, so was he softe;	As much as he was strong, he was gentle.
	They a man him misdede ofte,	Though other men often mistreated him,
	Neveremore he him misseyde,	He never insulted them
	Ne hond on him with yvele leyde.	Or laid a hand on them in malice.
	Of bodi was he mayden clene;	His body was pure of maidens;

[33] *His sorwe he couthe ful wel mithe*: Medieval England was not yet the time of the "stiff upper lip," and so the comment that "he could hide his feelings well" is odd. Presumably the poet is both praising Havelock for not burdening others with his tragic past and reminding the audience that he knows his true heritage.

	Nevere yete in game, ne in grene,	Never in fun or in lust would he
	With hire ne wolde he leyke ne lye,	Flirt or lie with a loose woman,[34]
	No more than it were a strie.	No more than if she were an old witch.
1000	In that time al Hengelond	In that time Earl Godrich
	Th'erl Godrich havede in his hond,	Had all of England in his hand,
	And he gart komen into the tun	And he ordered into the town
	Mani erl and mani barun,	Many earls and many barons,
	And alle that lives were	And all who were alive
	In Englond thanne wer there,	In England then were there,
	That they haveden after sent	For they had been sent for
	To ben ther at the parlement.	To be present at the parliament.[35]
	With hem com mani chambioun,	With them came many champions,
	Mani with ladde, blac and brown,	Many with servants of all sorts,[36]
1010	And fel it so that yungemen,	And so it happened that young men,
	Wel abouten nine or ten,	Well around nine or ten,
	Bigunnen the for to layke.	Began to play sports there.
	Thider komen bothe stronge and wayke,	Both the strong and weak came there.
	Thider komen lesse and more	Both the lesser and greater came
	That in the boru thanne weren thore -	Who were there in the town then:
	Chaunpiouns and starke laddes,	Heroes and rugged lads,
	Bondemen with here gaddes,	And bondsmen with their cattle prods
	Als he comen fro the plow.	Who had just come from the plow.
	There was sembling inow;	The assembly was large enough,
1020	For it ne was non horse-knave,	For there was no stable boy
	Tho thei sholden in honde have,	Who did not come to see the games,
	That he ne kam thider, the leyk to se.	Even if he should have been on duty.
	Biforn here fet thanne lay a tre,	Before their feet they laid a tree,
	And pulten with a mikel ston	Where the strong lads, a good number,
	The starke laddes, ful god won.	Shot-put with a giant stone.
	The ston was mikel and ek gret,	The stone was solid and huge as well,
	And al so hevi so a neth;	And as heavy as an ox.
	Grundstalwyrthe man he sholde be	It would have to be a very hardy man
	That mouthe liften it to his kne;	Who might lift it to his knees.
1030	Was ther neyther clerc ne prest,	There was neither cleric nor priest
	That mithe liften it to his brest.	Who might bring it to his chest.
	Therwit putten the chaumpiouns	With it the athletes shot-put,
	That thider comen with the barouns.	Those who had come with the barons.
	Hwo so mithe putten thore	Whoever there who could throw it
	Biforn another an inch or more,	Further than an inch or more,
	Wore he yung, wore he hold,	Whether he was young or old,

[34] *With hire ne wolde he leyke ne lye*: The *hire* is not clear and may simply be the *mayden* (996). TEAMS suggests that the *hire* is a 'woman for hire,' or at least a promiscuous woman who would frequent men's summer games. Some editors read 'whore,' but there is no consensus that *hire* had this meaning or pronunciation in early ME.

[35] Skeat remarks that a parliament was held in Lincoln in 1300 (note to 1006). Skeat's line numbering slightly differs from that of TEAMS. The poet mentions a summoned assembly in 1002-7 and the *barouns* (1033) whom the athletes accompany, but otherwise ignores any political deliberations. The point is surely that Godrich's cynical 'parliament' is also no more than a display of games.

[36] *Blac and brown*: "Every type of ordinary person." See the note to *Amis and Amiloun* (2474) and *Athelston* (291).

	He was for a kempe told.	Was considered a hero.
	Al so the stoden and ofte stareden,	And so they stood and watched intently,
	The chaumpiouns and ek the ladden,	The athletes and the lads as well,
1040	And he maden mikel strout	And they made a heated argument
	Abouten the altherbeste but,	About who had made the greatest shot.
	Havelok stod and lokede thertil,	Havelock stood and looked at it
	And of puttingge he was ful wil,	But he knew nothing about putting,
	For nevere yete ne saw he or	For he had never seen
	Putten the stone or thanne thor.	Or thrown the stone before then.
	Hise mayster bad him gon therto -	His master told him to go try
	Als he couthe therwith do.	As he was best able to do.
	Tho hise mayster it him bad,	Though his master asked him,
	He was of him sore adrad.	He was sorely doubtful of himself.
1050	Therto he stirte sone anon,	With that, he got up quickly
	And kipte up that hevi ston	And plucked up that heavy stone
	That he sholde putten withe;	Which he was supposed to put.
	He putte at the firste sithe,	On the first try he threw it
	Over alle that ther wore	Farther than anyone who was there,
	Twelve fote and sumdel more.	Twelve feet and somewhat more.
	The chaumpiouns that put sowen;	When the champions saw that shot,
	Shuldreden he ilc other and lowen.	They jostled each other and laughed.
	Wolden he nomore to putting gange,	They would not put any more, only saying
	But seyde, "Thee dwellen her to longe!"	"We've hung around here too long!"[37]
1060	This selkouth mithe nouth ben hyd:	This marvel could not be hidden for long.
	Ful sone it was ful loude kid	Very soon the news was loudly told
	Of Havelok, hw he warp the ston	About Havelock, how he threw the stone
	Over the laddes everilkon,	Farther than each of the lads;
	Hw he was fayr, hw he was long,	How he was handsome, how he was tall,
	Hw he was with, hw he was strong;	How he was manly, how he was strong.
	Thoruth England yede the speche,	Throughout England the news spread,
	Hw he was strong and ek meke;	How he was mighty and gentle as well.
	In the castel, up in the halle,	In the castle, up in the hall,
	The knithes speken therof alle,	The knights talked about it all
1070	So that Godrich it herde wel:	So that Godrich heard it well.
	The speken of Havelok, everi del -	They spoke of Havelock, every detail—
	Hw he was strong man and hey,	How he was a strong man, and high,
	Hw he was strong, and ek fri,	How he was strong and generous too,
	And thouthte Godrich, "Thoru this knave	And Godrich thought, "Through this peasant
	Shal ich Engelond al have,	I will have all England
	And mi sone after me;	For myself and for my son after,
	For so I wile that it be.	For it's my wish to have it happen.
	The King Athelwald me dide swere	King Athelwald made me swear
	Upon al the messe gere	Upon all the mass finery
1080	That I shude his douther yeve	That I would give his daughter
	The hexte that mithe live,	The *highest* that might live,
	The beste, the fairest, the strangest ok -	The best, the fairest, and the strongest as well.
	That gart he me sweren on the bok.	He made me swear that on the Bible.
	Hwere mithe I finden ani so hey,	Where could I find anyone so 'high'
	So Havelok is, or so sley?	As Havelock is, or so able?
	Thou I southe hethen into Inde,	If I searched from here to India,

[37] *Thee*: Some editors read *we* in the manuscript here, as there is some textual confusion between *þe* and *þe*.

	So fayr, so strong, ne mithe I finde.	I would not find someone so fair, so mighty.
	Havelok is that ilke knave	Havelock is the very boy
	That shal Goldeboru have!"	That Goldeboro will have!"
1090	This thouthe with trechery,	He schemed this out with treachery,
	With traysoun, and wit felony;	With treason, and with felony,
	For he wende that Havelok wore	For he surmised that Havelock was
	Sum cherles sone and no more;	Some peasant's son and no more.
	Ne shulde he haven of Engellond	Nor would he get one furrow
	Onlepi foru in his hond	Of England into his hand
	With hire that was therof eyr,	With Godeboro, who was the rightful heir,
	That bothe was god and swithe fair.	Who was both good and fair,
	He wende that Havelok wer a thral,	For he assumed that Havelock was a serf.
	Therthoru he wende haven al	For this reason he planned to keep all
1100	In Engelond, that hire rith was.	Of England, which was her right.
	He was werse than Sathanas	He was worse than Satan,
	That Jhesu Crist in erthe stoc.	Who Jesus Christ locked in the earth.
	Hanged worthe he on an hok!	He deserves to be hanged on an oak!
	After Goldeboru sone he sende,	Soon after he sent for Goldeboro,
	That was bothe fayr and hende,	Who was both beautiful and courteous,
	And dide hire to Lincolne bringe.	And had her brought to Lincoln.
	Belles dede he ageyn hire ringen,	He had bells for her rung alongside,
	And joie he made hire swithe mikel;	And made great celebration over her,
	But netheless he was ful swikel.	But nonetheless he was full of deceit.
1110	He saide that he sholde hire yeve	He said that he would give her
	The fayreste man that mithe live.	The fairest man that might live.
	She answerede and saide anon,	She answered at once and said,
	By Crist and bi Seint Johan,	By Christ and by Saint John,
	That hire sholde noman wedde	That she would wed no man,
	Ne noman bringen hire to bedde	Nor would any man bring her to bed
	But he were king or kinges eyr,	Unless he were a king or king's heir,
	Were he nevere man so fayr.	No matter how fair he was.
	Godrich the erl was swithe wroth	Godrich the earl was furious
	That she swor swilk an oth,	That she had sworn such an vow
1120	And saide, "Whether thou wilt be	And said, "Do you think you will be
	Quen and levedi over me?	Queen and lady over me?
	Thou shalt haven a gadeling -	You will have a beggar.
	Ne shalt thou haven non other king!	You will not have any other king!
	Thee shal spusen mi cokes knave -	You will marry my cook's servant.
	Ne shalt thou non other louered have.	You will not have any other lord!
	Datheit that thee other yeve	Damn whoever who gives you someone else
	Everemore hwil I live!	While I am alive!
	Tomorwe ye sholen ben weddeth,	Tomorrow you will be married
	And maugre thin togidere beddeth.	And bedded together, in spite of you!"
1130	Goldeboru gret and yaf hire ille;	Goldeboro cried and was in distress.
	She wolde ben ded bi hire wille.	She would have died if she had her will.
	On the morwen hwan day was sprungen	In the morning, when day had sprung
	And day-belle at kirke rungen,	And the early bells at the church were rung,
	After Havelok sente that Judas	That Judas, who was worse than Satan,
	That werse was thanne Sathanas,	Sent for Havelock and said,
	And saide, "Maister, wilte wif?"	"Mister, would you like a wife?"
	"Nay," quoth Havelok, "bi my lif!	"No," cried Havelock, "not by my life!
	Hwat sholde ich with wif do?	What could I do with a wife?
	I ne may hire fede ne clothe ne sho.	I cannot give her food, clothes, or shoes.
1140	Wider sholde ich wimman bringe?	Where would I bring a woman?

	I ne have none kines thinge -	I have nothing for a home.
	I ne have hws, I ne have cote,	I have no house, I have no cottage,
	Ne I ne have stikke, I ne have sprote,	I have no sticks, I have no twigs for a fire,
	I ne have neyther bred ne sowel,	I have neither bread nor sauce,[38]
	Ne cloth but of an hold whit covel.	No clothing except an old white cloak.
	This clothes that ich onne have	These clothes that I have on
	Aren the kokes and ich his knave!"	Are the cook's, and I am his servant."
	Godrich stirt up and on him dong,	Godrich jumped up and struck him
	With dintes swithe hard and strong,	With hard and strong blows
1150	And seyde, "But thou hire take	And said, "Unless you take
	That I wole yeven thee to make,	Who I give you as a mate,
	I shal hangen thee ful heye,	I will hang you very high,
	Or I shal thristen uth thin heie."	Or I will gouge out your eyes!"
	Havelok was one and was odrat,	Havelock was alone and was afraid,
	And grauntede him al that he bad.	And agreed to all that he ordered.
	Tho sende he after hire sone,	Then Godrich sent for Goldeboro at once,
	The fayrest wymman under mone,	The fairest woman under the moon,
	And seyde til hire, fals and slike,	And said to her, false and slick,
	That wicke thrall that foule swike:	That wicked oaf, that foul traitor:
1160	"But thu this man understonde,	"Unless you accept this man,
	I shall flemen thee of londe;	I will banish you from the land,
	Or thou shal to the galwes renne,	Or you will be rushed to the gallows,
	And ther thou shalt in a fir brenne."	And there you will burn in a fire."
	Sho was adrad for he so threttе,	She was terrified, for he threatened her so,
	And durste nouth the spusing lette;	And she dared not obstruct the marriage.
	But they hire likede swithe ille,	Though she was very unhappy,
	Sho thouthe it was Godes wille -	She thought it was God's will,
	God that makes to growen the korn,	God, who makes the grain grow
	Formede hire wimman to be born.	And who created her to be born a woman.
1170	Hwan he havede don him, for drede,	When he had compelled them by fear
	That he sholde hire spusen and fede,	That he should marry and keep her,
	And that she sholde til him holde,	And that she should hold to him,
	Ther weren penies thicke tolde	There were thick piles of pennies counted,
	Mikel plenté, upon the bok -	A great plenty, upon the mass book.
	He ys hire yaf and she is tok.	He gave her tokens and she accepted his.[39]
	He weren spused fayre and well,	They were wedded fair and clear.
	The messe he dede, everi del	The mass was performed, every part
	That fel to spusing, an god clek -	Related to marriage, by a good cleric—
	The erchebishop uth of Yerk,	The archbishop of York,
1180	That kam to the parlement,	Who came to the assembly
	Als God him havede thider sent.	As God had sent him there.

[38] *Bred ne sowel*: Literally, bread and sauce or anything eaten with bread, but the pairing could have the sense of 'bread and butter,' meaning that Havelock has no goods to make a household with.

[39] *He ys hire yaf and she is tok*: This opaque line has numerous explanations. Skeat posits that *he* is Godard, who has given Goldeboru the 'thick pile of pennies' to ship her off (note to 1174). Garbaty suggests it is a holdover of the Anglo-Saxon *morgengifu*, a present made by the husband to the bride the next morning, which could be made early as a sign of trust, as in the OE *Apollonius of Tyre* (Garbaty's note to 1173-4). TEAMS gives French & Hale's explanation that the money is partly the clerk's payment and partly the bride's dowry (118). The *ys* may simply be Havelock's public vows of promise.The Wife of Bath is married at the "chirche dore" (*CT* III.6), and medieval weddings were community events, normally appended to the church service (see line 1183).

	Hwan he weren togidere in Godes lawe,	When they were joined under God's law,
	That the folc ful wel it sawe,	So that the people saw it fully,
	He ne wisten what he mouthen,	Havelock did not know what to do,
	Ne he ne wisten what hem douthe,	Nor did he know where to turn for help,
	Ther to dwellen, or thenne to gonge.	Where to live, or where to go.
	Ther ne wolden he dwellen longe,	They could not stay there long,
	For he wisten and ful wel sawe	For he understood and saw clearly
	That Godrich hem hatede - the devel him hawe!	That Godrich hated them –the Devil take him!
1190	And if he dwelleden ther outh -	And if they stayed there unprotected,
	That fel Havelok ful wel on thouth -	Havelock worried about foul play.
	Men sholde don his leman shame,	Men might shame his beloved,
	Or elles bringen in wicke blame,	Or else disgrace her reputation.[40]
	That were him levere to ben ded.	To him it would be better to be dead.
	Forthi he token another red:	For this reason he took another course,
	That thei sholden thenne fle	That they should flee from there
	Til Grim and til hise sone thre -	To Grim and his three sons.
	Ther wenden he altherbest to spede,	He thought it best to hurry there
	Hem forto clothe and for to fede.	In order to clothe and feed themselves.
1200	The lond he token under fote -	They took to the land on foot,
	Ne wisten he non other bote -	For he knew no other solution,
	And helden ay the rith sti	And they kept the right route
	Til he komen to Grimesby.	Until they came to Grimsby.
	Thanne he komen there thanne was Grim ded -	When they arrived Grim was dead.
	Of him ne haveden he no red.	Havelock had had no word about him.
	But hise children alle fyve,	But of his five children,
	Alle weren yet on live,	All were still alive
	That ful fayre ayen hem neme	And took them in very courteously
	Hwan he wisten that he keme,	When they learned that he had come,
1210	And maden joie swithe mikel -	And they made a great celebration.
	Ne weren he nevere ayen hem fikel.	They were never fickle to them!
	On knes ful fayre he hem setten	They set themselves on their knees
	And Havelok swithe fayre gretten,	And greeted Havelock elegantly,
	And seyden, "Welkome, louered dere!	And said, "Welcome, dear lord!
	And welkome be thi fayre fere!	And welcome to your fair companion!
	Blessed be that ilke thrawe	Blessed be that very moment
	That thou hire toke in Godes lawe!	When you took her in God's law!
	Wel is hus we sen thee on live.	It is good for us to see you alive.
	Thou mithe us bothe selle and yeve;	We are yours to sell or give away.
1220	Thou mayt us bothe yeve and selle,	You may both give us or trade us,
	With that thou wilt here dwelle.	So long as you will stay here.
	We haven, louerd, alle gode -	We have, lord, every good thing:
	Hors, and neth, and ship on flode,	Horses and oxen, and a ship on the sea,
	Gold and silver and michel auchte,	Gold and silver, and many things
	That Grim ure fader us bitauchte.	That Grim our father left to us.
	Gold and silver and other fe	He told us to pass on to you
	Bad he us bitaken thee.	Gold and silver and all other goods.
	We haven sheep, we haven swin;	We have sheep, we have pigs;

[40] Garbaty explains that Havelock is perhaps worried about Godrich exercising the *jus primae noctis*, the lord's legal right to spend the first night with a vassal's bride (note to 1192). Despite little historical evidence that the practice ever actually existed in Europe, it is a recurringly attractive theme in literature from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* to *The Marriage of Figaro*.

	Bileve her, louerd, and al be thin!	Remain here, lord, and all will be yours.
1230	Tho shalt ben louerd, thou shalt ben syre,	You will be lord, you will be sire,
	And we sholen serven thee and hire;	And we will serve you and her.
	And hure sistres sholen do	And our sisters will do
	Al that evere biddes sho:	All that she ever bids.
	He sholen hire clothes washen and wringen,	They will wash and dry her clothes,
	And to hondes water bringen;	And bring water to her hands.
	He sholen bedden hire and thee,	They will make a bed for you and her,
	For levedi wile we that she be."	If that is our lady's will."
	Hwan he this joie haveden maked,	When they had begun the celebration,
	Sithen stikes broken and kraked,	Kindling was cracked and split,
1240	And the fir brouth on brenne;	And the fire was stoked into flames.
	Ne was ther spared gos ne henne,	There was no goose or hen spared,
	Ne the hende ne the drake:	Neither duck nor drake.
	Mete he deden plenté make;	They prepared plenty of meat
	Ne wantede there no god mete,	And did not lack for any good food.
	Wyn and ale deden he fete,	They fetched wine and ale,
	And hem made glade and blithe;	And made the couple glad and at ease,
	Wesseyl ledden he fele sithe.	And drank to their health many times.[41]
	On the nith als Goldeboru lay,	Yet during the night as Goldeboro lay in bed,
	Sory and sorwful was she ay,	She continually felt sorry and sad,
1250	For she wende she were biswike,	For she thought she had been mistreated,
	That she were yeven unkyndelike.	That she was married out of her kind.
	O nith saw she therinne a lith,	But one night she saw in there a light,
	A swithe fayr, a swithe bryth -	So fair, and so clear—
	Al so brith, all so shir	As bright, as shining,
	So it were a blase of fir.	As if it were a blaze of fire.
	She lokede noth and ek south,	She looked north and south as well
	And saw it comen ut of his mouth	And saw it coming out of his mouth
	That lay bi hire in the bed.	As he lay by her in the bed.
	No ferlike thou she were adred!	It is no wonder that she was afraid!
1260	Thouthe she, "What may this bimene?	She thought, "What does this mean?
	He beth heyman yet, als I wene:	He will be a nobleman yet, I believe.
	He beth heyman er he be ded!"	He will be a nobleman before he is dead!"
	On hise shuldre, of gold red	On his shoulder, in red gold,
	She saw a swithe noble croiz;	She saw a majestic cross.
	Of an angel she herde a voyz:	From an angel she heard a voice:
	"Goldeboru, lat thi sorwe be!	"Goldeboro, let your sorrows pass!
	For Havelok, that haveth spuset thee,	For Havelock, who has married you,
	He, kinges sone and kinges eyr,	Is a king's son and a king's heir.
	That bikenneth that croiz so fayr	That is the meaning of his fair cross.
1270	It bikenneth more - that he shal	It means more: that he shall
	Denemark haven and Englond al.	Have Denmark and all England.
	He shal ben king strong and stark,	He will be a king, strong and bold,
	Of Engelond and Denemark -	Of England and Denmark.
	That shal thu wit thin eyne seen,	You will see this with your eyes,
	And tho shalt quen and levedi ben!"	And you will be a queen and lady!"
	Thanne she havede herd the stevene	When she had heard the voice

[41] *Wesseyl*: 'Wassail' derives from Old Norse *ves heill* and perhaps OE *wes þu hal*, both meaning 'Be healthy.' Although the Romans placed bits of toast into wine to flavor it or mellow the acidity of cheap wines, 'toast' was not used in this sense until early Modern English.

	Of the angel uth of hevene,	Of the angel from Heaven,
	She was so fele sithes blithe	She was glad so many times over
	That she ne mithe hire joie mythe,	That she could not contain her joy,
1280	But Havelok sone anon she kiste,	But at once kissed Havelock,
	And he slep and nouth ne wiste	Who slept and knew nothing
	Hwat that aungel havede seyd.	Of what the angel had said.
	Of his slep anon he brayd,	In a while he started out of his sleep
	And seide, "Lemman, slepes thou?	And said, "Dear, are you asleep?
	A selkuth drem dremede me now -	I just dreamed an amazing dream;
	Herkne now what me haveth met.	Listen now to what happened.
	Me thouthe I was in Denemark set,	It seemed as though I was in Denmark,
	But on on the moste hil	But on one of the highest hills
	That evere yete cam I til.	That I ever came to yet.
1290	It was so hey that I wel mouthe	It was so high that it seemed to me
	Al the werd se, als me thouthe.	I could see all the world.
	Als I sat upon that lowe	As I sat upon that summit,
	I bigan Denemark for to awe,	I began to embrace Denmark,
	The borwes and the castles stronge;	The towns and the strong castles,
	And mine armes weren so longe	And my arms were so long
	That I fadmede al at ones,	That I held everything in Denmark
	Denemark with mine longe bones;	At once with my long limbs!
	And thanne I wolde mine armes drawe	And then I drew my arms back
	Til me and hom for to have,	Toward myself and to lift up
1300	Al that evere in Denemark liveden	Everyone who ever lived in Denmark,
	On mine armes faste clyveden;	Holding them fast within my arms.
	And the stronge castles alle	And all the strong castles
	On knes bigunnen for to falle -	Began to fall to their knees,
	The keyes fellen at mine fet.	And the keys fell at my feet.
	Another drem dremede me ek:	I dreamed another dream too,
	That ich fley over the salte se	That I flew over the salty sea to England,
	Til Engeland, and al with me	And everyone came with me
	That evere was in Denemark lyves	Who was alive in Denmark,
	But bondemen and here wives;	Except for bondsmen and their wives.
1310	And that ich com til Engelond -	And when I came to England
	Al closede it intil min hond,	I enclosed it all in my hand,
	And, Goldeborw, I gaf thee.	And Goldeboro, I gave it to you.
	Deus! lemman, what may this be?"	My God! Dear, what does this mean?"
	Sho answerede and seyde sone:	She answered and soon explained,
	"Jesu Crist, that made mone,	"Jesus Christ, who made the moon,
	Thine dremes turne to joye	Will turn your dreams to joy.
	. . . . .	. . . . . .[42]
	That wite thu that sittes in trone!	He who sits on the throne will lead you.
	Ne non strong, king ne caysere	There are none so mighty, king or emperor,
	So thou shalt be, fo thou shalt bere	As you will be, for you will wear
1320	In Engelond corune yet.	A crown in England yet.
	Denemark shal knele to thi fet;	Denmark shall kneel at your feet,
	Alle the castles that aren therinne	And you will, dear, win in full
	Shaltou, lemman, ful wel winne.	All the castles that are in it.
	I woth so wel so ich it sowe,	I know it as well as if I had seen it.

[42] A few lines are missing or defective here, as there is no rhyme for *joye* or *trone*. The referent in 1317 is likely Christ.

	To thee shole comen heye and lowe,	High and low shall come to you,
	And alle that in Denemark wone -	And all who live in Denmark:
	Em and brother, fader and sone,	Uncle and brother, father and son,
	Erl and baroun, dreng and thayn,	Earl and baron, vassal and retainer,
	Knightes and burgeys and sweyn -	Knights and townspeople and servants,[43]
1330	And mad king heyelike and wel.	And you will be made king with great honor.
	Denemark shal be thin evere ilc del -	Denmark will be yours, every bit.
	Have thou nouth theroffe douthe,	Do not have any doubt about it,
	Nouth the worth of one nouthe;	Not the value of a nut!
	Theroffe withinne the firste yer	For within one year
	Shalt thou ben king of evere il del.	You will be ruler of every part.
	But do now als I wile rathe:	But now do as I will advise you:
	Nim in wit lithe to Denemark bathe,	Let's both go to Denmark together
	And do thou nouth on frest this fare -	And don't put off this task.
	Lith and selthe felawes are.	Ambition and success go together!
1340	For shal ich nevere blithe be	For I will never be at peace
	Til I with eyen Denemark se,	Until I see Denmark with my own eyes,
	For ich woth that al the lond	Because I know that all the land
	Shalt thou haven in thin hond.	Will be yours in your hand.
	Prey Grimes sones alle thre,	Insist to all three of Grim's sons
	That he wenden forth with the;	That they journey forth with you;
	I wot he wilen the nouth werne -	I know they will not refuse.
	With the wende shulen he yerne,	They will go eagerly with the wind,
	For he loven thee hertelike.	For they love you with all their hearts.
	Thou maght til he aren quike,	You can tell that they are quick to act,
1350	Hwore-so he o worde aren;	Wherever in the world they might be.
	There ship thou do hem swithe yaren,	Have them prepare the ship quickly,
	And loke that thou dwelle nouth -	And see that you don't delay.
	Dwelling haveth ofte scathe wrouth."	Procrastinating often brings harm."
	Hwan Havelok herde that she radde,	When Havelock had heard what she counseled,
	Sone it was day, sone he him cladde,	Soon it was day, soon he dressed himself,
	And sone to the kirke yede	And soon he went to the church
	Or he dide any other dede,	Before he did any other thing.
	And bifor the Rode bigan falle,	He fell before the Cross and began to
	"Croiz" and "Crist" bi to kalle,	Call upon Cross and Christ,
1360	And seyde, "Louerd, that all weldes -	And said, "Lord, who rules all,
	Wind and water, wodes and feldes -	Wind and water, woods and fields,
	For the holy milce of you,	For the sake of Your holy kindness,
	Have merci of me, Louerd, now!	Have mercy on me now, Lord!
	And wreke me yet on mi fo	And avenge me yet on my foe
	That ich saw biforn min eyne slo	Whom I saw slaying my sisters
	Mine sistres with a knif,	With a knife, before my own eyes,
	And sithen wolde me mi lyf	And then would have taken my life,
	Have reft, for in the se	For he ordered Grim
	Bad he Grim have drenched me.	To drown me in the sea.
1370	He hath mi lond with mikel unrith,	He holds my land with great wrong,
	With michel wrong, with mikel plith,	With great injustice, and with great harm,
	For I ne misdede him nevere nouth,	For I never wronged him in any way

[43] *Burgeys*: A burgess could be a town magistrate, but often simply meant an urban citizen with a trade. As a member of the nascent middle class the word also led to PDE *bourgeois* (from Old French *borjois*, 'town-dweller').

	And haved me to sorwe brouth.	And he has brought me to sorrow!
	He haveth me do mi mete to thigge,	He drove me to beg for my food
	And ofte in sorwe and pine ligge.	And to lie in constant sorrow and pain.
	Louerd, have merci of me,	Lord, have mercy on me,
	And late me wel passe the se -	And though I have fears and worries,
	Though ihc have theroffe douthe and kare,	Let me cross the sea safely
	Withuten stormes overfare,	And pass over without storms
1380	That I ne drenched therine	So that I will not be drowned in the water,
	Ne forfaren for no sinne,	Nor shipwrecked because of any sin,
	And bringe me wel to the lond	And bring me sound to the land
	That Godard haldes in his hond,	That Godard grips in his hand,
	That is mi rith, everi del -	Which is my right, every bit.
	Jesu Crist, thou wost it wel!"	Jesus Christ, You know it well!"
	Thanne he havede his bede seyd,	When he had said his prayer
	His offrende on the auter leyd,	And laid his offering on the altar,
	His leve at Jhesu Crist he tok,	He took his leave of Jesus Christ
	And at his swete moder ok,	And His sweet mother Mary also,
1390	And at the Croiz that he biforn lay;	And of the Cross that he lay before.
	Sithen yede sore grotinde awey.	Then he went away, weeping bitterly.
	Hwan he com hom, he wore yare,	When he came home they were ready,
	Grimes sones, for to fare	All of Grim's sons, to set out
	Into the se, fishes to gete,	Into the sea to get fish
	That Havelok mithe wel of ete.	So that Havelock might eat well.
	But Avelok thoughte al another:	But Havelock had something else in mind.
	First he kalde the heldeste brother,	First he called the eldest brother,
	Roberd the Rede, bi his name,	Robert the Red, by his name,
	Wiliam Wenduth and Huwe Raven,	And then William Wende and Hugh Raven,
1400	Grimes sones alle thre -	All three of Grim's sons,
	And seyde, "Lithes now alle to me;	And said, "Listen now to me all!
	Louerdinges, ich wile you shewe	Lordings, I will recount to you
	A thing of me that ye wel knewe.	Something about me you know well.
	Mi fader was king of Denshe lond -	My father was king of Danish lands.
	Denemark was al in his hond	All of Denmark was in his hand
	The day that he was quik and ded.	The day that he was alive and dead.
	But thanne havede he wicke red,	But then he followed wicked counsel,
	That he me and Denemark al	So that I and all of Denmark
	And mine sistres bitawte a thral;	And my sisters were entrusted to a servant.
1410	A develes lime he hus bitawhte,	He trusted an instrument of the devil with us
	And al his lond and al hise authe,	And all his land and all that he owned,
	For I saw that fule fend	For I saw that foul fiend
	Mine sistres slo with hise hend:	Slay my sisters with his hand!
	First he shar a two here throtes,	First he cut their throats in two,
	And sithen hem al to grotes,	And then hacked them into bits,
	And sithen bad in the se	And then ordered Grim, your father,
	Grim, youre fader, drenchen me.	To drown me in the sea.
	Deplike dede he him swere	He had him solemnly swear
	On bok that he sholde me bere	On the Bible that he would take me
1420	Unto the se and drenchen ine,	Into the water and sink me in it,
	And wolde taken on him the sinne.	And he would take on himself the sin.
	But Grim was wis and swithe hende -	But Grim was wise and kindly,
	Wolde he nouth his soule shende;	And he would not stain his own soul.
	Levere was him to be forsworen	He would rather be falsely sworn
	Than drenchen me and ben forlorn.	Than drown me and be damned himself.
	But sone bigan he forto fle	At once he prepared to flee

	Fro Denemark for to berthen me.	From Denmark in order to protect me,
	For yif ich havede ther ben funden,	For if I had been found there,
	Havede he ben slayn or harde bunden,	He would have been slain or tightly bound,
1430	And heye ben hanged on a tre -	And hanged high on a tree!
	Havede go for him gold ne fe.	Neither gold nor money would have helped him.
	Forthi fro Denemark hider he fledde,	For this he fled away from Denmark
	And me ful fayre and ful wel fedde,	And he kept me well and kindly,
	So that unto this day	So that unto this day
	Have ich ben fed and fostred ay.	I have always felt protected and fathered.
	But now ich am up to that helde	But now I have come to the age
	Cumen that ich may wepne welde,	Where I may wield weapons,
	And I may grete dintes yeve,	And I may give great strokes.
	Shal I nevere hwil ich lyve	I will never be glad
1440	Ben glad til that ich Denemark se!	While I am alive until I see Denmark!
	I preie you that ye wende with me,	I ask you that you will go with me
	And ich may mak you riche men;	And I will make you rich men.
	Ilk of you shal have castles ten,	Each of you will have ten castles,
	And the lond that thor til longes -	And the land that belongs to it,
1445	Borwes, tunes, wodes, and wonges.	Boroughs, towns, fields, and villages!"
	. . . . .	. . . . .
		[Havelock and his stepbrothers sell their possessions and fit out their fishing boat to sail to Denmark. There they buy horses and carts and disguise themselves as merchants. Havelock meets a Danish earl, Ubbe, a friend of the late king who opposes Godard's tyranny. Havelock offers him an expensive gold ring as a gift to gain permission to trade there.[44]]
	. . . . .	. . . . .
1625	"With swilk als ich byen shal.	Havelock said, "I will trade such things as this,
	Ther of biseche you now leve	And so I ask your permission now.
	Wile ich speke with non other reve	I will deal with no lower official
	But with thee, that justise are,	But you, as you are a justice,
	That I mithe seken mi ware	So that I might search for my wares[45]
1630	In gode borwes up and doun,	In good boroughs up and down,
	And faren ich wile fro tun to tun."	As I travel from town to town."
	A gold ring drow he forth anon -	He then drew out a gold ring—
	An hundred pund was worth the ston -	The stone was worth a hundred pounds—[46]

[44] One entire leaf is missing from the MS here of probably 180 lines. As earlier versions of the narrative are substantially different, only a speculative summary of the action is possible.

[45] *I mithe seken mi ware*: Havelock perhaps intends a double meaning here, for merchants usually sell wares and he is really 'seeking' his lost heritage (Garbaty, note to 1450).

[46] *An hundred pund*: Like the gold cups Amis and Amiloun exchange, this extravagence for a fisherman's family is outlandish. According to the UK National Archives website, £100 in 1300 is roughly US$77,000 in modern money. Hodges gives a laborer's yearly wage as £2 in 1300. Kenneth Hodges, "Medieval Sourcebook: Medieval Prices," Fordham University Center for Medieval Studies, accessed 20 June 2010 at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/medievalprices.html#WAGES

	And yaf it Ubbe for to spede.	And gave it to Ubbe for good luck.
	He was ful wis that first yaf mede;	He is a wise man who gives a gift first,
	And so was Havelok ful wis here:	And so Havelock was shrewd here.[47]
	He solde his gold ring ful dere -	He gave his gold ring very dearly;
	Was nevere non so dere sold	There was never anything so precious given
	Fro chapmen, neyther yung ne old.	By a merchant, neither young nor old.
1640	That sholen ye forthward ful wel heren,	That you will hear more about,
	Yif that ye wile the storie heren.	If you wish to listen to the story.
	Hwan Ubbe havede the gold ring,	When Ubbe had the gold ring,
	Havede he yovenet for no thing,	He wouldn't have given it up for anything,
	Nouth for the borw evere ilk del.	Not for every part of the county.
	Havelok bihel he swithe wel,	He looked over Havelock well,
	Hw he was wel of bones maked,	How he was powerfully built,
	Brod in the sholdres, ful wel schaped,	Broad in the shoulders, well-shaped,
	Thicke in the brest, of bodi long -	With a thick chest and a tall body;
	He semede wel to ben wel strong.	He appeared to be very strong.
1650	"Deus!" hwat Ubbe, "Qui ne were he knith?	"God!" marveled Ubbe, "Why isn't he a knight?
	I woth that he is swithe with!	I can tell that he is very manly!
	Betere semede him to bere	It would be more fitting for him to wear
	Helm on heved, sheld and spere,	A helmet on his head with a shield and spear,
	Thanne to beye and selle ware -	Rather than buying and selling wares.
	Allas, that he shal therwith fare!	A shame that he should succeed at that!
	Goddot! Wile he trowe me,	God knows if he trusted my advice
	Chaffare shal he late be."	He would let go of trading."
	Netheles he seyde sone:	Nevertheless, he soon replied,
	"Havelok, have thi bone!	"Havelock, you have your request,
1660	And I ful wel rede thee	And I strongly advise you
	That thou come and ete with me	That you come and dine with me
	Today, thou and thi fayre wif	Today, you and your lovely wife
	That thou lovest al so thi lif.	That you love as much as your life.
	And have thou of hire no drede -	And have no fear for her.
	Shal hire no man shame bede.	No man will attempt to shame her.
	Bi the fey that I owe to thee,	By the faith that I owe to you,
	Ther of shal I me self borw be."	I will myself be your guarantor."[48]
	Havelok herde that he bad,	Havelock heard what Ubbe offered,
	And thow was he ful sore drad	Though he was sorely afraid
1670	With him to ete, for hise wif;	To eat with him because of his wife,
	For him wore levere that his lif	For he would have rather had his life
	Him wore reft, than she in blame	Taken away than see her name ruined
	Felle or lauthe ani shame.	Or have her experience any shame.
	Hwanne he havede his wille yat,	When Havelock had given his consent,
	The stede that he onne sat	Ubbe urged the steed that he sat on
	Smot Ubbe with spures faste,	With taut spurs and he departed.
	And forth awey, but at the laste,	But at the last moment,

[47] Far from censuring Havelock's bribery of an official, the poet praises his shrewdness. Smithers explains that "a soi-disant merchant might get hirnself, as an alien, exemption from the payment of local tolls" through such candid palm-greasing. G.V. Smithers, ed., *Havelock* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), xlviii.

[48] Why Havelock needs repeated guarantees of protection is not clear, although it emphasizes both Goldeboru's vulnerable beauty and nobility and Denmark's general lawlessness under Godard. Skeat claims that Ubbe was a close friend of Birkabeyn based on other traditions (note to 1444), and if Ubbe recognizes his lost son, Havelock is taking a dangerous gamble by trusting him.

	Or he fro him ferde,	Before he had traveled far
	Seyde he, that his folk herde:	He called so that Havelock's family heard,
1680	"Loke that ye comen bethe,	"See that you both come,
	For ich it wile and ich it rede."	For it's both my desire and my advice!"
	Havelok ne durste, the he were adrad,	Though he was anxious, Havelock did not
	Nouth withsitten that Ubbe bad.	Dare oppose what Ubbe asked.
	His wif he dide with him lede -	He had his wife follow with him,
	Unto the heye curt he yede.	And they went into the high court.
	Roberd hire ledde, that was red,	Robert led her, who was well-advised
	That havede tholed for hire the ded	And would have suffered death for her
	Or ani havede hire misseyd,	Before anyone shamed her
	Or hand with ivele onne leyd.	Or laid a hand on her in evil.
1690	Willam Wendut was that other	William Wendut, Robert's brother,
	That hire ledde, Roberdes brother,	Was the other who accompanied her,
	That was with at alle nedes.	Who was bold in all times of need.
	Wel is him that god man fedes!	Fortunate is he who keeps good men!
	Than he weren comen to the halle,	When they had come to the hall
	Biforen Ubbe and hise men alle,	Before Ubbe and all his men,
	Ubbe stirte hem ageyn,	Ubbe went up to them,
	And mani a knith and mani a sweyn,	Along with many a knight and servant,
	Hem for to se and for to shewe.	In order to see and to inspect them.
	Tho stod Havelok als a lowe	Havelock stood like a hill then
1700	Aboven that ther inne wore,	Above those who were present,
	Rith al bi the heved more	A good head above
	Thanne ani that ther inne stod.	Any others who stood inside there.
	Tho was Ubbe blithe of mod	Then Ubbe was in a glad mood
	That he saw him so fayr and hende;	When he saw him so handsome and noble.
	Fro him ne mithe his herte wende,	He could not turn his heart away,
	Ne fro him, ne fro his wif -	Not from him, nor from his wife;
	He lovede hem sone so his lif.	He loved him as much as his life.
	Weren non in Denemark that him thouthe	There was no one in Denmark he thought
	That he so mikel love mouthe.	He might have loved more.
1710	More he lovede Havelok one	He had more affection for Havelock alone
	Than al Denemark, bi mine wone.	Than for all Denmark, by my word.
	Loke now, hw God helpen kan	See now how God can help
	O mani wise wif and man!	Many a prudent woman and man!
	Hwan it was comen time to ete,	When the time to eat had come,
	Hise wif dede Ubbe sone in fete,	Ubbe fetched his own wife inside,
	And til hire seyde al on gamen,	And said to her in joking,
	"Dame, thou and Havelok shulen ete samen,	"My lady, you and Havelock will eat together,
	And Goldeboru shal ete wit me,	And I will dine with Goldeboro,
	That is so fayr so flour on tre.	Who is as beautiful as a flower on a tree.
1720	In al Denemark is wimman non	In all of Denmark there's no woman
	So fayr so sche, by Seint Johan."	As pretty as her, by Saint John!"
	Thanne were set and bord leyd,	When the table was laid and set,
	And the beneysun was seyd,	And the blessing was said,
	Biforn hem com the beste mete	Before them came the best dinner
	That king or cayser wolde ete:	That a king or emperor could eat—
	Kranes, swannes, veneysun,	Cranes, swans, venison,

	Lax, lampreys, and god sturgun,	Salmon, lamprey, and fine sturgeon,
	Pyment to drinke and god claré,	Spiced wine, and wine with honey,[49]
	Win hwit and red, ful god plenté -	And white and red wine in plenty.
1730	Was ther inne no page so lite	There was no page there so low
	That evere wolde ale bite.	That he had to bite down ale once.[50]
	Of the mete forto telle	But as for the food served,
	Ne of the win bidde I nout dwelle;	Or the wine offered, I won't dwell on it;
	That is the storie for to lenge -	That will make the story far too long
	It wolde anuye this fayre genge.	And it would annoy this fine gathering.
	But hwan he haveden the kilthing deyled	But when they had shared every thing,[51]
	And fele sithe haveden wosseyled,	And had made toasts many times,
	With gode drinkes seten longe,	Sitting a long time with fine drinks,
	And it was time for to gonge,	It was time for each man
1740	Ilk man to ther he cam fro,	To go back where he came from.
	Thouthe Ubbe, "If I late hem go,	Ubbe thought, "If I let these four go
	Thus one foure, withuten mo,	On their own, with no more,
	So mote ich brouke finger or to,	As sure as I have fingers and toes
	For this wimman bes mikel wo!	This woman will cause great trouble!
	For hire shal men hire louerd slo."	For her, men will slay her lords."
	He tok sone knithes ten,	At once he gathered ten knights,
	And wel sixti other men	And a good sixty other men
	Wit gode bowes and with gleives,	With strong bows and with spears,
	And sende hem unto the greyves,	And sent them to the watchman's place
1750	The beste man of al the toun,	With the best man of all the town,
	That was named Bernard Brun -	Who was named Bernard Brown.
	And bad him als he lovede his lif,	And he ordered him, as he loved his life,
	Havelok wel yemen and his wif,	To guard Havelock and his wife well,
	And wel do wayten al the nith	And to keep watch all the night
	Til the other day that it were lith.	Until the next day when it was light.
	Bernard was trewe and swithe with,	Bernard was loyal and powerfully strong.
	In al the borw ne was no knith	In all the area there was no knight
	That betere couthe on stede riden,	Who could better ride a steed,
	Helm on heved ne swerd bi side.	Helmet on head, with a sword by his side.
1760	Havelok he gladlike understod	He gladly took charge of Havelock
	With mikel love and herte god,	With great love and kind heart,
	And dide greythe a super riche	And prepared a lavish supper,
	Al so he was no with chinche	As he was in no way stingy
	To his bihove everil del,	In taking care of Havelock's every need
	That he mithe supe swithe wel.	So that they might dine finely.
	Al so he seten and sholde soupe,	As they were sitting and eating,
	So comes a ladde in a joupe,	Along came a youth in an outlaw's jacket,
	And with him sixti other stronge	And with him sixty others strong,[52]

[49] *Pyment*: See the note to *Bevis of Hampton*, 2126. TEAMS explains that medieval *claré*, spiced wine with honey, is not modern *claret*, red wine.

[50] Swanton comments that Havelock's rise in status matches his diet. Curiously, ale is here treated as unworthy of the earl's court, whereas the narrator begins by asking for a cup of it (14). Michael Swanton, *English Literature Before Chaucer* (New York: Longman Group, 1987), 202.

[51] *Kilthing*: TEAMS defines this word as 'tippling,' but it is not in the MED and even Skeat gives up on a definition. Some editors have *ilk þing*, 'each thing,' which makes more sense as the next line deals with drinking toasts.

	With swerdes drawen and knives longe,	With swords drawn and long knives,
1770	Ilkan in hande a ful god gleive,	Each one with a firm lance in hand.
	And seyde, "Undo, Bernard the greyve!	And he said, "Open up, watchman Bernard!
	Undo swithe and lat us in,	Open up quick and let us in,
	Or thu art ded, bi Seint Austin!"	Or by Saint Augustine, you're dead!"
	Bernard stirt up, that was ful big,	Bernard, who was very big, started up
	And caste a brinie upon his rig,	And threw a coat of mail on his back
	And grop an ax that was ful god -	And grabbed a good, strong ax.
	Lep to the dore so he wore wod,	He leaped to the door as if he were mad,
	And seyde, "Hwat are ye, that ar ther-oute,	And shouted, "Who are you
	That thus biginnen for to stroute?	Who are out there making such a noise?
1780	Goth henne swithe, fule theves,	Get out of here fast, dirty thieves!
	For, bi the Louerd that man on leves,	By the Lord who men believe in,
	Shol ich casten the dore open,	If I have to throw the door open,
	Summe of you shal ich drepen,	Some of you I will drop dead,
	And the othre shal ich kesten	And the rest I will throw
	In feteres and ful faste festen!	In fetters and bind up tightly!"
	"Hwat have ye seid?" quoth a ladde,	"What did you say?" said one lad.
	"Wenestu that we ben adradde?	"Do you think that we're afraid?
	We shole at this dore gonge	We will go through this door
	Maugre thin, carl, or outh longe."	Before long, you oaf, in spite of you!"
1790	He gripen sone a bulder ston	At once he gripped a giant stone
	And let it fleye, ful god won,	And let it fly with great force
	Agen the dore, that it to-rof.	Against the door, breaking it apart.
	Avelok it saw, and thider drof	Havelock saw that, and ran up
	And the barre sone ut drow,	And soon drew out the door bar,
	That was unride and gret ynow,	Which was huge and rough enough,
	And caste the dore open wide	And flung the door open wide
	And seide, "Her shal I now abide!	And said, "Here I stand waiting now!
	Comes swithe unto me -	Come to me fast!
	Datheyt hwo you henne fle!"	Damn any of you who runs away!"
1800	"No," quodh on, "that shaltou coupe;"	"No!" said one. "You will pay for that!"
	And bigan til him to loupe,	And he began to run toward Havelock,
	In his hond his swerd ut drawe,	And drew out his sword in his hand,
	Havelok he wende thore have slawe,	Thinking to slay him there.
	And with him comen other two	And with him came two others
	That him wolde of live have do.	Who would have ended his life.
	Havelok lifte up the dore tre	Havelock lifted up the door bar,
	And at a dint he slow hem thre.	And with one blow he killed all three.
	Was non of hem that hise hernes	There were none of them whose brains
	Ne lay ther ute ageyn the sternes.	Did not lie there under the stars.
1810	The ferthe that he sithen mette	The fourth one that he met next
	Wit the barre so he him grette	He greeted with the bar against his head,
	Bifor the heved that the rith eye	So that he made the right eye

[52] The number of attackers in the English version is pumped up considerably from six to sixty to emphasize Havelock's valor. Additionally, in the French *Lai d'Aueloc* Havelock's assailants are motivated by lust for his wife, but here they are murderous thieves. The scene has puzzled scholars as evidently they are the same sixty men that Ubbe sends to protect Havelock (1747), though the poet gives no suggestion that Ubbe is complicit. They may also simply be different people, as sixty was often used to mean an indefinite number. Susie I. Tucker, "'Sixty' as an Indefinite Number in Middle English," *Review of English Studies* 25:98 (1949): 152-153. See also the notes to lines 1929 and 2045.

	Ut of the hole made he fleye,	Fly out of the socket,
	And sithe clapte him on the crune	And then clapped him on the head
	So that he stan ded fel thor dune.	So that he fell down stone dead.
	The fifte that he overtok	The fifth that he overtook
	Gaf he a ful sor dint ok,	He gave a painful blow as well,
	Bitween the sholdres ther he stod,	Between the shoulders where he stood,
	That he spen his herte blod.	So that his heart's blood was spent.
1820	The sixte wende for to fle,	The sixth turned to run away,
	And he clapte him with the tre	And he slapped him with the bar
	Rith in the fule necke so	Right on the full shoulder,
	That he smot hise necke on to.	So that he broke his neck in two.
	Thanne the sixe weren doun feld,	When the sixth was brought down,
	The seventhe brayd ut his swerd	The seventh whipped out his sword,
	And wolde Havelok riht in the eye;	Wanting to strike Havelock right in the eye,
	And Havelok let the barre fleye	And Havelock sent the bar flying
	And smot him sone agheyn the brest,	And hit him at once against the chest.
	That havede he nevere schrifte of prest	He had no time for a priest's rites,
1830	For he was ded on lesse hwile	For he was dead in less time
	Than men mouthe renne a mile.	Than men might run a mile.
	Alle the othere weren ful kene;	All the others were very determined.
	A red they taken hem bitwene	They made a plan among themselves
	That he sholde him bihalve,	That they would surround him
	And brisen so that wit no salve	And batter him, so that no salve
	Ne sholde him helen leche non.	Of a doctor's would heal him.
	They drowen ut swerdes, ful god won,	They drew out swords, a large number,
	And shoten on him so don on bere	And rushed on him just like dogs
	Dogges that wolden him to-tere,	That intend to tear apart a bear
1840	Thanne men doth the bere beyte.	When men watch bear-baiting.[53]
	The laddes were kaske and teyte	The thugs were keen and quick,
	And umbiyeden him ilkon.	And each one surrounded him.
	Sum smot with tre and sum wit ston,	Some struck with branches and some with stones.
	Summe putten with gleyve in bac and side	Some put knives in his back and sides
	And yeven wundes longe and wide	And inflicted wounds long and wide
	In twenti stedes and wel mo,	In twenty places and many more,
	Fro the croune til the to.	From the head to the toe.
	Hwan he saw that, he was wod	When Havelock saw that, he was made mad,
	And was it ferlik hw he stod!	And it was a miracle how he stood!
1850	For the blod ran of his sides	For the blood ran down his sides
	So water that fro the welle glides.	Like water flowing from the well.
	But thanne bigan he for to mowe	But then he began to mow them down
	With the barre, and let hem shewe	With the bar, and to show them
	Hw he couthe sore smite;	How he could strike painfully.
	For was ther non, long ne lite,	For there were none, tall or short,
	That he mouthe overtake,	That he might overtake
	That he ne garte his croune krake,	Who did not have their heads cracked,
	So that on a litel stund,	So that within a little while

[53] *Bere beyte*: Bear baiting was a savagely violent 'sport' in which a bear would be chained to a stake and trained dogs would be set on. Bets would be taken and dogs would be replaced as they were mauled until the bear succumbed (Garbaty, note to 1659-61). Henry VIII was not surprisingly a fan and the games were popular until their prohibition in 1835. Cockfighting, a similar blood-sport, still enjoys popularity in parts of the world. See also line 2330.

	Felde he twenti to the grund.	He dropped twenty to the ground.
1860	Tho bigan gret dine to rise,	Then a great din began to rise,
	For the laddes on ilke wise	For the lads attacked him
	Him asayleden with grete dintes,	In every way with great blows.
	Fro fer he sto[n]den him with flintes,	From a distance they stood and flung
	And gleyves schoten him fro ferne,	Flintstones and knives at him,
	For drepen him he wolden yerne;	For they were eager to kill him,
	But dursten he newhen him nomore	But they dared not get any nearer him
	Thanne he bor or leun wore.	Than if he were a boar or a lion.
	Huwe Raven that dine herde,	Hugh Raven heard that clamor
	And thowthe wel that men misferde	And knew full well that men were
1870	With his louerd for his wif	Acting wrongly against his lord for his wife.
	And grop an ore and a long knif,	He grabbed an oar and a long knife,
	And thider drof al so an hert,	And rushed out like a stag deer
	And cham ther on a litel stert	And arrived there in a short moment,
	And saw how the laddes wode	And saw how the crazed outlaws
	Havelok his louerd umbistode,	Surrounded his lord Havelock
	And beten on him so doth the smith	And beat on him like the smith
	With the hamer on the stith.	Does with the hammer on the anvil.
	"Allas!" hwat Hwe, "that I was boren!	"Alas," cried Hugh, "that I was ever born
	That evere et ich bred of koren!	And ever ate bread from grain,
1880	That ich here this sorwe se!	To see this sorrow here!
	Roberd! Willam! Hware ar ye?	Robert, William, where are you?
	Gripeth ether unker a god tre	Both of you, grab a good club
	And late we nouth thise doges fle	And we will not let these dogs escape
	Til ure louerd wreke be.	Until our lord is avenged!
	Cometh swithe, and folwes me:	Come quickly, and follow me.
	Ich have in honde a ful god ore -	I have a good strong oar in my hand;
	Datheit wo ne smite sore!"	Damn anyone who isn't hit hard!"
	"Ya! leve, ya!" quod Roberd sone,	"Here! Brother, here!" said Robert quickly,
	"We haven ful god lith of the mone."	"We have a good light from the moon."
1890	Roberd grop a staf strong and gret,	Robert seized a staff, strong and huge,
	That mouthe ful wel bere a net,	Which might well have carried a cow,
	And Willam Wendut grop a tre	And William Wendut grabbed a club
	Mikel grettere than his the,	Much thicker than his own thigh,
	And Bernard held his ax ful faste	And Bernard held his ax firmly.
	I seye was he nouthe the laste!	I say he wasn't the last out!
	And lopen forth so he weren wode	And they leaped forth, as if they were berserk,
	To the laddes ther he stode,	Toward the attackers where they stood,
	And yaf hem wundes swithe grete;	And gave them harsh wounds.
	Ther mithe men wel se boyes bete,	There one could see the thieves beaten,
1900	And ribbes in here sides breke	And the ribs in their sides broken,
	And Havelok on hem wel wreke.	And Havelock avenged on them well.
	He broken armes, he broken knes,	They broke arms, they broke knees,
	He broken shankes, he broken thes.	They broke legs, they broke thighs;
	He dide the blod there renne dune	They made the blood run down
	To the fet rith fro the crune,	Right from their foreheads to their feet,
	For was ther spared heved non.	For not one head was spared.
	He leyden on hevedes ful god won,	They laid on a great number of men,
	And made croune breke and crake	And made skulls break and crack
	Of the broune and of the blake.	On every kind of fighter.
1910	He maden here backes al so bloute	They beat their backs as soft
	Als here wombes and made hem rowte	As their insides and made them roar
	Als he weren kradelbarnes -	Like they were babies in cradles,

	So dos the child that moder tharnes.	Like the child that loses its mother.
	Datheit the recke! For he it servede.	Damn whoever cares! They deserved it!
	Hwat dide he thore? Weren he werewed.	What business had they there? They were mauled!
	So longe haveden he but and bet	They battered and beat them,
	With neves under hernes set	With fists set on their brains,
	That of tho sixti men and on	For so long that of the sixty-one men,
	Ne wente ther awey lives non.	None went their way alive.
1920	On the morwen, hwan it was day,	In the morning, when it was day
	Ilc on other wirwed lay	Each lay mangled on the other
	Als it were dogges that weren henged;	As if they were dogs that were hanged.
	And summe leye in dikes slenget,	And some lay slung in ditches,
	And summe in gripes bi the her	And some in trenches,
	Drawen ware and laten ther.	Dragged by their hair and left there.
	Sket cam tiding intil Ubbe	The news came fast to Ubbe
	That Havelok havede with a clubbe	That Havelock had, with a club,
	Of hise slawen sixti and on	Slain sixty-one of his retinue—
	Sergaunz, the beste that mihten gon.	Sergeants, the best that might serve.[54]
1930	"Deus," quoth Ubbe, "Hwat may this be?	"My God," said Ubbe, "what is this about?
	Betere is I nime miself and se	It would be better to go myself, and see
	That this baret on hwat is wold	What this trouble is about,
	Thanne I sende yunge or old;	Than to send someone, young or old.
	For yif I sende him unto,	For if I send him to Havelock,
	I wene men sholde him shame do,	I expect men would take revenge,
	And that ne wolde ich for no thing.	And I would not have that for anything.
	I love him wel, bi Heveneking -	I love him well, by Heaven's king!
	Me wore levere I wore lame	I would rather be crippled
	Thanne men dide him ani shame	Than have men do him any shame,
1940	Or tok or onne handes leyde	Or seize or lay hands on him rudely,
	Unornelike or shame seyde."	Or speak abuse to him."
	He lep up on a stede lith,	He leaped upon a nimble horse,
	And with him mani a noble knith,	Along with many a noble knight,
	And ferde forth unto the tun,	And journeyed forth into the town.
	And dide calle Bernard Brun	He called Bernard Brown
	Ut of his hus wan he ther cam;	Out of his house when he came there,
	And Bernard sone ageyn nam,	And Bernard soon appeared.
	Al to-tused and al to-torn,	He was all cut up and torn to pieces,
	Ner al so naked so he was born	Nearly as naked as when he was born,
1950	And al to-brised, bac and the.	And all bruised on the back and thighs.
	Quoth Ubbe, "Bernard, hwat is thee?	Ubbe said, "Bernard, what's wrong with you?
	Hwo haves thee thus ille maked,	Who has hurt you so foully,
	Thus to-riven and al mad naked?"	To be ripped apart and almost naked?"
	"Louerd, merci," quot he sone,	"Mercy, my lord!" he answered at once.
	"Tonicht, al so ros the mone,	"Last night, as the moon rose,
	Comen her mo than sixti theves	More than sixty thieves showed up here,
	With lokene copes and wide sleves,	With fastened cloaks and wide sleeves,
	Me for to robben and to pine,	To rob and torment me,
	And for to drepe me and mine.	And to slay me and my family!
1960	Mi dore he broken up ful sket,	They broke apart my door in a rush,

[54] *Sergaunz*: In medieval usage a *sergeant* was any armed attendant or officer with a protective or guarding function. The line again suggests that the outlaws who attack Bernard Brun and Ubbe's retinue are the same men.

	And wolde me binden hond and fet.	And would have bound me hand and foot.
	Wan the godemen that sawe,	When those gentlemen saw that,
	Havelok and he that bi the wowe	Havelock, and those lying by the wall,
	Leye, he stirten up sone onon	They got up right away,
	And summe grop tre and sum grop ston	And some grabbed trees, and some took stones,
	And drive hem ut, thei he weren crus,	And though they were fierce, they drove them out
	So dogges ut of milne-hous.	Like dogs out of a mill-house.
	Havelok grop the dore-tre,	Havelock gripped the door bar,
	And a dint he slow hem thre.	And with one blow he killed three of them.
1970	He is the beste man at nede	He is the best man in need
	That everemar shal ride stede -	Who will ever ride a steed!
	Als helpe God, bi mine wone	So help me God, by my word,
	A thousend men his he worth one!	He is worth a thousand men!
	Yif he ne were, ich were now ded -	If not for him I would be dead now,
	So have ich don mi soule red!	As sure as I trust my own soul.
	But it is of him mikel sinne:	But as for him, it is a great sin.
	He maden him swilke woundes thrinne	They gave him three wounds so harsh
	That of the altherleste wounde	That the very least of them
	Were a stede brouht to grunde.	Would bring a horse to the ground.
1980	He haves a wunde in the side	He has an ugly gash in his side
	With a gleyve ful unride;	From a lance,
	And he haves on thoru his arum	And he has a wound through the arm
	Ther of is full mikel harum;	Which has caused him great harm,
	And he haves on thoru his the -	And he has one through his thigh,
	The unrideste that men may se.	The most horrible that men might see.
	And othe wundes haves he stronge,	And he has other serious injuries,
	Mo than twenti, swithe longe.	More than twenty, just as severe.
	But sithen he havede lauth the sor	But after he felt the pain of the wounds,
	Of the wundes, was nevere bor	There was never a wild boar
1990	That so fauth, so he fauth thanne!	That fought as he fought then!
	Was non that havede the hernepanne	There was none who heaved on skulls
	So hard that he ne dede al to-cruhsse	So hard as he completely crushed,
	And al to-shivere and al to-frusshe.	Shattered, and smashed them.
	He folwede hem so hund dos hare -	To Hell with anyone he might spare!
	Datheyt on he wolde spare,	He chased them like a hound does a hare,
	That ne made hem everilkon	So that he made each one of them
	Ligge stille so doth the ston.	Lie still like a stone.
	And ther nis he nouth to frie	And there is nothing to blame him for,
	For other sholde he make hem lye	For they either had to lie dead by his hand
2000	Ded, or thei him havede slawen,	Or they would have slain him,
	Or al to-hewen or al to-drawen.	Or totally hacked or ripped him apart!
	"Louerd, havi nomore plith	My lord, I have no more trouble
	Of that ich was grethed tonith.	From what threatened me last night.
	Thus wolde the theves me have reft;	The thieves would have robbed me,
	But, God thank, he havenet sure keft!	But, thank God, they surely paid for it!
	But it is of him mikel scathe -	But it is a great pity about Havelock.
	I woth that he bes ded ful rathe."	I believe that he will soon be dead."
	Quoth Ubbe, "Bernard, seyst thou soth?"	Ubbe said, "Bernard, is this the truth?"
	"Ya, sire, that I ne leye o tooth!	"Yes, sire, I do not make false oaths![55]

[55] *That I ne leye o tooth*: Word division in the MS is unclear. TEAMS suggests the idiom 'I do not lie through my teeth,' but this spelling of *tooth* is not in the MED. Skeat has *that ine lepe oth* but the phrase makes no sense. Some give *leye othe*, 'lie' + 'oath,' which seems to work here.

2010	Yif I, louerd, a word leye,	If I lie one word, my lord,
	Tomorwen do me hengen heye."	Tomorrow have me hanged high!"
	The burgeys that ther bi stode thore	The townspeople who stood nearby,
	Grundlike and grete othes swore,	Low and great, young and old,
	Litle and mikle, yunge and holde,	Swore great and solemn oaths
	That was soth that Bernard tolde -	That it was true what Bernard said.
	Soth was that he wolden him bynde,	It was true that they wanted to tie him up
	And trusse al that he mithen fynde	And carry off all they might find of his
	Of hise in arke or in kiste	In coffers or in chests
	That he mouthe in seckes thriste.	That they would jam into sacks.
2020	"Louerd, he haveden al awey born	"My lord, they would have taken
	His thing, and himself al to-torn,	All he had, with himself torn apart,
	But als God self barw him wel,	But God Himself has preserved him well
	That he ne tinte no catel.	So that he has not lost any goods.
	Hwo mithe so mani stonde ageyn	Who could stand against so many men
	Bi nither-tale, knith or swein?	In the night-time, knight or peasant?
	He weren bi tale sixti and ten -	They were seventy in count,
	Starke laddes, stalworthi men,	Strong men, rugged men,
	And on the mayster of hem alle,	And one was the master of them all,
	That was the name Griffin Galle.	Who had the name Griffin Galle.
2030	Hwo mouthe ageyn so mani stonde,	Who could stand against so many,
	But als this man of ferne londe	Except this man from faraway lands,
	Haveth hem slawen with a tre?	Who has killed them with a door bar?
	Mikel joie have he!	May he have great joy!
	God yeve him mikel god to welde,	May God give him wealth to wield,
	Bothe in tun and ek in felde:	Both in town and in the fields as well.
	Wel is set the mete he etes."	The food he eats is well spent!"
	Quoth Ubbe, "Doth him swithe fete,	Ubbe said, "Have him brought quickly,
	That I mouthe his woundes se,	So that I may see his wounds,
	If that he mouthen holed be;	If he may be healed.
2040	For if he mouthe covere yet	For if he might still recover,
	And gangen wel upon hise fet,	And walk firm on his feet,
	Miself shal dubben him to knith,	I myself will dub him a knight
	Forthi that he is so with.	Because of his bravery.
	And yif he livede, tho foule theves,	And if any are alive, those foul thieves
	That weren of Kaym kin and Eves,	Who come from Cain and Eve's kin,[56]
	He sholden hange bi the necke -	They will hang by the neck!
	Of here ded datheit wo recke,	Curse whoever cares about their death,
	Hwan he yeden thus on nithes	Since they ran about at night
	Tobinde bothe burgmen and knithes!	To tie up both townsmen and knights.
2050	For bynderes love ich neveremo -	I have no love for outlaws;
	Of hem ne yeve ich nouht a slo."	I don't give a berry about them!"
	Havelok was bifore Ubbe browth,	Havelock was brought before Ubbe,
	That havede for him ful mikel thouth	Who had great concern for him
	And mikel sorwe in his herte	And much sorrow in his heart
	For hise wundes, that we so smerte.	For his wounds, which were so painful.
	But hwan his wundes weren shewed,	But when his injuries were examined

[56] The descendants of Cain were considered evil, just as Grendel is in *Beowulf* (108). Eve was viewed with similar opprobrium, as she was seen as responsible for the fall of man into sin. The antifeminist literature that Janekyn reads and which vexes the Wife of Bath has a typical excoriation of Eve: "that for hir wikkednesse / was al mankynde broght to wrecchednesse" (*CT* III.715-16).

	And a leche havede knawed	And a doctor had determined
	That he hem mouthe ful wel hele,	That he would be able to heal them,
	Wel make him gange and ful wel mele,	To make him walk and talk with vigor,
2060	And wel a palefrey bistride,	And sit on a saddle-horse
	And wel upon a stede ride,	And then ride a steed confidently,
	Tho let Ubbe al his care	Then Ubbe let his worries go
	And al his sorwe over fare,	And his sorrow passed away.
	And seyde, "Cum now forth with me,	He said, "Come back with me now,
	And Goldeboru, thi wif, with thee,	With Goldeboro, your wife,
	And thine serjaunz alle thre,	And your men-at-arms, all three.
	For now wile I youre warant be:	For I will be your guarantor now.
	Wile I non of here frend	I want none of the friends
	That thu slowe with thin hend	Of those you killed with your hand
2070	Moucte wayte thee to slo	To be able to wait for you in ambush
	Also thou gange to and fro.	As you go to and fro.
	I shal lene thee a bowr	I will lend you a chamber
	That is up in the heye tour,	Which is up in the high tower
	Til thou mowe ful wel go	Until you can get around
	And wel ben hol of al thi wo.	And be fully healed from all your woes.
	It ne shal nothing ben bitwene	There will be nothing between
	Thi bowr and min, al so I wene,	Your room and mine, I know,
	But a fayr firrene wowe -	But a fine fir-wood wall.
	Speke I loude or spek I lowe,	If I speak loudly or speak quietly,
2080	Thou shalt ful wel heren me,	You will hear me well.
	And than thu wilt thou shalt me se.	And whenever you want, you will see me.
	A rof shal hile us bothe o nith,	A roof will cover us both at night,
	That none of mine, clerk ne knith,	So that none of mine, priest or knight,
	No sholen thi wif no shame bede	Will try to cause shame to your wife
	No more than min, so God me rede!"	Any more than mine, so God help me!"
	He dide unto the borw bringe	He had Havelock brought into the chamber
	Sone anon, al with joiinge,	Soon after, with his wife and his
	His wif and his sergaunz thre,	Three officers, the best men
	The beste men that mouthe be.	That might be, all rejoicing.
2090	The first nith he lay ther inne,	The first night that he lay in there,
	Hise wif and his serganz thrinne,	With his wife and three brothers in arms,
	Aboute the middel of the nith	About the middle of the night
	Wok Ubbe and saw a mikel lith	Ubbe woke up and saw a great light
	In the bowr thar Havelok lay	From the room where Havelock lay,
	Al so brith so it were day.	As bright as if it were day.
	"Deus!" quoth Ubbe, "Hwat may this be?	"Good lord!" said Ubbe, "What is this?
	Betere is I go miself and se	I had better go myself and see
	Hwether he sitten now and wesseylen,	Whether he is up now and drinking toasts,
	Or ani sotshipe to deyle,	Or taking part in some debauchery
2100	This tid nithes also foles;	Like fools do this time of night.
	Than birthe men casten hem in poles	Men ought to throw them in pools,
	Or in a grip, or in the fen -	Or in a ditch, or in the muddy swamp.
	Now ne sitten none but wicke men,	No one is up now but wicked men,
	Glotuns, revres, or wicke theves,	Gluttons, criminals, or foul thieves,
	Bi Crist that alle folk onne leves!"	By Christ who all people believe in!"
	He stod and totede in at a bord	He stood up and peered through a board
	Her he spak anilepi word	Before he spoke another word,
	And saw hem slepen faste ilkon	And saw each one of them fast asleep
	And lye stille so the ston;	And lying as still as a stone.
2110	And saw al that mikel lith	He saw all that great light

	Fro Havelok cam that was so brith.	Coming from Havelock, which was so bright.
	Of his mouth it com il del -	Every bit of it came out of his mouth;
	That was he war ful swithe wel.	He could see that clearly.
	"Deus," quoth he, "Hwat may this mene!"	"My God," he said, "what can this mean?"
	He calde bothe arwe men and kene,	He called for men, both timid and bold,
	Knithes and serganz swithe sleie,	His wisest knights and officers,
	Mo than an hundred, withuten leye,	More than a hundred, without a lie,
	And bad hem alle comen and se	And he ordered them all to come and see
	Hwat that selcuth mithe be.	What that marvel might be.
2120	Als the knithes were comen alle,	As the knights were all arriving,
	Ther Havelok lay ut of the halle,	There Havelock lay outside the hall.
	So stod ut of his mouth a glem,	Out of his mouth streamed a gleam,
	Rith al swilk so the sunne-bem,	Exactly like a sunbeam.
	That al so lith was thare, bi hevene,	The light there, by Heaven,
	So ther brenden serges sevene	Was as if seven tapers were burning
	And an hundred serges ok	And a hundred more candles with it.
	That durste I sweren on a book!	I would dare to swear it on a Bible!
	He slepen faste, alle five,	They were fast asleep, all five,
	So he weren brouth of live;	As if they had departed from life,
2130	And Havelok lay on his lift side,	And Havelock lay on his left side,
	In his armes his brithe bride:	With his shining bride in his arms.
	Bi the pappes he leyen naked -	He lay naked down to the chest;[57]
	So faire two weren nevere maked	So fair a two were never created
	In a bed to lyen samen.	To lie together in a bed.
	The knithes thouth of hem god gamen,	The knights thought it was good fun
	Hem for to shewe and loken to.	To look at them and examine them.
	Rith al so he stoden alle so,	But just as they all stood there
	And his bac was toward hem wend,	And his back shifted toward them,
	So weren he war of a croiz ful gent	They were aware of a majestic cross
2140	On his right shuldre swithe brith,	On his right shoulder, so clear,
	Brithter than gold ageyn the lith,	Brighter than gold against the light,
	So that he wiste, heye and lowe,	That they realized, high and low,
	That it was kunrik that he sawe.	It was a royal mark that they saw.
	It sparkede and ful brith shon	It sparkled and shone brightly
	So doth the gode charbuncle ston	Just as a good carbuncle stone does,
	That men see mouthe se by the lith	So that men can pick out a penny
	A peni chesen, so was it brith.	By its light, it was so brilliant.
	Thanne bihelden he him faste,	Then they beheld him closely,
	So that he knewen at the laste	So that they finally understood
2150	That he was Birkabeynes sone,	That he was the son of Birkabeyn,
	That was here king, that was hem wone	The man who was their king, who used
	Wel to yeme and wel were	To govern and protect them well
	Ageynes uten-laddes here -	Against foreign armies:
	"For it was nevere yet a brother	"For there has never been a brother
	In al Denemark so lich another,	In all Denmark so like another
	So this man, that is so fayr,	As this man, who is so noble,

[57] Skeat cites George Ellis' *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances* (1811), who asserts that the medieval custom was to sleep naked. The emir in *Floris & Blancheflor* describes Floris as a naked boy in Blancheflor's bed (1411). However, it is unlikely that the poet's statement that Havelock went *ful naked* (6, 854) means total nudity. More likely, in the heat of summer Havelock and Goldeboru are wearing minimal bedclothing.

	Als Birkabeyn; he is hise eyr."	Is like Birkabeyn. He is his heir."
	He fellen sone at hise fet.	At once they fell at his feet;
	Was non of hem that he ne gret -	There were none who did not hail him.
2160	Of joye he weren alle so fawen	They were all as full of joy
	So he him haveden of erthe drawen.	As if he had risen from the grave.
	Hise fet he kisten an hundred sythes -	They kissed his feet a hundred times,
	The tos, the nayles, and the lithes -	The toes, the nails, and the tips,
	So that he bigan to wakne	So that he began to wake up.
	And wit hem ful sore to blakne,	On seeing them he blanched painfully,
	For he wende he wolden him slo,	For he thought they would slay him,
	Or elles binde him and do wo.	Or else tie him up and do woe.
	Quoth Ubbe, "Louerd, ne dred thee nowth,	Ubbe said, "My lord, have no fear!
	Me thinkes that I se thi thouth.	I think that I know your thoughts.
2170	Dere sone, wel is me	Dear son, how fortunate I am
	That I thee with eyn se.	To see you with my own eyes.
	Manred, louerd, bede I thee -	Lord, I offer you homage;
	Thi man auht I ful wel to be;	I fully ought to be your man.
	For thu art comen of Birkabeyn,	For you are born from Birkabeyn,
	That havede mani knith and sweyn,	Who had many knights and servants,
	And so shalt thou, louerd, have:	And you, lord, shall have the same.
	Thou thou be yet a ful yung knave	Though you are still a young man,
	Thou shalt be King of al Denemark -	You will be king of all Denmark.
	Was ther inne never non so stark.	There was never anyone so strong here.
2180	Tomorwen shaltu manrede take	Tomorrow you will receive pledges
	Of the brune and of the blake,	From every type of man,
	Of alle that aren in this tun,	From all who are in this town,
	Bothe of erl and of barun,	Both from earl and from baron,
	And of dreng and of thayn	And from vassal and retainer,
	And of knith and of sweyn.	And from knight and bondsman.
	And so shaltu ben mad knith	And so you will be made a knight
	Wit blisse, for thou art so with."	With gladness, for you are so valiant."
	Tho was Havelok swithe blithe,	Then Havelock was very pleased,
	And thankede God ful fele sithe.	And thanked God many times.
2190	On the morwen, wan it was lith,	In the morning, when it was light,
	And gon was thisternesse of the nith,	And the gloom of the night was gone,
	Ubbe dide upon a stede	Ubbe had a young messenger
	A ladde lepe, and thider bede	Leap on a steed, and go to summon
	Erles, barouns, drenges, theynes,	Earls, barons, retainers, vassals,
	Klerkes, knithes, burgeys, sweynes,	Priests, knights, townspeople, and peasants,
	That he sholden comen anon	That they should come quickly
	Biforen him sone everilkon,	Before him soon, each of them,
	Al so he loven here lives	As much as they loved their lives
	And here children and here wives.	And their children and their wives.
2200	His bode ne durste he non atsitte	No one dared ignore his command,
	That he ne neme for to wite,	So that all came at once
	Sone hwat wolde the justise;	To find out what the justice wanted.
	And bigan anon to rise	Ubbe soon rose
	And seyde sone, "Lithes me,	And said, "Listen to me,
	Alle samen, theu and fre,	All together, bound and free!
	A thing ich wile you here shauwe	I will relate to you a matter here
	That ye alle ful wel knawe.	That you all know clearly.
	Ye witen wel that al this lond	You know well that all this land
	Was in Birkabeynes hond	Was in Birkabeyn's hand
2210	The day that he was quic and ded,	The day that he was alive and dead,

	And how that he, bi youre red	And how he, by your counsel,
	Bitauhte hise children thre	Entrusted his three children, and all
	Godard to yeme, and al his fe.	His property, to Godard to steward.
	Havelok his sone he him tauhte	He committed his son Havelock to him,
	And hise two douhters and al his auhte.	And his two daughters and his holdings.
	Alle herden ye him swere	All of you heard him swear
	On bok and on messe gere	On the Bible and on the mass garments
	That he shulde yemen hem wel,	That he would protect them well,
	Withuten lac, withuten tel.	Without fault, without reproach.
2220	He let his oth all overgo -	He forget all about his oath!
	Evere wurthe him yvel and wo!	He deserves evil and woe forever!
	For the maydnes here lif	For he deprived both of the maidens
	Refte he bothen with a knif,	Of their lives with a knife,
	And him shulde ok have slawen -	And he would have killed the boy also.
	The knif was at his herte drawen.	The knife was drawn at his heart,
	But God him wolde wel have save:	But God wished to save him.
	He havede rewnesse of the knave	Godard felt regret for the boy
	So that he with his hend	So that he could not kill him
	Ne drop him nouth, that sori fend!	With his own hand, that miserable fiend!
2230	But sone dide he a fishere	But he soon after forced a fisherman
	Swithe grete othes swere,	To swear solemn oaths
	That he sholde drenchen him	That he would drown him
	In the se, that was ful brim.	In the sea that was so wild.
	Hwan Grim saw that he was so fayr,	When Grim saw that he was so fair,
	And wiste he was the rith eir,	And realized he was the rightful heir,
	Fro Denemark ful sone he fledde	They quickly fled from Denmark
	Intil Englond and ther him fedde	Into England and kept him there.
	Mani winter that til this day	Many years until this day
	Haves he ben fed and fostred ay.	He has been fed and brought up well.
2240	Lokes hware he stondes her!	Look where he stands here!
	In al this werd ne haves he per -	In all this world he has no peer,
	Non so fayr, ne non so long,	None so handsome, none so tall,
	Ne non so mikel, ne non so strong.	Nor any so great, nor none so strong.
	In this middelerd nis no knith	On this earth there is no knight
	Half so strong ne half so with.	Half so mighty, nor half so valiant.
	Bes of him ful glad and blithe,	Be joyful and glad because of him,
	And cometh alle hider swithe,	And come forward quickly
	Manrede youre louerd for to make,	To pledge loyalty to your lord,
	Bothe brune and the blake -	Every rank of person.
2250	I shal miself do first the gamen	I shall first do the honors myself,
	And ye sithen alle samen."	And you will all follow together after."
	O knes ful fayre he him sette -	Ubbe set himself courteously on his knees;
	Mouthe nothing him ther fro lette,	Nothing might prevent him from it.
	And bicam is man rith thare,	And he became Havelock's man right there,
	That alle sawen that there ware.	So that all who were there saw it.[58]
	After him stirt up laddes ten	After him ten lads started up
	And bicomen hise men,	And became his men,

[58] Strohm notes that the swearing of fealty between vassal and lord, *manrede*, was becoming an increasingly practical and contractual matter by the fourteenth century, but in romance there is still the older Germanic ideal of a sacred and emotional bond of loyalty expressed in a public rite. Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1989), 14.

	And sithen everilk a baroun	And after then each baron
	That evere weren in al that toun,	Who was ever in that town,
2260	And sithen drenges, and sithen thaynes	And then servants, and then vassals,
	And sithen knithes, and sithen sweynes;	And then knights, and then peasants,
	So that, or that day was gon,	So that before the day was gone,
	In al the tun ne was nouth on	In all the town there was no one
	That it ne was his man bicomen -	Who had not become his man.
	Manrede of alle havede he nomen.	They had all taken oaths of loyalty.
	Hwan he havede of hem alle	When he had accepted homage
	Manrede taken in the halle,	From all of them in the hall,
	Grundlike dide he hem swere	He had them solemnly swear
	That he sholden him god feyth bere	That they would act in good faith
2270	Ageynes alle that woren on live;	Toward all who were alive for him.
	Ther-yen ne wolde never on strive,	No one would ever strive against him
	That he ne maden sone that oth -	Who made that oath,
	Riche and poure, lef and loth.	Rich or poor, fair or foul.
	Hwan that was maked, sone he sende	When that was done, at once he sent
	Ubbe writes fer and hende,	Ubbe's summons far and wide
	After alle that castel yemede,	To all who ruled a castle,
	Burwes, tunes, sibbe an fremde	City, or town, friend or stranger,
	That thider sholden comen swithe	That they should come to him quickly
	Til him and heren tithandes blithe	And hear the good news
2280	That he hem alle shulde telle.	That he would tell them.
	Of hem ne wolde nevere on dwelle,	Of them, not a one delayed
	That he ne come sone plattinde;	So that he did not come hurrying.
	Hwo hors ne havede, com gangande.	Whoever had no horse came on foot,
	So that withinne a fourtenith	So that within a fortnight
	In al Denemark ne was no knith,	In all of Denmark, there was no knight,
	Ne conestable, ne shireve,	Constable, or sheriff[59]
	That com of Adam and of Eve,	Who came from Adam and Eve
	That he ne com biforn sire Ubbe -	Who did not appear before Sir Ubbe;
	He dredden him so thef doth clubbe.	They feared him as the thief does the club.
2290	Hwan he haveden alle the king gret	When they had all greeted the king
	And he weren alle dun-set,	And they were all seated,
	Tho seyde Ubbe, "Lokes here	Then Ubbe said, "Behold
	Ure louerd swithe dere,	Our lord so dear,
	That shal ben king of al the lond	Who will be king of all the land
	And have us alle under hond,	And have us all in his hand!
	For he is Birkabeynes sone,	For he is Birkabeyn's son,
	The king that was umbe stonde wone	The king who once used
	Us for to yemen and wel were	To rule and protect us well
	With sharp swerd and longe spere.	With a sharp sword and long spear.
2300	Lokes now, hw he is fayr:	Look now, how noble he is;
	Sikerlike he is hise eyr.	Surely he is his heir!
	Falles alle to his fet -	Everyone fall to his feet in haste
	Bicomes hise men ful sket."	And become his man."
	He weren for Ubbe swithe adrad	They were so in awe of Ubbe
	And dide sone al that he bad.	That they did all he ordered at once,

[59] *Ne conestable, ne shireve*: Like *sergeant*, these are terms predating modern police forces. A constable or marshall (*mareschal*) was an officer of the stables. A sheriff was a *shire-reeve*, the lord's representative in maintaining order in the countryside, such as Gamelyn's brother.

	And yet he deden sumdel more:	And yet they did something more:
	O bok ful grundlike he swore	They gravely swore on the scriptures
	That he sholde with him halde,	That they would stand with him
	Bothe ageynes stille and bolde	Against both timid and bold,
2310	That evere wolde his bodi dere.	Against whoever wished to harm his body.
	That dide he hem o boke swere.	He had them swear it on the Bible.
	Hwan he havede manrede and oth	When he had taken homage and oaths
	Taken of lef and of loth,	From fair and foul,
	Ubbe dubbede him to knith	Ubbe dubbed him a knight
	With a swerd ful swithe brith,	With a sword shining bright,
	And the folk of al the lond	And the people of all the land
	Bitauhte him al in his hond,	Entrusted everything into his hand,
	The cunnriche everil del	Every part of the kingdom,
	And made him king heylike and wel.	And made him king, fully and majestically.
2320	Hwan he was king, ther mouthe men se	When he was king, men might see
	The moste joye that mouhte be -	The greatest joy that could be.
	Buttinge with sharpe speres,	There was jousting with sharp spears,
	Skirming with talevaces that men beres,	Fencing with shields that men bear,
	Wrastling with laddes, putting of ston,	Wrestling with the lads, shot-putting,
	Harping and piping, ful god won,	Harping and piping, an abundant amount,
	Leyk of mine, of hasard ok,	Games of backgammon and dice as well,
	Romanz reding on the bok.	And readings from books of romances.
	Ther mouthe men here the gestes singe,	There men could hear tales sung,
	The glewmen on the tabour dinge.	With minstrels beating on a drum.
2330	Ther moutthe men se the boles beyte,	Men could see bulls baited,
	And the bores, with hundes teyte.	And the boars with lively dogs.
	Tho mouhte men se everil glew;	Men could see every kind of sport
	Ther mouthe men se hw grim grew -	And enjoy the growing excitement.[60]
	Was nevere yete joye more	There was never more joy
	In al this werd than tho was thore.	In all this world than there was there.
	Ther was so mikel yeft of clothes	There were so many gifts of clothes[61]
	That, thou I swore you grete othes,	That even if I swore you great oaths
	I ne wore nouth ther of trod.	It would never be believed.
	That may I ful wel swere, bi God!	That I may swear in full, by God!
2340	There was swithe gode metes	There were costly foods and wines
	And of wyn that men fer fetes,	That men bring from distant lands,
	Rith al so mik and gret plenté	Just as much and in such abundance
	So it were water of the se.	As if it were water from the sea.
	The feste fourti dawes sat -	The feast lasted forty days;
	So riche was nevere non so that.	There was never one so lavish as that.
	The king made Roberd there knith,	The king made Robert a knight there,
	That was ful strong and ful with,	Who was strong and valiant,
	And Willam Wendut hec, his brother,	And William Wendut as well, his brother,
	And Huwe Raven, that was that other,	And Hugh Raven, who was the other.
2350	And made hem barouns alle thre,	He made all three of them barons,

[60] *Ther mouthe men se hw grim grew*: Skeat asserts in his note to 2320 that this is early evidence of secular theatre, as the celebrants are reenacting the life of Havelock's stepfather, Grim. More likely the poet means ME *grim*, in this context 'excitement or action.'

[61] *So mikel yeft of clothes*: Lavish presents of clothing were common in wealthy households during holidays and celebrations. Chaucer and Philippa received many such gifts as recorded in royal account books of the period (Garbaty, note to 2157-59).

	And yaf hem lond and other fe,	And gave them land and other properties,
	So mikel that ilker twenti knihtes	So much that each had in his retinue
	Havede of genge, dayes and nithes.	Twenty knights by day and night.
	Hwan that feste was al don,	When the feast was all over,
	A thusand knihtes ful wel o bon	A thousand knights, fully equipped,
	Withheld the king with him to lede,	Escorted the king with him leading them.
	That ilkan havede ful god stede,	Each had a strong steed,
	Helm and sheld, and brinie brith,	Helmet and shield, and bright mailcoat,
	And al the wepne that fel to knith.	And all the weapons fitting for knights.
2360	With hem ek five thusand gode	With them were also five thousand
	Sergaunz that weren to fyht wode	Good men, raring to fight,
	Withheld he al of his genge -	Who filled out his company.
	Wile I namore the storie lenge.	I will not make the story any longer.
	Yet hwan he havede of al the lond	And yet when he had, from all the land,
	The casteles alle in his hond,	All the castles in his command,
	And conestables don therinne,	And had placed officers in them,
	He swor he ne sholde never blinne	He swore he would never rest
	Til that he were of Godard wreken,	Until he had revenge on Godard,
	That ich have of ofte speken.	Whom I have spoken often enough about.
2370	Half hundred knithes dede he calle,	He summoned half a hundred knights,
	And hise fif thusand sergaunz alle,	And all his five thousand strongmen,
	And dide sweren on the bok	And had them swear at once
	Sone, and on the auter ok,	On the Bible and on the altar as well,
	That he ne sholde nevere blinne,	That they would never give up,
	Ne for love ne for sinne,	Neither for love nor for sin,
	Til that he haveden Godard funde	Until they had found Godard
	And brouth biforn him faste bunde.	And brought him before him bound fast.
	Thanne he haveden swor this oth,	When they had sworn this oath,
	Ne leten he nouth, for lef ne loth,	They would not be delayed for love or hate,
2380	That he foren swithe rathe	So that they went forth in a rush
	Ther he was, unto the pathe	To where Godard was, on the path
	Ther he yet on hunting for,	Where he went hunting,
	With mikel genge and swithe stor.	With a retinue that was large and proud.
	Robert, that was of all the ferd	Robert, who was master of the militia,
	Mayster, girt was wit a swerd,	Was equipped with a sword
	And sat upon a ful god stede,	And sat upon a mighty steed
	That under him rith wolde wede.	That would gallop mightily under him.
	He was the firste that with Godard	He was the first to speak to Godard,
	Spak, and seyde, “Hede, cavenard!	And shouted, “Stop right there, rogue!
2390	Wat dos thu here at this pathe?	What are you doing on this path?
	Cum to the king swithe and rathe!	Come to the king quickly in haste!
	That sendes he thee word and bedes,	He sends you word and commands
	That thu thenke what thou him dedes	You to think on what you did to him
	Whan thu reftes with a knif	When you took the lives of
	Hise sistres here lif	His sisters with a knife
	And sithen bede thou in the se	And then ordered him to be drowned
	Drenchen him - that herde he!	In the sea—he heard all about that!
	He is to thee swithe grim;	He is very displeased with you.
	Cum nu swithe unto him	Now come to him immediately,
2400	That king is of this kunerike,	The sovereign of this kingdom,
	Thou fule man, thou wicke swike!	You foul man, you wicked traitor!
	And he shal yelde thee thy mede,	And he will give you your reward,
	Bi Crist that wolde on Rode blede!”	By Christ who bled on the Cross!”
	Hwan Godard herde that he ther thrette,	When Godard heard what he threatened,

	With the neve he Robert sette	With his fist he struck Robert
	Biforn the teth a dint ful strong.	In the teeth with a good strong blow,
	And Robert kipt ut a knif long	And Robert pulled out a long knife
	And smot him thoru the rith arum -	And stuck him through the right arm.
	Ther of was ful litel harum!	There was little harm done in that!
2410	Hwan his folk that saw and herde,	When his company saw and heard
	Hwou Robert with here louerd ferde,	How Robert had acted with their lord,
	He haveden him wel ner browt of live,	They nearly would have taken his life
	Ne weren his two brethren and othre five	If not for his two brothers and five others
	Slowen of here laddes ten,	Who killed ten men
	Of Godardes altherbeste men.	Of Godard's very best troops.
	Hwan the othre sawen that, he fledden,	When the others saw that, they fled,
	And Godard swithe loude gredde:	And Godard shouted loudly,
	"Mine knithes, hwat do ye?	"My knights, what are you doing?
	Sule ye thusgate fro me fle?	Will you abandon me this way?
2420	Ich have you fed and yet shal fede -	I have kept you and will still keep you!
	Helpe me nw in this nede	Help me now in this need
	And late ye nouth mi bodi spille,	And do not let my blood be spilled,
	Ne Havelok don of me hise wille!	Or let Havelock do his will with me!
	Yif ye it do, ye do you shame	If you do so, you shame yourselves
	And bringeth youself in mikel blame!"	And bring yourselves into dishonor!"
	Hwan he that herden, he wenten ageyn,	When they heard that, they came back,
	And slowen a knit and a sweyn	And killed a knight and a servant
	Of the kinges oune men,	Of the king's own men,
	And woundeden abuten ten.	And wounded about ten others.
2430	The kinges men, hwan he that sawe,	The king's men, when they saw this,
	Scuten on hem, heye and lowe,	Rushed on them, high and low,
	And everilk fot of hem he slowe,	And slaughtered every foot of them
	But Godard one, that he flowe,	Except for Godard alone, whom they would flay
	So the thef men dos henge,	Like the thief that men hang,
	Or hund men shole in dike slenge.	Or a dog that men hurl into a ditch.
	He bunden him ful swithe faste,	They tied him up tightly
	Hwil the bondes wolden laste,	While the bonds would last,
	That he rorede als a bole	So that he roared like a bull
	That wore parred in an hole	That was trapped in a pit
2440	With dogges forto bite and beite.	With dogs biting and goading.
	Were the bondes nouth to leite -	The bonds were not light in weight.
	He bounden him so fele sore	They held him so painfully tight
	That he gan crien Godes ore,	That he began to cry for God's mercy,
	That he sholde of his hend plette;	That they would cut off his hands.
	Wolden he nouht ther fore lette	They did not stop for that,
	That he ne bounden hond and fet.	Until he was bound hand and foot.
	Datheit that on that ther fore let!	Cursed be the man who would prevent it!
	But dunten him so man doth bere	They beat him like men do a bear
	And keste him on a scabbed mere,	And threw him on a mangy mare
2450	Hise nese went unto the crice.	With his nose turned back into its behind.[62]
	So ledden he that ful swike	They led that foul traitor in this way

[62] *Hise nese went unto the crice*: It was a special humiliation to have a knight ride on a mare or ass, usually facing backwards (Garbaty, note to 2298-99). Here the punishment is especially degrading with the criminal's nose pressed near the animal's anus. In the bawdy fabliau *Dame Sirith* the lady similarly fears this penalty if she is exposed as a procurer of prostitutes (247). See also *Havelock*, 2823.

	Til he biforn Havelok was brouth,	Until he was brought before Havelock,
	That he havede ful wo wrowht,	To whom he had caused so much woe,
	Bothe with hungre and with cold	Both with hunger and with cold
	Or he were twel winter old,	Before he was twelve years old,
	And with mani hevi swink,	And with much heavy labor,
	With poure mete and feble drink,	With poor food and little drink,
	And swithe wikke clothes,	And with ragged clothing,
	For al hise manie grete othes.	For all his many fine oaths.
2460	Nu beyes he his holde blame:	Now he paid for his earlier crime;
	Old sinne makes newe shame!	Old sin makes new shame!
	Wan he was so shamelike	When the foul traitor was so
	Brouth biforn the king, the fule swike!	Disgracefully brought before the king,
	The king dede Ubbe swithe calle	The king had Ubbe quickly call
	Hise erles and hise barouns alle,	His earls and all his barons,
	Dreng and thein, burgeis and knith,	Vassal and retainer, citizen and knight,
	And bad he sholden demen him rith,	And ordered that they should judge him,
	For he knew the swike dam;	For they knew the criminal well.
	Everil del God was him gram!	God was angry with him in every way!
2470	He setten hem dun bi the wawe,	They seated themselves by the wall,
	Riche and pouere, heye and lowe,	Rich and poor, high and low,
	The helde men and ek the grom,	The old men and the young as well,
	And made ther the rithe dom	And made their judgment there.
	And seyden unto the king anon,	Soon they said to the king,
	That stille sat so the ston:	Who sat as still as a stone,
	"We deme that he be al quic flawen	"We order that he be flayed alive,
	And sithen to the galwes drawe	And then taken to the gallows,
	At this foule mere tayl,	Facing this foul mare's tail,
	Thoru his fet a ful strong nayl,	With a good strong nail through his feet,
2480	And thore ben henged wit two feteres	And be hanged there on two chains,[63]
	And thare be writen thise leteres:	With these letters written there:
	'This is the swike that wende wel	'This is the traitor who fully intended
	The king have reft the lond ilk del,	To rob the king of every acre of land,
	And hise sistres with a knif	And took the lives of both
	Bothe refte here lif.'	His sisters with a knife.'
	This writ shal henge bi him thare.	This writ will hang by him there.
	The dom is demd - seye we namore."	The verdict is given. We have no more to say."
	Hwan the dom was demd and give,	When the judgment was given and approved,
	And he was wit the prestes shrive,	And he received rites from the priests,
2490	And it ne mouhte ben non other,	There was no other course,
	Ne for fader ne for brother,	Not for father nor for brother,
	But that he sholde tharne lif,	But that he should lose his life.
	Sket cam a ladde with a knif	A lad came swiftly with a knife
	And bigan rith at the to	And began right at the toe
	For to ritte and for to flo;	To cut and to slice,
	And he bigan tho for to rore	As if it were a gown or dress,[64]

[63] Garbaty notes that because hanged criminals were left exposed as a public example, chains were preferred to rope as they would not deteriorate in bad weather (note to 2301).

[64] *So it were grim or gore*: Garbaty has *so it were goun or gore*, 'gown or dress' i.e. tailored by the knife. Though the executioners drive the mare over a rough field, presumably to inflict further agony, Godard is probably dead long before his ride to the gallows. Levine criticizes the poet for his rather prurient glee over

	So it were grim or gore,	And Godard began to roar then
	That men mithe thethen a mile	So that men a mile away
	Here him rore, that fule file!	Might hear him yell, that foul wretch!
2500	The ladde ne let nowith forthi,	The youth did not stop at all for that,
	They he criede, "Merci! Merci!"	Even though he cried, "Mercy! Mercy!",
	That ne flow him everil del	To skin every bit of him
	With knif mad of grunden stel.	With a knife made of ground steel.
	Thei garte bringe the mere sone,	Soon they had the mare brought,
	Skabbed and ful ivele o bone,	Scabbed and sick to the bone,
	And bunden him rith at hire tayl	And bound him right to the tail
	With a rop of an old seyl	With a rope from an old sail.
	And drowen him unto the galwes,	They took him to the gallows,
	Nouth bi the gate but over the falwes,	Not by the road but over the fields,
2510	And henge him thore bi the hals -	And hanged him there by the neck.
	Datheit hwo recke: he was fals!	Damn whoever cares! He was false!
	Thanne he was ded, that Sathanas,	When he was dead, that devil,
	Sket was seysed al that his was	All that was his was quickly seized
	In the kinges hand ilk del -	Into the king's hand, every bit,
	Lond and lith and other catel -	Lands and tenants and other goods.
	And the king ful sone it yaf	And the king immediately placed it
	Ubbe in the hond, wit a fayr staf,	Into Ubbe's hand with a fine staff[65]
	And seyde, "Her ich sayse thee	And said, "I hereby invest you
2519	In al the lond, in al the fe."	With all the land, and all the properties."
	. . . . .	. . . . .
979	Quant Haueloc est rois pussanz,	Havelock was a mighty king then,[66]
	Le regne tint plus de .iiii. anz;	And he reigned more than four years
	Merueillos tresor i auna.	And amassed marvelous treasures.
	Argentille li commanda	But Goldeboro urged him
	Qu'il passast en Engleterre	To journey back to England
	Pur son heritage conquerre,	To conquer her heritage,
	Dont son oncle l'out engettée,	For which her uncle had exiled
	[Et] A grant tort desheritée.	And very unjustly disinherited her.
	Li rois li dist qu'il fera	The king told her he would do
	Ceo qu'ele li comandera.	As she had asked him.
	Sa nauie fet a-turner,	He had his fleet prepared
990	Ses genz & ses ostz mander.	And sent for his men and his host.
	En mier se met quant orré a,	After praying, he put to sea
	Et la reyne od lui mena.	And took the queen with him.
	Quatre vinz & quatre cenz	Havelock had four hundred
	Out Haueloc, pleines de genz.	And eighty ships, full of men.
	Tant out nagé & siglé,	They sailed and steered
	Q'en Carleflure est ariué.	Until they arrived at Saltfleet.[67]

Godard's suffering in this scene. Robert Levine, "Who Composed *Havelok* for Whom?", *Yearbook of English Studies* 22 (1992): 96.

[65] *Wit a fayr staf*: Havelock likely gives Ubbe a staff of wood to symbolize his authority, as King Edgar gives Bevis (3509), although the poet might more prosaically mean a "staff" of retainers and supporters.

[66] Editors feel about twenty lines are missing from the English story explaining Havelock's return to England, although it is not a MS defect. Skeat provides an extract from the *Lai d'Aueloc* of the likely omission (Skeat's note to line 2530). In the French version Goldeboru's name is Argentille.

	Sur le hauene se herbergerent,	They anchored near the harbor
998	Par le pais viande quierent.	And looked for provisions on land.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
2520	Tho swor Havelok he sholde make,	Then Havelock swore that
	Al for Grim, of monekes blake	He would establish a priory for Grim
	A priorie to serven in ay	Of Benedictine monks to serve
	Jhesu Crist, til Domesday,	Jesus Christ forever, until Judgment Day,
	For the god he havede him don	For the kindness he had shown him
	Hwil he was pouere and ivel o bon.	When he was poor and weak.
	And ther of held he wel his oth,	And he would keep his promise in full,
	For he it made, God it woth,	For he had it built, God knows,
	In the tun ther Grim was graven,	In the town where Grim was buried,
	That of Grim yet haves the name.	Which still has his name.[68]
2530	Of Grim bidde ich namore spelle.	I have no more to say about Grim.
	But wan Godrich herde telle,	But when Godrich,
	Of Cornwayle that was erl,	Who was earl of Cornwall—
	That fule traytour, that mixed cherl!	That foul traitor, that filthy slave—
	That Havelok King was of Denemark,	Heard that Havelock was king of Denmark,
	And ferde with him, strong and stark	And that an army, strong and bold,
	Comen Engelond withinne,	Had come into England,
	Engelond al for to winne;	To win all of England,
	And that she that was so fayr,	And that the beautiful Goldeboro,
	That was of Engelond rith eir,	Who was England's rightful heir,
2540	Was comen up at Grimesbi,	Had arrived at Grimsby,
	He was ful sorful and sori,	He was distraught and miserable
	And seyde, "Hwat shal me to rathe?	And said, "What shall I do?
	Goddoth, I shal do slon hem bathe!	God knows, I will have them both executed!
	I shal don hengen hem ful heye	I will have them hanged high,
	So mote ich brouke my rith eie,	As sure as I see with my right eye,
	But yif he of mi londe fle.	Unless they flee my land!
	Hwat! Wenden he deserite me?"	What, do they think they will disinherit me?"
	He dide sone ferd ut bidde,	At once he ordered his army out,
	That al that evere mouhte o stede	All who could ever ride a horse
2550	Ride or helm on heved bere,	Or bear a helmet on their head,
	Brini on bac, and sheld and spere,	A mailcoat on their back, shield and spear,
	Or ani other wepne bere,	Or carry any other weapon,
	Hand-ax, sythe, gisarm, or spere,	Battle-ax, scythe, halberd, or spear,
	Or aunlaz and god long knif,	Or dagger or a good long knife,
	That als he lovede leme or lif,	So that if they loved life or limb,
	That they sholden comen him to,	They should report to him,
	With ful god wepne yboren, so	Bearing their finest weapons,
	To Lincolne, ther he lay,	To Lincoln, where he waited,
	Of Marz the sevententhe day,	On the seventeenth day of March,
2560	So that he couthe hem god thank;	So that he might thank them properly.
	And yif that ani were so rank	And if any were so headstrong
	That he thanne ne come anon,	That they did not come speedily,

[67] Carleflure is near Saltfleet, 30 km south of Grimsby. Charles W. Whistler, preface to *Havelock the Dane: A Legend of Old Grimsby and Lincoln* (T. Nelson and Sons, 1899).

[68] Skeat posits that this is either Wellow Abbey in Grimsby, established by Henry I in 1110, or the Grimsby Friary, founded around 1290 (note to line 2521). TEAMS asserts that the 'black monks' are Benedictine, but Skeat and Garbaty have Augustinians. See also Smithers' note, p.144.

	He swor bi Crist and by Seint Johan,	He swore by Christ and by Saint John,
	That he sholde maken him thral,	That he would make him a slave,
	And al his ofspring forth withal.	And all his offspring after the same.[69]
	The Englishe that herde that,	Of the English who heard that,
	Was non that evere his bode sat;	There were none who refused his orders,
	For he him dredde swithe sore,	For they dreaded him so sorely
	So runcy spore, and mikle more.	Like the nag fears the spur, and much more.
2570	At the day he come sone	On the day that Godard set for them,
	That he hem sette, ful wel o bone,	They promptly came, fully equipped,
	To Lincolne with gode stedes,	To Lincoln with good warhorses
	And al the wepne that knith ledes.	And all the weapons that knights carry.
	Hwan he wore come, sket was the erl yare	When they had arrived, the earl was eager
	Ageynes Denshe men to fare,	To face against Danish men,
	And seyde, "Lythes nw alle samen!	And he said, "Listen now, all together!
	Have ich gadred you for no gamen,	I have not gathered you for fun and games,
	But ich wile seyen you forthi.	But for what I will tell you now:
	Lokes hware here at Grimesbi	Look where, there at Grimsby,
2580	Hise uten laddes here comen,	These foreigners have come,
	And haves nu the priorie numen -	And have now seized the priory
	Al that evere mithen he finde,	And all that they can find.
	He brenne kirkes and prestes binde;	They burn churches and tie up priests;
	He strangleth monkes and nunnes bothe -	They strangle both monks and nuns!
	Wat wile ye, frend, her-offe rede?	What do you, friends, advise to be done?
	Yif he regne thusgate longe,	If they run free in this way for long,
	He moun us alle overgange,	They may overcome us all.
	He moun us alle quic henge or slo,	They may hang or slay us all alive,
	Or thral maken and do ful wo	Or make us slaves and do us great woe,
2590	Or elles reve us ure lives	Or else rob us of our lives,
	And ure children and ure wives.	Along with our children and our wives!
	But dos nw als ich wile you lere,	But now do as I will instruct you,
	Als ye wile be with me dere.	If you wish to be faithful to me.
	Nimes nu swithe forth and rathe	Let us go forth now, and in haste,
	And helpes me and yuself bathe,	And save both me and yourselves
	And slos upo the dogges swithe.	And strike at the dogs quickly!
	For shal I nevere more be blithe,	For I will never be at peace,
	Ne hoseled ben ne of prest shriven	Nor be confessed or absolved by a priest,
	Til that he ben of londe driven.	Until they are driven from our land.
2600	Nime we swithe and do hem fle	Let's get going and make them flee,
	And folwes alle faste me!	And everyone follow me closely!
	For ich am he of al the ferd	For in all the army, it is me
	That first shal slo with drawen swerd.	Who will first kill with his sword drawn.
	Datheyt hwo ne stonde faste	Damn anyone who doesn't stand fast
	Bi me hwil hise armes laste!"	By me while his arms last!"
	"Ye! lef, ye!" quoth the erl Gunter;	"Yes, my dear lord, yes!" said Earl Gunter.
	"Ya!" quoth the Erl of Cestre, Reyner.	"Yes!" said the earl of Chester, Reyner.
	And so dide alle that ther stode	And who stood there said the same,

[69] Godard threatens to disinherit any knight if he will not fight, a "flagrant and unheard-of violation of custom and law" (68). Sheila Delaney, *Medieval Literary Politics* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 68. Similarly, in lines 2585 Godard asks for advice rhetorically, ignoring any answer, and then lies about the Danes to stir up anger. The poet intends to highlight Havelock's good rule, as he defers to the counsel of others and thus needs no coercion to inspire loyalty.

	And stirte forth so he were wode.	And they rushed forth as if they were mad.
2610	Tho mouthe men se the brinies brihte	Then men could see bright mailcoats
	On backes keste and lace rithe,	Thrown on backs and laced firmly,
	The helmes heye on heved sette.	And helmets set high on heads.
	To armes al so swithe plette	All hurried so quickly to arms
	That thei wore on a litel stunde	That they were ready in the time
	Grethet als men mithe telle a pund,	It takes to count out a pound.
	And lopen on stedes sone anon;	Straightaway they leaped on steeds,
	And toward Grimesbi, ful god won,	And towards Grimsby, with full force,
	He foren softe bi the sti	They lumbered along the road
	Til he come ney at Grimesbi.	Until they came near to Grimsby.
2620	Havelok, that havede spired wel	Havelock, who had inquired closely
	Of here fare, everil del,	Into their movements, every detail,
	With all his ferd cam hem ageyn.	Came against them with all his forces.
	Forbar he nother knith ne sweyn:	He spared neither knight nor peasant.
	The firste knith that he ther mette	The first knight that he met there
	With the swerd so he him grette,	He charged so hard with his sword
	For his heved of he plette -	That he sheared off his head.
	Wolde he nouth for sinne lette.	He did not hesitate to inflict harm.
	Roberd saw that dint so hende -	When Robert saw that skillful blow,
	Wolde he nevere thethen wende,	He would not turn away
2630	Til that he havede another slawen	Until he had slain another
	With the swerd he held ut drawen.	With the sword he held drawn out.
	Willam Wendut his swerd ut drow,	William Wendut drew out his sword,
	And the thredde so sore he slow	And he struck a third so hard
	That he made upon the feld	That he made his left arm fly off
	His lift arm fleye with the swerd.	Onto the field with his sword.
	Huwe Raven ne forgat nouth	Hugh Raven did not forget to use
	The swerd he havede thider brouth.	The sword he had brought there.
	He kipte it up, and smot ful sore	He swung it up, and struck hard
	An erl that he saw priken thore	On an earl that he saw spurring there
2640	Ful noblelike upon a stede,	Nobly upon a steed,
	That with him wolde al quic wede.	Who galloped quickly toward him.
	He smot him on the heved so	He struck him on the head so forcefully
	That he the heved clef a two.	That he cleft the skull in two,
	And that bi the shudre blade	And near the shoulder-blade
	The sharpe swerd let wade	He let the sharp sword pass
	Thoru the brest unto the herte;	Through the breast into the heart.
	The dint bigan ful sore to smerte,	The blow began to hurt so painfully
	That the erl fel dun anon	That the earl fell down at once,
	Al so ded so ani ston.	As dead as any stone.
2650	Quoth Ubbe, “Nu dwelle ich to longe!”	Ubbe said, “I hold back too long!”,
	And let his stede sone gonge	And immediately charged his horse
	To Godrich, with a god spere,	Toward Godrich, with a good spear
	That he saw another bere;	That he saw another bear,
	And smot Godrich and Godrich him,	And the two struck at each other
	Hetelike with herte grim,	Hotly with fierce hearts,
	So that he bothe felle dune	So that they both fell headfirst
	To the erthe, first the croune.	Down to the earth.
	Thanne he woren fallen dun bothen,	When they were both fallen,
	Grundlike here swerdes he ut drowen,	They drew out their swords violently,
2660	That weren swithe sharp and gode,	Which were so sharp and hard,
	And fouhten so thei woren wode	And fought like they were berserk,
	That the swot ran fro the crune	So that the sweat and blood ran

	To the fet right there adune.	From their heads down to their feet.
	Ther mouthe men se to knicthes bete	There men could see two knights
	Ayther on other dintes grete,	Beat on each other with great blows
	So that with the altherleste dint	So that the least strike
	Were al to-shivered a flint.	Would have shattered a stone to pieces.
	So was bitwenen hem a fiht	There was a fight between them
	Fro the morwen ner to the niht,	From the morning nearly to night,
2670	So that thei nouth ne blunne	So that they did not let up
	Til that to sette bigan the sunne.	Until the sun began to set.
	Tho yaf Godrich thorw the side	Godrich had given Ubbe
	Ubbe a wunde ful unride,	An ugly wound through the side,
	So that thorw that ilke wounde	So that with that same injury
	Havede ben brouth to grunde	He would have been brought to the earth
	And his heved al of slawen,	And his head hacked off
	Yif God ne were and Huwe Raven,	If God and Hugh Raven were not there,
	That drow him fro Godrich awey	Who drew him away from Godrich
	And barw him so that ilke day.	And saved him that very day.
2680	But er he were fro Godrich drawen,	But before he was taken from Godrich
	Ther were a thousind knihtes slawen	There were a thousand knights killed
	Bi bothe halve and mo ynowe,	And more enough on both sides.
	Ther the ferdes togidere slowe,	Where the armies clashed together
	Ther was swilk dreping of the folk	There was such slaughter of the warriors
	That on the feld was nevere a polk	That on the field there was no puddle
	That it ne stod of blod so ful	That was not so full of blood
	That the strem ran intil the hul.	That the stream didn't run downhill.
	Tho tarst bigan Godrich to go	Then Godrich began to strike quickly[70]
	Upon the Danshe and faste to slo	Upon the Danish again, killing swiftly
2690	And forthrith, also leun fares	And relentlessly, as a lion pounces
	That nevere kines best ne spares,	Who spares no kind of prey
	Thanne his gon, for he garte alle	And then is gone, for he made all
	The Denshe men biforn him falle.	The Danish men fall before him.
	He felde browne, he felde blake,	He dropped every type of warrior,
	That he mouthe overtake.	Any that he might overtake.
	Was nevere non that mouhte thave	There was no one who might survive
	Hise dintes, noyther knith ne knave,	His blows, neither knight nor serf,
	That he felde so dos the gres	That he cut down like the grass
	Biforn the sythe that ful sharp es.	Before a sharpened scythe.
2700	Hwan Havelok saw his folk so brittene	When Havelock saw his men so shaken
	And his ferd so swithe littene,	And his forces so reduced,
	He cam drivende upon a stede,	He came driving up on a steed
	And bigan til him to grede,	And began to parley with him,
	And seyde, "Godrich, wat is thee,	And said, "Godrich, why do you do this
	That thou fare thus with me	That you act this way with me
	And mine gode knihtes slos?	And slay my good knights?
	Sikerlike, thou misgos!	Surely, you do evil!
	Thou wost ful wel, yif thu wilt wite,	You know full well, if you recall,
	That Athelwold thee dide site	That Athelwold had you swear
2710	On knes and sweren on messe bok,	On your knees and on the missal,
	On caliz and on pateyn ok,	On chalice and sacramental cloth as well,

[70] *Tarst*: The word is unrecorded in the MED, and Skeat believes it may be an error for *faste.* The poet compares Godard to a lightning strike.

	That thou hise douhter sholdest yelde,	That you would yield to his daughter,
	Than she were wimman of elde,	When she was a woman of age,
	Engelond everil del.	Every bit of England.
	Godrich the erl, thou wost it wel!	Earl Godrich, you know it well!
	Do nu wel withuten fiht	Do it now without struggle.
	Yeld hire the lond, for that is rith.	Give her the land, for it is her right.
	Wile ich forgive thee the lathe,	I will forgive you for your hate,
	Al mi dede and al mi wrathe,	For all my dead, and all my wrath,
2720	For I se thu art so with	For I see you are valiant
	And of thi bodi so god knith."	And in body a good knight."
	"That ne wile ich neveremo,"	"That I will never do,"
	Quoth erl Godrich, "for ich shal slo	Answered Earl Godrich, "for I will
	Thee, and hire forhenge heye.	Slay you, and hang her high!
	I shal thrist ut thy rith eye	I will thrust out your right eye
	That thou lokes with on me,	That you look at me with,
	But thu swithe hethen fle!"	Unless you flee from here quickly!"
	He grop the swerd ut sone anon,	He straightaway gripped his sword out,
	And hew on Havelok ful god won,	And cut down on Havelock forcefully,
2730	So that he clef his sheld on two.	So that he split his shield in two.
	Hwan Havelok saw that shame do	When Havelock saw that shame done
	His bodi ther biforn his ferd,	To his own body in front of his host,
	He drow ut sone his gode swerd,	At once he drew out his best sword
	And smote him so upon the crune	And smashed him so hard upon the head
	That Godrich fel to the erthe adune.	That Godrich fell to the earth.
	But Godrich stirt up swithe sket -	But Godrich got up very quickly.
	Lay ne nowth longe at hise fet -	He did not lay long at his feet,
	And smot him on the sholdre so	And struck Havelock on the shoulder
	That he dide thare undo	So that he took off more
2740	Of his brinie ringes mo	Of his mailcoat rings
	Than that ich kan tellen fro,	Than I can count,
	And woundede him rith in the flesh,	And wounded him right in the flesh,
	That tendre was and swithe nesh,	Which was so tender and soft,
	So that the blod ran til his to.	So that the blood ran down to his toe.
	Tho was Havelok swithe wo,	Havelock was distressed then
	That he havede of him drawen	That Godrich had drawn blood
	Blod and so sore him slawen.	From him and wounded him so sorely.
	Hertelike til him he wente	With furious heart he went at him
	And Godrich ther fulike shente,	And brought great shame to Godrich there,
2750	For his swerd he hof up heye,	For he heaved his sword up high
	And the hand he dide of fleye	And struck him so harshly
	That he smot him with so sore -	That he made Godrich's hand fly off.
	Hw mithe he don him shame more?	How could he dishonor him more?
	Hwan he havede him so shamed,	When Havelock had disgraced him,
	His hand of plat and ivele lamed,	His hand cut off, and badly lame,
	He tok him sone bi the necke	He immediately seized him by the neck
	Als a traitour, datheit who recke!	As a traitor—damn whoever cares!—
	And dide him binde and fetere wel	And had him bound and fettered fast
	With gode feteres al of stel,	With strong chains, all of steel,
2760	And to the quen he sende him,	And he sent him to the queen.
	That birde wel to him ben grim,	That lady had cause to be stern with him,
	And bad she sholde don him gete	And she ordered that he be guarded,
	And that non ne sholde him bete,	But that no one should beat him
	Ne shame do, for he was knith,	Or abuse him, for he was a knight,
	Til knithes haveden demd him rith.	Until other knights had rightfully judged him.

	Than the Englishe men that sawe,	When the English men saw that,
	That thei wisten, heye and lawe,	When they realized, high and low,
	That Goldeboru that was so fayr	That Goldeboro, who was so fair,
	Was of Engelond rith eyr,	Was the rightful heir of England,
2770	And that the king hire havede wedded,	And that the king had married her,
	And haveden been samen bedded,	And they had bedded together,
	He comen alle to crie "Merci,"	They all came to cry, "Mercy!"
	Unto the king at one cri,	Unto the king with one voice.
	And beden him sone manrede and oth	At once they offered him homage and vows
	That he ne sholden, for lef ne loth,	That they would never,
	Neveremore ageyn him go,	For love or hate, oppose him again,
	Ne ride, for wel ne for wo.	Or rebel, for better or for worse.
	The king ne wolde nouth forsake	The king did not reject them
	That he ne shulde of hem take	So that he should not accept
2780	Manrede that he beden and ok	The homage that they offered, as well as
	Hold othes sweren on the bok.	Other oaths of loyalty sworn on the Bible.
	But or bad he that thider were brouth	But before doing so he ordered the queen
	The quen for hem swilk was his thouth	To be brought, for such were his thoughts
	For to se and forto shawe,	To watch and to see
	Yif that he hire wolde knawe -	If they would recognize her.
	Thoruth hem witen wolde he	Through them he would know
	Yif that she aucte quen to be.	If she ought to be queen.
	Sixe erles weren sone yare	Six earls were soon ready
	After hire for to fare.	To set out after her.
2790	He nomen onon and comen sone,	They went at once and soon returned
	And brouthen hire, that under mone	Bringing her, she who had no peer
	In al the werd ne havede per	Under the moon in all the world
	Of hendeleik, fer ne ner.	In gentility, near or far.
	Hwan she was come thider, alle	When she was coming near,
	The Englishe men bigunne falle	All the English men began to fall
	O knes, and greten swithe sore,	On their knees and cried out bitterly
	And seyden, "Levedi, Kristes ore	And said, "Our lady, Christ's mercy
	And youres! We haven misdo mikel	And yours! We have done great evil
	That we ayen you have be fikel,	To be disloyal to you,
2800	For Englond auhte for to ben	For England ought to be yours,
	Youres and we youre men.	And we your men.
	Is non of us, yung ne old,	There is none of us, young or old,
	That he ne wot that Athelwold	Who does not know that Athelwold
	Was king of this kunerike	Was sovereign of this kingdom
	And ye his eyr, and that the swike	And you his heir, and that the traitor
	Haves it halden with mikel wronge -	Has held it with great injustice.
	God leve him sone to honge!"	May God soon grant for him to hang!"
	Quot Havelok, "Hwan that ye it wite,	Havelock said, "Since you understand,
	Nu wile ich that ye doune site;	I would like you now to all sit down.
2810	And after Godrich haves wrouht,	And in regard to what Godrich has caused,
	That haves in sorwe himself brouth,	Who has brought himself to calamity,
	Lokes that ye demen him rith,	See that you judge him rightly,
	For dom ne spareth clerk ne knith,	For justice spares neither priest nor knight.
	And sithen shal ich understonde	And after then I will accept from you,
	Of you, after lawe of londe,	Under the law of the land,
	Manrede and holde othes bothe,	Both your homage and oaths of loyalty,
	Yif ye it wilen and ek rothe."	If you want it and recommend it as well."
	Anon ther dune he hem sette,	They seated themselves at once,
	For non the dom ne durste lette	For no one dared obstruct the verdict,

2820	And demden him to binden faste	And they ordered the traitor bound tight
	Upon an asse swithe unwraste,	Upon a filthy donkey,
	Andelong, nouht overthwert,	End to end, not across,
	His nose went unto the stert	His nose set toward the tail,
	And so to Lincolne lede,	And led to Lincoln in this manner,
	Shamelike in wicke wede,	Shamefully in wretched rags;
	And, hwan he come unto the borw,	And, when he arrived in the borough,
	Shamelike ben led ther thoru,	To be dishonorably paraded through,
	Bi southe the borw unto a grene,	To south of the town onto a green field—
	That thare is yet, als I wene,	Which is still there, as far as I know—
2830	And there be bunden til a stake,	And to be tied to a stake
	Abouten him ful gret fir make,	With a great fire set around him,
	And al to dust be brend rith there.	And all to be burned to dust right there.
	And yet demden he ther more,	And yet they ordered more,
	Other swikes for to warne:	In order to warn other traitors:
	That hise children sulde tharne	That his children should forever lose
	Everemore that eritage	Their heritage of what was his
	That his was, for hise utrage.	For his outrageous crime.
	Hwan the dom was demd and seyd,	When the verdict was given and approved,
	Sket was the swike on the asse leyd,	The traitor was quickly laid on the donkey
2840	And led him til that ilke grene	And he was led to that same green
	And brend til asken al bidene.	And burned to ashes right away.
	Tho was Goldeboru ful blithe -	Then Goldeboro was at ease.
	She thanked God fele sythe	She thanked God many times
	That the fule swike was brend	That the foul traitor who had intended
	That wende wel hire bodi have shend;	To disgrace her body was burned,
	And seyde, "Nu is time to take	And she said, "Now is the time to take
	Manrede of brune and of blake,	Homage from all kinds of people
	That ich se ride and go,	That I see riding and walking,
	Nu ich am wreke of mi fo."	Now that I am avenged on my foe."
2850	Havelok anon manrede tok	Havelock had soon received pledges
	Of alle Englishe on the bok	On the Bible from all the English,
	And dide hem grete othes swere	And had them swear solemn oaths
	That he sholden him god feyth bere	That they would hold him in good faith
	Ageyn hem alle that woren lives	Toward all who were alive
	And that sholde ben born of wives.	And who were born of women.[71]
	Thanne he haveden sikernesse	When he had taken guarantees
	Taken of more and of lesse,	From the great and the lesser,
	Al at hise wille, so dide he calle	With all at his will, he summoned
	The Erl of Cestre and hise men alle,	The earl of Chester with all his men,[72]
2860	That was yung knith withuten wif,	Who was a young knight without a wife,
	And seyde, "Sire erl, bi mi lif,	And said, "Sir Earl, by my life,
	And thou wile mi conseyl tro,	If you will trust my counsel,
	Ful wel shal ich with thee do;	I will deal with you fairly.

[71] *And that sholde ben born of wives*: i.e. everyone. The expression seems to have been common, for the apparitions in *Macbeth* trick him by saying "none of woman born / shall harm Macbeth" (*Macbeth* IV.1.89-90), leading him into false confidence when Macduff turns out to be born by Caesarian. See also *Guy of Warwick*, 1288.

[72] This seems to be the same Earl of Chester, Reyner, as the one who allies with Godrich earlier (2607), and apparently he has been rehabilitated. The reference might be meaningful, although there was no earl of Chester named Reyner, and Gunter is a generic name in the time period.

	For ich shal yeve thee to wive	For I will give you as a wife
	The fairest thing that is o live.	The fairest thing that is alive,
	That is Gunnild of Grimesby,	Gunnild of Grimsby,
	Grimes douther, bi Seint Davy,	The daughter of Grim, by Saint David,[73]
	That me forth broute and wel fedde,	Who brought me up and kept me well,
	And ut of Denemark with me fledde	And fled with me out of Denmark
2870	Me for to burwe fro mi ded.	To rescue me from death.
	Sikerlike, thoru his red,	Surely, through his good judgment
	Have ich lived into this day -	I have lived to this day.
	Blissed worthe his soule ay!	May his soul be blessed forever!
	I rede that thu hire take	I advise that you take her
	And spuse and curteyse make,	And wed her, and do her courtesy,
	For she is fayr and she is fre,	For she is beautiful and she is noble,
	And al so hende so she may be.	And as gracious as she could be.
	Ther tekene, she is wel with me;	I will prove it to you in full that
	That shal ich ful wel shewe thee.	I am well pleased with her by a token,
2880	For ich wile give thee a give	For I will give you a promise
	That everemore, hwil ich live,	That forevermore, while I live,
	For hire shaltu be with me dere,	For her sake you shall be dear to me.
	That wile ich that this folc al here."	I would like all these people to witness that."
	The erl ne wolde nouth ageyn	The earl did not refuse the king,
	The king be, for knith ne sweyn	And neither knight nor servant
	Ne of the spusing seyen nay,	Said anything against the match,
	But spusede that ilke day.	But they were wedded that same day.
	That spusinge was in god time maked,	That marriage was made in a blessed moment,
	For it ne were nevere, clad ne naked,	For there were never in any land
2890	In a thede samened two	Two who came together, clothed or naked,
	That cam togidere, livede so	Who lived in the way
	So they diden al here live:	That they did their whole lives.
	He geten samen sones five,	They had five sons together,
	That were the beste men at nede	All the best men in times of need
	That mouthe riden on ani stede.	Who might ride on any steed.
	Hwan Gunnild was to Cestre brouth,	When Gunnild was brought to Chester,
	Havelok the gode ne forgat nouth	Havelock, the good man, did not forget
	Bertram, that was the erles kok,	Bertram, who was the earl's cook.
	That he ne dide callen ok,	He called him as well
2900	And seyde, "Frend, so God me rede,	And said, "Friend, so God help me,
	Nu shaltu have riche mede,	You will have a rich reward
	For wissing and thi gode dede	For your guidance and your kind deeds
	That tu me dides in ful gret nede.	That you did for me in my great need.
	For thanne I yede in mi cuvel	For then I walked in my cloak
	And ich ne havede bred ne sowel.	And had neither bread nor sauce,
	Ne I ne havede no catel,	Nor did I have any possessions.
	Thou feddes and claddes me ful wel.	You fed and clothed me well.
	Have nu forthi of Cornwayle	Take now the earldom of Cornwall,
	The erldom ilk del, withuten fayle,	Every acre, without any doubt,
2910	And al the lond that Godrich held,	And all the land that Godrich held,
	Bothe in towne and ek in feld;	Both in town and field as well.
	And ther-to wile ich that thu spuse,	And with that I want you to marry

[73] *Seint Davy*: Not King David of Israel, but David (c. 500-89) the patron saint of Wales. Associated with vegetarians and poets, he is possibly here only to fit the rhyme. *Gunhildr* is Old Norse in etymology.

	And fayre bring hire until huse,	Grim's daughter, Levi the gracious,
	Grimes douther, Levive the hende,	And bring her honorably to your house
	For thider shal she with thee wende.	For she shall go with you there.
	Hire semes curteys for to be,	It is her nature to be courteous,
	For she is fayr so flour on tre;	For she is as fair as the flower on the tree.
	The hew is swilk in hire ler	The color in her face
	So the rose in roser,	Is like the rose in a rosebush
2920	Hwan it is fayre sprad ut newe,	When it has newly blossomed out
	Ageyn the sunne brith and lewe."	Toward the sun, bright and fresh."
	And girde him sone with the swerd	And at once he fit him with the sword
	Of the erldom, biforn his ferd,	Of the earldom, in front of his army,
	And with his hond he made him knith,	And with his hand he made him a knight
	And yaf him armes, for that was rith,	And gave him arms, for that was proper,
	And dide him there sone wedde	And straightaway had him married
	Hire that was ful swete in bedde.	To Levi, who was so sweet in bed.
	After that he spused wore,	After they were married,
	Wolde the Erl nouth dwelle thore,	The earl did not wish to dwell there,
2930	But sone nam until his lond	But soon made his way to his land
	And seysed it al in his hond	And received it all into his hand,
	And livede ther inne, he and his wif,	And lived there, him and his wife,
	An hundred winter in god lif,	For a hundred seasons in good health.
	And gaten mani children samen	They had many children together,
	And liveden ay in blisse and gamen.	And lived forever in ease and pleasure.
	Hwan the maidens were spused bothe,	When both of the maidens were married,
	Havelok anon bigan ful rathe	Havelock immediately began
	His Denshe men to feste wel	To endow his Danish men well
	Wit riche landes and catel,	With rich lands and properties,
2940	So that he weren alle riche,	So that they were all prosperous,
	For he was large and nouth chiche.	For he was generous and not grudging.
	Ther after sone, with his here,	Soon after, he traveled with his army
	For he to Lundone for to bere	To London to wear the crown,
	Corune, so that it sawe	So that all would see,
	Henglishe ant Denshe, heye and lowe,	English and Danish, high and low,
	Hwou he it bar with mikel pride,	How he wore it with regal pride
	For his barnage that was unride.	Before his great baronage.
	The feste of his coruning	The festival of his coronation
	Lastede with gret joying	Lasted with great rejoicing
2950	Fourti dawes and sumdel mo.	For forty days and somewhat more.
	Tho bigunnen the Denshe to go	Then the Danes began to go
	Unto the king to aske leve;	To the king to ask permission to leave.
	And he ne wolde hem nouth greve,	He did not want to aggrieve them,
	For he saw that he woren yare	For he saw that they were anxious
	Into Denemark for to fare;	To journey home to Denmark,
	But gaf hem leve sone anon	But gave them permission soon after
	And bitauhte hem Seint Johan,	And entrusted them to Saint John,
	And bad Ubbe, his justise,	And ordered Ubbe, his magistrate,
	That he sholde on ilke wise	That he should govern and guard
2960	Denemark yeme and gete so	Denmark in the same way,
	That no pleynte come him to.	So that no complaint would come to him.
	Hwan he wore parted alle samen,	When they had all departed together,
	Havelok bilefte wit joye and gamen	Havelock stayed with joy and pleasure
	In Engelond and was ther-inne	In England and was king there
	Sixti winter king with winne,	In peace for sixty years.
	And Goldeboru Quen, that I wene	And as for Queen Goldeboro, I know that

	So mikel love was hem bitwene	So much love was between them
	That al the werd spak of hem two;	That all the world spoke of the two.
	He lovede hir and she him so	He loved her and she loved him
2970	That neyther owe mithe be	So that neither one could be separated
	Fro other, ne no joye se	From the other, nor have any happiness
	But if he were togidere bothe.	Unless they were together.
	Nevere yete no weren he wrothe	They were never angry with each other,
	For here love was ay newe -	For their love was always new.
	Nevere yete wordes ne grewe	Harsh words never grew between them
	Bitwene hem hwar of ne lathe	That might lead to any hostility
	Mithe rise ne no wrathe.	Or any wrath.
	He geten children hem bitwene	They had many children together,
	Sones and doughtres rith fivetene,	Sons and daughters, fifteen in all,
2980	Hwar-of the sones were kinges alle,	Of whom the sons were all kings
	So wolde God it sholde bifalle,	If God should have it happen,
	And the douhtres alle quenes:	And the daughters all queens.
	Him stondes wel that god child strenes!	He stands well who has good children!
	Nu have ye herd the gest al thoru	Now you have heard the adventure through
	Of Havelok and of Goldeboru -	Of Havelock and Goldeboro,
	Hw he weren boren and hw fedde,	How they were born and how they fared,
	And hwou he woren with wronge ledde	And how they were treated wrongly
	In here youthe with trecherie,	In their youth with treachery,
	With tresoun, and with felounye;	With treason, and with felony;
2990	And hwou the swikes haveden tiht	And how the traitors intended
	Reven hem that was here rith,	To rob them of what was their right,
	And hwou he weren wreken wel,	And how they were well avenged.
	Have ich seyd you everil del.	I have told you every bit.
	Forthi ich wolde biseken you	For that, I now ask of all of you
	That haven herd the rim nu,	Who have heard the story now,
	That ilke of you, with gode wille,	That each of you, in good faith,
	Saye a Pater Noster stille	Will say the Lord’s Prayer quietly
	For him that haveth the rym maked,	For him who made this story
	And ther-fore fele nihtes waked,	And stayed awake many nights for it,
3000	That Jesu Crist his soule bringe	That Jesus Christ would bring his soul
	Biforn his Fader at his endinge.	Before His Father at his end.
3002	Amen	Amen.

Class and the Anglo-Saxon World of *Havelock the Dane*

Chaucer's pilgrims are defined by their livelihoods,[1] and many are not even given names. The sort of work one did and its associated social class seems inseparable from personal identity during the English medieval period and in its literature. Charlemagne ordered that every subject "serve God faithfully in that order in which he is placed,"[2] and expectations of conduct based on rank seem axiomatic throughout middle and late medieval texts. Class still seems to be the normative concern for modern critics of literature. For the romance *Havelock the Dane*, dated to approximately 1285, much commentary deals with the social identity of the assumed audience of the story, and how Havelock acts as an exemplar for its agendas. Halverson sees the sentimentality of the poem as distinctly lower-class. Swanton reads the poem as a series of "improbable social advancements" forming a bourgeois fantasy in which hard work counts but "breeding will out."[3] Crane sees a desire for legitimacy among the upper-middle class barony and a nostalgia for the more secure era of their Anglo-Norman forebears.[4] Alternatively, Stuart posits royal patronage of the poem, suggesting that perhaps an unpopular Edward I wished to portray himself via Havelock as an ideal model of kingship.[5]

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[1] Nicola Masciandaro, *The Voice of the Hammer: The Meaning of Work in Middle English Literature* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2007), 124.

[2] Quoted in David Herlihy, "Three Patterns of Social Mobility in Medieval History," in *Social Mobility and Modernization*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 19.

[3] Michael Swanton, *English Literature Before Chaucer* (New York: Longman Group, 1987), 202, 195.

[4] Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 9.

[5] Christopher Stuart, "*Havelok the Dane* and Edward I in the 1290s," *Studies in Philology* 93:4 (1996): 349-364.

All of these critical lenses assume that the poem may be neatly fitted into a discrete class bracket, with at most the common sense concession that more than one group might have enjoyed reading or hearing such a work. Yet a narrow focus on class in *Havelock* results in locking it within a timeframe it does not belong to, all the more curious as early scholarship of the poem dealt largely with sources rather than actual textual criticism. I would like to offer an alternative interpretation of *Havelock* which sidesteps the issue of class by suggesting that the fictive ethos of the poem predates these late-medieval distinctions. The social values in the poem, the idealized virtues of the warrior-knight, and the nature of kingly authority all reflect a culturally Anglo-Saxon and Germanic rather than late medieval and Anglo-Norman world. This identification provides a new praxis of reading the poem that goes beyond the obsessive question of "is there a class in this text?"[6]

Part of this academic fixation with audience rank may be due to the relative lateness of English medieval romances, with most appearing less than a century before Chaucer. But *Havelock* is earlier and analogues of the story date back to Geoffrey Gaimer's *Estorie des Engles* (1140) and the twelfth- century *Lai d'Havelok*, among numerous briefer citations. The story's folktale roots may be considerably older. Grimsby's town seal of 1201 depicts Havelock and Goldeboru on it. Skeat lists several Anglo-Danish kings as possible sources and even speculates a link to Hamlet,[7] and another scholar notes that, just as Grim flees to England secretly, in the Old Norse sagas

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[6] Roy Michael Liuzza, "Representation and Readership in the ME *Havelok*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 93 (1994): 519.

[7] Walter Skeat, ed., *The Lay of Havelock the Dane* (Early English Text Society, Extra Series 4, 1868; Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint, 1973).

the name *Grímnir* can mean *disguise*.[8] Similarly, Odin keeps a raven named Huginn, echoed in Grim's son Hugh Raven. Critics have noticed similarities in style between *Havelock* and *Beowulf*: both are narrated by a minstrel, with the call to attention "herkneth to me" (1) sounding much like "Hwaet!" Bradbury argues that the English *Havelock* was written independently of Gaimar and the *Lai* based on common oral tradition. Robert Mannying, around 1300, reports his puzzlement over the popularity of the story in the Lincoln area, for "I fynd no man, þat has writen in story, how Hauelok þis lond wan."[9] The minstrel narrator of the poem may be a fiction. But if so, "where did this convention come from?"[10]

Anglo-Saxon England, of course, had class divisions, with noblemen, freemen, and slaves. Ælfric's plowman complains that his work is hard "for þæm þe ic neom freo" ("because I am not free," 21).[11] Nevertheless, the class system of *Havelock* differs from late feudalism, for there is a curious absence of the middle barony in the poem and the courtly virtues they pretended to, or the urban world with which they were increasingly interacting. The physical stage of the knight is absent. Castles have functional purposes or exist as forlorn places of punishment, such as to imprison Goldeboru or Havelock and

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[8] Edmund Reiss, "*Havelok the Dane* and Norse Mythology," *Modern Languages Quarterly* 27 (1996): 115-24, quoted in *Four Romances of England*, ed. Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1999), 79.

[9] Robert Mannying of Brunne (Bourne, Linconshire), *Peter Langtoft's Chronicle*, ed. Thomas Hearne (Oxford, 1725), 1: 25-26, quoted in Nancy Mason Bradbury, "The Traditional Origins of *Havelock the Dane*," *Studies in Philology* 90:2 (1991): 119. Bradbury (128) also notes that the English *Havelock* does not have formulaic appeals to French authority such as in *Bevis* (888), "So hit is fonde in Frensche tale."

[10] Bradbury, 127.

[11] Ælfric, "A Colloquy on the Occupations," Anonymous translation into Old English, tenth century, in *A Guide to Old English*, fifth ed., ed. Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), 183.

his sisters. Feasts take place outdoors. Jewelry and swords have no magical properties to summon fairy-queens, but military or ordinary utility, such as when Havelock bribes Ubbe with an expensive ring in order to receive permission to trade in Denmark. Halverson believes that "*bourgeois* inevitably suggests an urban background,"[12] which assumes a simple binary of civic versus rural life. Even so, little takes place in cities in *Havelock*. Lincoln is barely a square kilometer in size in pre-Norman England,[13] and most of the poem's action there takes place outdoors, and often in mud. Havelock takes royal residence in London only at the story's close, and the poet is otherwise unconcerned with city life.

Havelock explores universal concerns crossing class boundaries, and a primary one is food. The poem has a cook, but at times sounds like a cookbook. The types of fish that Grim and Havelock catch are listed in detail, as well as the "wastels, simenels with þe horn / hise pokes fulle of mele an korn / netes flesh, shepes, and swines" ("cakes, horn-shaped loaves, his bags full of flour, and beef, mutton, and pork," 780-2). Hunger touched all ranks even if unequally. One Marxist critic objects that Havelock's wage request for only enough to eat from the cook marks the poem as bourgeois, as it is admirable "only from the point of view of an employer."[14] But Lincoln is experiencing a near-famine, and receiving regular meals is good fortune for any class. It is not a time for Havelock to negotiate his retirement benefits. Much like the *Odyssey*, trials are

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[12] John Halverson, "Havelok the Dane and Society," *Chaucer Review*, Pennsylvania State University Press 6:2 (1971): 150.

[13] William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell, ed., *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain* (New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), 230.

[14] Sheila Delaney, *Medieval Literary Politics* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 69.

interspersed with feasting in the poem, and Havelock's rise in prosperity is indexed by his diet.[15] He progresses from hunger to "bred an chese, butere and milk / pastees and flaunes" (644), to the cook's soup, up to cranes, swans, and venison: "þe beste mete / þat king or cayser wolde ete" (1545-6). Significantly, Havelock drinks the beverages of a Heorot and not a French court. With Ubbe he drinks *pyment* (1549), a mix of mead and grape juice, and the minstrel narrator is also evidently a man of the people who requests "ful god ale" (14) rather than wine.

Nicola Masciandaro, in *The Voice of the Hammer*, examines the origins of several Middle English words for *work*. The use of such words in *Havelock* similarly suggests an attitude to labor which has little commonality with later French or feudal values. Masciandaro points out that all of the French loanwords for *work* in Middle English have negative connotations: *travail* has an etymological link to an instrument of torture,[16] and *labor* similarly suggests fatigue or pain, with the modern submeaning of childbirth still retaining such a connection. Although St. Augustine writes that man was meant to work, there is clearly a medieval aristocratic contempt for labor, and even prohibitions against knights engaging in manual toil. At best there is regard for the creative artisan or craftsman, just as the speaker in *The Ruin* praises the *waldendwyrhtan*, or master-mason.[17] In *Floris and Blancheflor* Dary sends Floris to the emir's tower to pose as a "god ginour" (701), a master craftsman and stonemason, with no suggestion that the occupation is a low or demeaning one for him.

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[15] Swanton, *English Literature*, 202.

[16] Masciandaro, 14.

[17] Masciandaro, 83.

In the French analogue to *Havelock*, Grim sends out Havelock not from need but to give him a "prince's education."[18] The English poet will have none of this and places a near-famine in the story, underscoring the family's desperate straits by having Grim dress Havelock in a ship's sail (859). In the English text Havelock knows of his royalty, made unambiguous by the poet when Havelock offers *manrede* to Godard as a child,[19] unlike the French versions where Grim's daughter Kelloc later tells him. He nevertheless sets out proclaiming, "It is no shame forto swinken" (800). For Ælfric's plowman, to *swince* is grunt labor of the lowest type, but Havelock knowingly shares in it. Everyone in the poem works in some way, through the cook to Ubbe to even Athelwold and Birkabeyn, who have some kingly employment dispensing justice. Godard, noticeably, is hunting when apprehended (2203), a form of leisure highly approved of for the medieval aristocrat but here an idle activity.

The sensibilities of Anglo-Norman England seems thinnest in the portrayal of women in *Havelock*, which is considerably more Germanic than Latinate in flavor. There is a hint of the courtly romance style in Goldeboru's coerced marriage to what will turn out to be a "frog-prince,"[20] but unlike the over-elaborate recognition plot of *Floris and Blancheflour* with its blushing lovers, here the marriage is made out of necessity.[21] Goldeboru's utility for Godrich is closer to an Anglo-Saxon *fríþwebba*, peace-weaver. Love, when it later flowers, takes place within "the secure and fruitful relationship of

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[18] David Staines, "Havelok the Dane: A Thirteenth-Century Handbook for Princes," *Speculum* 51 (1976): 605.

[19] G.V. Smithers, ed., *Havelock* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), xxxvii.

[20] Swanton, *English Literature,* 195.

[21] *Four Romances of England,* 76.

marriage"[22] rather than covert adultery or a dramatic separation with its theatrical pining and sighing. Romances may obliquely indicate the hero's vulnerability by projecting it onto the heroine.[23] Yet, despite Ubbe and Havelock's fear for her safety, the would-be rapists in the French text are thieves in the English version, largely unconcerned with Goldeboru. Goldeboru is otherwise actualized and constantly beside Havelock to offer sound advice,[24] receiving the angelic visitor and directing her husband to return to Denmark to claim the throne. Havelock's obedience to her *radde* (1354) is not chivalrous service but practical conduct. After winning England, as the country "rightly belongs to his wife, Havelock refuses to pass sentence on Godrich; he surrenders his victim to his wife for sentencing."[25]

The relatively egalitarian treatment of women extends beyond Havelock's marital relationship. Anglo-Saxon women had standing in legal transactions, and Goldeboru is respected as the daughter of the legitimate king. The English soldiers who realize their error in fighting Havelock's army plead to her "levedi, Kristes ore" ("Lady, Christ's mercy," 2798) before recognizing Havelock. The poet's and the characters' regard for Goldeboru is not based purely on her royalty, for other women in the story also play rather practical domestic roles as opposed to period themes of courtly seclusion behind curtains. Ubbe teases his wife while the table is being set that he wants to sit with Goldeboru at dinner because she is better looking (1716). In another realistic touch, Grim

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[22] Swanton, *English Literature*, 195

[23] Julie Nelson Couch, "The Vulnerable Hero: *Havelok* and the Revision of Romance," *Chaucer Review* 42:3 (2008): 336.

[24] Swanton, *English Literature*, 203.

[25] Staines, 610.

seems to be at the tail-end of an argument with his wife over drowning Havelock when he rises at night, protesting, "ne thenkestu nowt of mine othes / that ich have mi louerd sworen?" (579-80). Havelock describes his stepsister Levi's face to Bertram the cook as "so a rose in roser" ("like a rose in a rosebush," 2919), but then we have the surprisingly earthy comment that Levi was a wife "ful swete in bedde" (2927).

The poet equally seems more interested in Havelock's physical preeminence than his lineage. Havelock is "boþe stark and strong / in Engelond was non hise per / of strengþe þat euere kam him ner" (989-91). His rock-throwing prowess amazes the commoners as well as the gentry: "þe knithes speken þerof alle" ("the knights all spoke of him," 1069). Godrich himself is either sarcastic or momentarily intimidated by Havelock's size, addressing him as "maister" (1136) upon their meeting, whereas he previously calls Havelock a knave (1088). Later on, Havelock distinguishes himself for might in battle, healing from an impossible number of wounds inflicted by Ubbe's outlaws, and then leading the charge in England and heaving a sword on to Godrich's head (2555). Havelock earns his *lof* through physical combat and not solely through family titles, in the same way that Beowulf gains an audience with Hrothgar through his father Ecgtheow, but must still prove himself as a warrior, having previously been dismissed as an "æðeling unfrom," a feeble prince (2188).

The choice of weaponry in the poem also echoes the Anglo-Saxon emphasis on individual strength. Havelock tends to use the weapons of a peasant. In a fight with the thieving rebels of Ubbe's lawless realm, Havelock grabs only a "dore-tre" (1627), his brother Robert takes a staff, and William a tree (1713). These are the weapons of a *Tournament of Tottenham* combatant. Halverson notes that the French poet feels the

weapon is necessary but unsuitable for Havelock,[26] but the English text intimates no sense of inadequacy. Bernard takes the most sophisticated weapon, an axe. A recurring theme in *Beowulf* is swords breaking or being charmed into uselessness, requiring bare-handed fighting, and *Havelock* suggests an equally dismissive attitude toward the weapons of the knight. The attackers throw spears at Havelock "fro ferne" ("from a distance," 1685), and there is the odor that such tactics are cowardly. To underscore their cravenness and Havelock's heroism, far more rebels die in the English analogue than in the French.[27] Noticeably, the only time the poet describes the military preparation of knights, with "brinies brihte / on backes keste, and late rithe / þe helmes heye on heued sette" ("coats of mail cast on backs and fitted straight, high helmets set on heads," 2431-33), it is for Godrich's losing side.

The vocabulary of the warrior also indicates flux in the period of *Havelock*'s writing. Few of the Old English terms which relate to military rank or organization survive into Middle English. The *duguð* and the *fyrd* disappear, and new terms appear which previously had servile significations: *cniht* becomes *knight*, and *vassal*—Celtic for *boy* or *servant*—improves, as does *constable*, previously indicating someone who shoveled out the stable.[28] The semantic shifts precipitate from the Norman takeover and partly from differences between the courtly ideals of knighthood and the older Germanic model of the loyal warrior. Havelock uses a sword in battle with Godrich, but here an interesting irony appears: his Danes use a Germanic *ferd* formation (2443) fought on foot,

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[26] Halverson, 149.

[27] Halverson, 149.

[28] Herlihy, in Rotberg, 32.

and the English under Godrich use Norman cavalry tactics.[29] Hugh Raven splits the head of an English earl mounted "noblelike upon a stede" (2461). This is odd considering that the poet repeatedly praises Havelock's ability with horses (10, 1971). Gaimar does not mention cavalry in his version, but to have battle on foot in the English text seems anachronistic to the time of the poem's composition, especially to *win* after the defeat of Harold's foot soldiers at Hastings.

The general culture of *Havelock* seems suspiciously *Beowulf*ian in its Germanic conception of warrior etiquette. In the scene where rebels attack the guardhouse in Denmark, Havelock's brothers sleep on benches by the wall, like Beowulf's men in Heorot. The formal exchange of insults between Bernard Brown and the thieves, "summe of you shal ich drepen / and the othre shal ich kesten / in feteres and ful faste festen" (1783-5), sounds like an Anglo-Saxon *flyting*. The rebels are themselves Grendel-like in being described by Ubbe as belonging to "Kaym kin and Eves" ("Cain and Eve's kin," 2046). Many of the dialogues in the poem are performative speech acts rather than conversation,[30] and the recurrence of declamatory openings such as "lithes now alle to me" (1401) suggest the heightened and monologic *maþelode*-speeches of the Anglo-Saxon epic heroes.

Ker says that the Germanic hero "sails his own ship."[31] The Anglo-Saxons use *earl* to refer to nearly any warrior displaying leadership,[32] and *Havelock* seems equally

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[29] Garbaty, 244.

[30] Anne Scott, "Language as Convention, Language as Sociolect in *Havelok the Dane*," *Studies in Philology* 89:2 (1992): 150.

[31] W.P. Ker, *Epic and Romance* (1908) (New York: Dover Publications, 1957), 168.

distant from the courtly ethos which saw breeding and nobility as naturally identical. Adalbero, bishop of Laon, writes around 1000 that the perfect Christian community can be divided into laborers, fighters, and prayers,[33] but these are fluid occupations less described by birth and more by function. Such classifications partake in what Strohm calls "classical ideas of the body politic and the 'corporate' state."[34] The roles form interdependent and horizontal parts of a functioning Christian body rather than a hierarchy of blood. The status of most peasants declined under the Normans and became more socially fixed.[35] Strohm asserts that the aristocratic prestige of knights was in decline by the fourteenth century,[36] yet both the culture and the increasingly prohibitive costs of armor and cavalry tended to exacerbate lower divisions, and by 1300 there is an increasing rigidifying of class and access to parliament. Rank becomes increasingly a matter of birth, whereas before 1337 the only heritable title is earl.[37] One reason for the prohibition of clerical marriage during the Cluniac reforms was to prevent clerical dynasties, and as church positions were non-hereditary it had become one of the few avenues open to advancement.[38]

Havelock's aristocracy is not in question as he is of royal blood. However, his adoptive family is not. Havelock refers to his brothers as "louerdinges" (1402) and

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[32] Baker uses the example of *The Wanderer* (line 12). Peter S. Baker, *Introduction to Old English*, second ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 223.

[33] In Herlihy, in Rotberg, 19.

[34] Strohm, 3.

[35] Chris Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 20.

[36] Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 5.

[37] Given-Wilson, 29.

[38] Herlihy, in Rotberg, 20.

promises them advancement. Ubbe explicitly tells the Danish assembly that Grim was a fisherman (2051), hence a commoner, and yet neither the Danes nor the English question Hugh, Robert and William fighting at the head of the line or their being knighted later, making them "barouns alle þre" (2171). In Shakespeare's *Henry V* the king makes a patriotic speech promising that by fighting for England the lowest of his soldiers will "gentle their condition" (IV.iii.67), and here it also seems sufficient that Havelock's brothers were "ful strong and ful with" (2168). Their peasant-class origins seem to have been dismissed, both because of their association with Havelock and because of their performance in battle. As with *Henry V* the appeal is to Germanic ideals of the warrior hero as having loyalty and strength rather than noble breeding.

The interpretation of Grim has been controversial. The *Lai* attempts to explain away his sons' social elevation by making Grim a baron as well as a fisherman,[39] but in the English version Godard taunts him as a "fule drit-cherl" (683), making his status unambiguous. Grim has been compared to Saint Peter, another fisherman who weeps in repentance (Mark 14:72).[40] He has also been read as suspiciously enthusiastic to carry out Godard's orders.[41] The inference in either interpretation is that Havelock's royalty and goodness redeem Grim, just as Ubbe is later reformed from his corrupt tendencies.[42] Beowulf similarly rehabilitates Unferth's character with his own overflowing heroic dignity. Yet the poet, so liberal in heaping damnation on Godard and Godrich, has no

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[39] Stephen H.A. Shepherd, ed., *Middle English Romances* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 323. Also Halverson, 145.

[40] Delaney, 65.

[41] Maldwyn Mills, "Havelok and the Brutal Fisherman," *Medium Aevum* 36 (1967): 227.

[42] Shepherd, 318.

such words of censure for either Grim or Ubbe. Grim apparently only follows orders, and Ubbe's gift seems business as usual, just as Beowulf gives the Danish coast guard who guides him to Heorot a sword (1899). Grim ostensibly occupies a cultural setting where class is simply less vital of a concern. It does not seem objectionable to anyone that the village of Grimsby is named after a runaway slave.

The class identity of the narrator has also occasioned comment. Throughout the text the storyteller assumes an easy affiliation and intimacy with his audience as he adds personal comments to the action. Halverson points out that the French-version narrator "is not really talking to anyone,"[43] but the English voice is more like a tavern entertainer talking to fellow "godemen, wiues, maydnes, and alle men" (1-2) rather than the courtly audience of a private room. Critics have argued that ale-drinking does not necessarily entail a bar or a public space, but the effect is to suggest a shared activity bonding the speaker to his audience,[44] just as the cup has associations with holy communion. The poem was likely not composed by an actual minstrel, but such is its fictional frame which the poet attempts to depict, and for a reason.

Other characters also participate in the blithely flattened social hierarchy of the poem's world. At the end of the poem Havelock's brothers become landholding knights, Havelock's stepsister, Gunnild, marries the Earl of Chester, and even the cook is made an earl and marries another sister, Levi. These are considerable promotions. Another critic posits that being a cook could actually be a prestigious position and that Bertram might

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[43] Halverson, 144.

[44] Kenneth E. Gadomski, "Narrative Style in *King Horn* and *Havelok the Dane*," *Journal of Narrative Technique* 15:2 (1985): 140. Gadomski replies to Dieter Mehl's criticisms.

have been a "tenant-knight with merely supervisory duties."[45] This seems unlikely. Bertram clearly knows his craft, and he has Havelock sit and rest while he stirs "þe broys in þe led" (924). The English poet gives a wealth of "concrete details of the life of the kitchen"[46] missing in the French. In the poem's denouement, Havelock knights Bertram (2924), indicating he is not one previously. Nor would real-life knighthood guarantee acceptance among peers. After Richard II made a favorite steward, John de Beauchamp, a baron in 1387 the Merciless Parliament convicted the court of treason and the steward was executed. He was not entitled to a trial, the Magna Carta having been amended in 1217 to exclude legal rights for commoners.[47]

A better explanation for these improbable events is that the poem, like much romance, does not reflect its contemporary reality but rather nostalgically looks back to a time of easier social mobility and universal desires. The poet praises Levi not for royal lineage, of which she has none, but for her physical comforts. The poem ends with all being blessed with long life and large families. Halverson dismisses this sentimentality as "a peasant fantasy,"[48] but as with Levi's attractiveness, these are traditional aspirations for every class. No less than Beowulf mourns not having a son as he dies, and in the *Clerk's Tale* Walter's subjects worry about their bachelor lord. The coda that Havelock and Goldeboru were inseparable and did not quarrel—"nevere yete no weren he wrothe"

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[45] Delaney, 72.

[46] Halverson, 148.

[47] Wendy Scase, *Literature and Complaint in England, 1272-1553* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8.

[48] Halverson, 149.

(2973)—is a conventional closure in romance for all classes, so much so that the Wife of Bath can poke fun at the formula with her knight.

The time setting of the Havelock versions is additionally significant. Whereas the *Lai d'Havelock* places the action in a magical Arthurian time where all good French romances go,[49] the English poet has a generic past accessible to his audience. Occasionally he even uses present-tense interjections, such as "þe devil of hell him sone take" (446) for Godard.[50] The argument has been made that the English Havelock is meant to suggest Edward I, also a popular king with a reputation for combating crime and supporting parliamentary rule.[51] The poet stresses Havelock's height and at the games he towers over the lads "als a mast" (987). Edward was equally tall at 6'2", which gave him the nickname 'Longshanks.' Stuart suggests the poem may have had a propagandistic purpose as an idealization of Edward in later years when his admiration had declined. Similarly, God-*rich* and God-*ard* have been identified with a historical Rich-ard (1209-72), Edward's uncle and also Earl of Cornwall. Richard was an agitator who periodically organized to undermine the king, and his switching of allegiances for calculated personal benefit "earned him disrespect from all sides."[52] Nevertheless, even if the poet intends such a linkage, the focus remains on Havelock as a past ideal which Edward might have or was subtly identified with.

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[49] Halverson, 144.

[50] Swanton, *English Literature*, 196.

[51] Staines, 617. See also Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England 1225-1360* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 132.

[52] Shepherd, 13. See also Prestwich, 89.

Havelock has been described as "a walking metaphor for kingship, literally marked with a sign of royalty."[53] The source of Havelock's legitimacy as a ruler is ambiguously dual, perhaps intentionally, for he both is entitled by regal birth to be king and is seen to deserve it by being strong and good. A blending of both a Latinate sense of primogeniture and a Germanic work ethic seems operant in the text. Significantly, Havelock's understanding of his identity is clear, but his destiny is opaque until revealed to him by Goldeboru through the angel. Unlike Prince Hal who associates with the rabble but remains apart, or *Floris and Blancheflour*'s hero who transparently affects working-class credentials, Havelock does not masquerade as a beggar; he is one.[54] As a sort of male-Cinderella, he is born to rule, but through his trials, courage, and good nature he also earns the right to reign, and the poet seems to suggest the good king has both characteristics. The Danish are convinced by Havelock's glowing light that he is their legitimate heir, but even in their first meeting Ubbe marvels to himself, "qui ne were he knith" ("why is he not a knight!" 1471).

Nevertheless, the ideals of kingship in *Havelock* reflect more traditional Germanic values than Latinate or late-feudal concepts. Like Hrothgar, Havelock as king is praised for his sharing: "he was large and nouth chiche" ("he was generous and not stingy," 2941). The medieval period saw a gradual shift from the *cyning* as merely one of the kin, serving at the pleasure of the *witan* with the tenuous support of warriors, to the Latinate concept of an emperor serving as God's representative. Alcuin, steeped in the new

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[53] *Four Romances of England*, 75. The theme of kingly behavior was an issue I also explored in a paper read at the 44th International Congress on Medieval Studies, 7-10 May 2009 in Kalamazoo, forming the basis of this chapter. My thanks to participants for ideas I have incorporated.

[54] Swanton, *English Literature*, 200.

system, advises Charlemagne that "the people are to be led, not followed."[55] The medieval expansion of parliamentary power after Edward I undermined the Germanic ideal of authority originating upward from the *folc*, for by the fourteenth century parliaments were increasingly hereditary,[56] even while actual economic power in England became increasingly diversified.

Crane argues that the barony's likely audience for romances lay in just such a nostalgic yearning for a world less pre-empted by royal and urban encroachments on their class' privileges.[57] Yet she also sees *Havelock* as "a romance of the law,"[58] a story set in a world regulated by constitutional justice. The two claims are contradictory, especially when the earls in the poem fare the worst, ending up on donkeys because of judicial decisions. Yet the principles come closer to resolution if the rule of law is set in a utopian past of "are dawes" (27), as it is here. The late medieval English saw the Anglo-Saxon period as a lost golden age where laws applied to all.[59] Numerous open assemblies occur in the poem to deliberate Athelwold's and Birkabeyn's succession, Havelock's claim to the throne, and even the fate of Godrich and Godard, which he defers to the people's verdict. Absent in the French versions, such assemblies include "riche and pouere, heye

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[55] "Populus iuxta sanctiones divinas ducendus est non sequendus," quoted in Michael J. Swanton, *Crisis and Development in Germanic Society 700-800* (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1982), 13.

[56] Given-Wilson, 57.

[57] Crane, 8.

[58] Crane, 48.

[59] Rouse gives the example of the tenants of St. Alban's Abbey who demanded during the Peasants' Rebellion of 1381 that the abbot renew the privileges granted them by King Offa. The rebels refused to believe the abbot's protests that no charter existed. Rosamund Faith, "The Great Rumour of 1377 and Peasant Ideology," in *The English Rising of 1381*, ed. R.H. Hilton and T.H. Aston (Cambridge, 1984), 64, in Robert Allen Rouse, "English Identity and the Law in *Havelock the Dane*, *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild* and *Beues of Hamtoun*," *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, ed. Corinne Sanders (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 70.

and lowe" (2292) as summoned to judge Godard. The poet has been called "a virtuoso of violence"[60] for taking a rather pornographic glee in the executions, but Havelock decides that even royal traitors deserve a trial. The ideal ruler is no sun king relying on imperial grandeur, but justifies his rule "in strictly practical terms: the good king brings justice, peace, and loyalty to his people."[61] Most importantly, the three kings share that most leveling of emotions with their subjects: love.

Godard and Godrich both pervert and subvert the ideal of legitimacy through popular consent as expressed by Athelwold and Birkabeyn. Godrich calls a "parlement" (1007), but it is a bread-and-circuses affair more than meaningful political deliberation, for the poet mentions only athletic games. The competitors cheerfully play by the rules and are good losers, in juxtaposition to Godrich's cheating intrigues. He stacks state institutions with his own cronies, all at "his wille, at hise merci" (271), and without admitting any as partners in government.[62] Godard similarly coerces his subjects into obedience (441). Swanton believes that Godrich has some redemption in wanting his son to be king,[63] but his actions debase primogeniture into a cynical power-grab rather than fatherly concern or desire for stability of succession. Godrich never considers marrying Goldeboru to his son, and even the Archbishop of York is forced to dignify the hoax of wedding Goldeboru to the *hexte* man. Whereas Athelwold genuinely asks for *rede* from

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[60] Levine, 96. But Godard's sentence is in keeping with actual punishments meted out to individuals guilty of high treason. In 1283 Edward I similarly summoned a parliament which sentenced the rebel Prince of Wales' brother to be drawn by horses, hanged, and quartered (Staines, 620).

[61] A.C. Spearing, *Readings in Medieval Poetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 44.

[62] Delaney, 67.

[63] Swanton, 197.

his advisors, Godrich makes only a perfunctory show of consultation: "wat wile ye, frend, her-offe rede?" (2585).[64] That Godrich has already vowed to kill Havelock and does not wait for a reply before giving orders demonstrates the appeal's emptiness.

The absence of a just king ruling by popular consent in turn corrupts the body politic, and Godrich and Godard's unlawful rule results in public disorder. Both usurpers' subjects sink into tyrannical rule based on animal fear rather than popular consent. Godrich's army fears him "so runic spore" ("as an old horse does the spur," 2390), and Godrich has to threaten his soldiers with slavery in order to coerce their support (2385), a "flagrant and unheard-of violation of custom and law."[65] Lacking the personal bonds of loyalty of the *comitatus*, Godard's men put up only a token defense (2237). The poet's praise for the public order during Athelwold's reign is telling. The repetition of phrases such as "in that time" (25) emphasize how under Godrich's tenure England is no longer a place where traders can safely carry gold. Ubbe's rebel sergeants who harass Havelock at the guardhouse demonstrate his heroism but also indicate how Denmark's violence reflects that of Godard.

The opposing views on power that distinguish Germanic kingship from Latinate authority are also seen in the differing religious practices depicted in the poem. Critics have noted the "complete secularity" of Havelock's succession, which has no cathedrals or bishops in either Denmark or England.[66] Instead of a religious ceremony, there is a

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[64] Scott, 155.

[65] Delaney, 68. Simon de Montfort, who led a baron's revolt against Henry III, did threaten those who failed to muster with disinheritence but was killed a month later at Evesham. Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England 1225-1360* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 118.

[66] Delaney, 71.

forty-day feast (2771). One explanation is that the historical Edward also ruled for years before ecclesiastical confirmation.[67] Such an omission would be consistent in the more secular French version,[68] but Havelock is elsewhere presented as an ideal of Christian piety. There is a long scene of tearful contrition in a church where Havelock "bifor þe rode bigan falle / croiz and Crist bigan to kalle" (1358-9). Neither Havelock nor Goldeboru defy what they believe to be "Godes wille" (1167) in a forced marriage. Similarly, both Athelwold and Birkabeyn meticulously undergo last rites, with Athelwold scourging himself and giving away his possessions, leaving not even clothing (220) in order not to risk entering heaven as a rich man. The poet requests the audience's prayers at the end of his labors (2818), for death spares none, "riche ne poure" (353). Couch even suggests a hagiographic reading of *Havelock*, as it appears in MS Laud Misc. 108 next to several pietistic texts such as the *South English Legendary*.[69]

The kings have been criticized for narcissistically obsessing over their own souls instead of being concerned with their political succession. Yet all of these religious observances of the dying monarchs and of Havelock form a consistent pattern: they are all essentially personal acts of devotion rather than state rituals of power. Neither Athelwold nor Birkabeyn uses Christian ritual in order to buttress his kingship, for they are on their deathbeds; they do it for their own souls. Similarly, Havelock's wedding vows do not have a publicly kingly purpose (yet), and Havelock's night-long penitence

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[67] Delaney, 72.

[68] Staines, 609.

[69] Julie Nelson Couch, "Defiant Devotion in MS Laud Misc. 108: The Narrator of *Havelok the Dane* and Affective Piety," *Parergon* 25:1 (2008): 53-79.

before his journey to Denmark is done alone. Only Godrich and Godard publicly swear on altars and missals while receiving political authority (186-9) in an attempt to sugarcoat their power seizure through the church. The implicit assertion is that the just king is legitimized by the people, not by Roman ecclesiastical authority. Only Havelock's inner piety is used by the poet to indicate moral character; both Havelock and Edward I endow a Cistercian house in thanks for protection from storms.[70]

At times the poet tries to have things both ways by having an angel appear to Goldeboru to explain Havelock's kingly heritage, and by putting a gold cross birthmark on his shoulder. A balance must still be drawn between kingship legitimized either wholly by the *folc* or ordered by God. Were it absolutely the former, Birkabeyn would not have the right in a primitive Germanic tribe to designate his son as king. Nevertheless, the angel's visitation forms a private scene in the pair's bedroom and not the basis of Havelock's claim to Denmark. The angel does not proclaim, he informs. Similarly, when Ubbe and his nobles puzzle over the light emanating from Havelock's mouth and his cross-mark, they do not shout, "Deus vult!" The response is rather secular. The men seem more focused on Havelock's position as Birkabeyn's lawful heir rather than the idea of divine selection. As with Grim and his wife, the purpose of the Heavenly light seems more to draw attention. In the Robin Hood folktales the rich abbot is abused, but the friar is viewed warmly for being on the side of the people.[71] *Havelock* is not an anti-clerical poem, but genuine faith is consistently portrayed in personal rather than institutional terms.

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[70] Staines, 619.

[71] Swanton, *English Literature*, 23.

Certainly, a contemporary understanding of class and authority would have been necessary for the poem if it were to survive or be relevant to an audience, in the same way that Chaucer cheerily makes his Troilus and Palamon ancient pagans with Ricardian courtly values. A hostile chronicler, Jean Froissart writes around 1400 that the English peasants are "cruel, perfidious, proud and disloyal," and are so haughty that the nobles cannot even have an egg without paying for it.[72] While unlikely, such demonizations echoed many aristocratic and literary attitudes toward the peasant class. Justice, previously everyone's concern and right to secure through revenge or *wergild*, had become a selective prerogative of 'the king's peace.' Godard's dismissive slur to Grim, "be eueremore / þral and cherl, als þou er wore" (684-5) would not seem extreme in Chaucer's time: Richard II betrays the peasant rebels of 1381 with almost identical words.[73] Even the cook's purchase of new clothes, hose, and shoes for Havelock (970) might have been complicated in later centuries by sumptuary laws prescribing permitted attire for each class. Strohm concludes that such niggling laws were futile attempts to arrest the creeping obsolescence of feudalism and the stirrings of capitalism. Yet they typified attempts to secure ostensible class boundaries.

Nevertheless, a critical fixation on class divisions in *Havelock* oversimplifies a complex time period. Class does not seem to be a primary issue for the poet, or for the narrator who ostensibly tells the tale in an ale-house. His concern is rather depicting the moral example of a "ful god gome" (7) who overcomes difficulty and injustice through

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[72] Jean Froissart, *Chroniques*, from the Rome MS (3ième redaction, c. 1400), quoted in Janet Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers 1350-1400* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 14.

[73] "Rustici quidem fuistis et estis; in bondagio permanebitis…," quoted in Thomas Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, ed. H.T. Riley (London, 1864) II, 156, in Halverson, 145.

his own virtues as well as his birthright. While there were likely homiletic intentions to the story—an endorsement of working with a *bliþe* spirit and of trusting in God—the sort of audience imagined to be sitting in a tavern would have wanted an entertaining story then just as now. If *Havelock*'s audience was expected to see parallels between contemporary events and the values of their ancestors under pre-Norman or Danelaw England, it was an affirming comparison, and a general one rather than the desideratum of one particular social class.

That ideal was overall more Germanic than Latinate. The characters who populate *Havelock* value food, family, strong drink, and horseplay more than chivalry or ceremony. They have a greater expectation of social mobility which emphasizes strength and fortitude in legitimizing status. A man may be born to be king but must earn respect. These assumptions were not automatic in England or its literature, but they are the water in which the poem swims. The poet asks that God bless *us* (20). The peasant might have heard *Havelock* and thought this a uniting concept, and the gentility might have read it and thought it a pleasant even if naïve sentiment. Northrop Frye describes the audience of the quest-romance as desiring a fulfillment that will escape reality while still containing that reality.[74] The audience of Havelock might have enjoyed such a tale, set in an antique England still consisting of the best aspects of an older Germanic heritage that had partly ceased to exist.

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[74] In Delaney, 61.

CHAPTER 8

King Horn

King Horn survives in three manuscripts: Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 108 (c. 1300), Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27.2 (c. 1300), and British Library MS Harley 2253 (c. 1325). I take as my text source Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds. *King Horn*. *Four Romances of England.* Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999. http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/hornfrm.htm. Herzman *et al*. use as their base text Cambridge Gg.4.27.2. Selected editions include Joseph Hall, *King Horn: A Middle English Romance* (1901), Walter Hoyt French & Charles Brockway Hale, eds., *Middle English Metrical Romances* (1930), and Rosamund Allen, *King Horn* (1984).

1	Alle beon he blithe	May all be happy
	That to my song lythe!	Who listen to my song!
	A sang ich schal you singe	I will sing you a melody
	Of Murry the Kinge.	About Murray the King.
	King he was biweste	He was a king in the far west
	So longe so hit laste.	As long as his life lasted.
	Godhild het his quen;	His queen was named Godhild;
	Faire ne mighte non ben.	No one could be more beautiful.
	He hadde a sone that het Horn;	He had a son called Horn.[1]
10	Fairer ne mighte non beo born,	No one could be born more handsome,
	Ne no rein upon birine,	No one who had rain fall on them
	Ne sunne upon bischine.	Or the sun shine on them.
	Fairer nis non thane he was:	There was no fairer child than he was.
	He was bright so the glas;	He was as bright as glass;
	He was whit so the flur;	He was as white as a flower;
	Rose red was his colur.	His features were red like a rose.[2]

[1] Garbaty points out that, unlike many medieval romances, Murray, Godhild, Horn, and others in the text do not seem to refer to or represent any known historical figures. Thomas J. Garbaty, *King Horn*, *Medieval English Literature* (Long Grove, Il: Waveland, 1984), note to line 4.

[2] The poet connects Horn's features to his mother's. TEAMS cites Hall, who comments that such language is usually reserved for women, and he has "not found anything quite like it used for a hero of romance." Joseph Hall, *King Horn: A Middle English Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1901), 93.

	He was fayr and eke bold,	He was fair and brave as well,
	And of fiftene winter hold.	And fifteen years old.
	In none kinge riche	In no other rich kingdom
20	Nas non his iliche.	Was there anyone like him.
	Twelf feren he hadde	He had twelve companions
	That he alle with him ladde,	Who always went with him,
	Alle riche mannes sones,	All noble men's sons,
	And alle hi were faire gomes,	And all of them were fine boys
	With him for to pleie,	For him to have fun with.
	And mest he luvede tweie;	And he loved two the most—
	That on him het Hathulf child,	One of them was called Child Athulf,[3]
	And that other Fikenild.	And the other Fickenhild.
	Athulf was the beste,	Athulf was the best,
30	And Fikenylde the werste.	And Fickenhild the worst.
	Hit was upon a someres day,	It was on a summer's day,
	Also ich you telle may,	As I can tell you as well,
	Murri, the gode King,	When Murray, the good king,
	Rod on his pleing	Rode for leisure
	Bi the se side,	By the seaside,
	Ase he was woned ride.	As he was accustomed to do.
	With him riden bote two -	There were only two riding with him;
	Al to fewe ware tho!	They were all too few!
	He fond bi the stronde,	He noticed by the shore
40	Arived on his londe,	Fifteen ships
	Schipes fiftene	That had arrived on his land
	With Sarazins kene	With zealous Saracens.
	He axede what hi soghte	He asked what they were looking for
	Other to londe broghte.	Or what they brought to the land.
	A payn hit ofherde,	A pagan heard him
	And hym wel sone answarede:	And answered him brusquely,
	"Thy lond folk we schulle slon,	"We will kill your land's people
	And alle that Crist luveth upon	And all who have love for Christ,
	And the selve right anon.	And yourself right away.
50	Ne shaltu todai henne gon."	You will not leave here today."
	The king alighte of his stede,	The king dismounted from his horse,
	For tho he havede nede,	For he needed the help
	And his gode knightes two;	Of his two good knights.
	Al to fewe he hadde tho.	He had all too few then!
	Swerd hi gunne gripe	They began to grip swords
	And togadere smite.	And strike against each other.
	Hy smyten under schelde	They struck under shields
	That sume hit yfelde.	So that some were brought down,
	The king hadde al to fewe	But the king had all too few
60	Togenes so fele schrewe;	Against so many villains.
	So wele mighten ythe	They could too easily
	Bringe hem thre to dithe.	Bring the three to death.
	The pains come to londe	The pagans came to the land

[3] *Hathulf child*: ME *child* as a post-positive adjective usually indicates not childhood but the role of apprentice knight, similar to the titles *page* and *squire*, though it can also be initial (*Childe Roland*). Normally boys began as pages very young and became squires around age fourteen. See also *Guy of Warwick*, line 1625.

	And neme hit in here honde	And took it into their hand.
	That folc hi gunne quelle,	They began to kill the people
	And churchen for to felle.	And to destroy churches.
	Ther ne moste libbe	No one might live,
	The fremde ne the sibbe.	Whether friend or family,
	Bute hi here laye asoke,	Unless they renounced their faith
70	And to here toke.	And took theirs.
	Of alle wymmanne	Of all women,
	Wurst was Godhild thanne.	The most miserable was Godhild.
	For Murri heo weop sore	She wept bitterly for Murray
	And for Horn yute more.	And for Horn even more.
	He wente ut of halle	She went out of the hall,
	Fram hire maidenes alle	Away from all her maidens,
	Under a roche of stone	Into a cave of stone
	Ther heo livede alone.	Where she lived alone.
	Ther heo servede Gode	There she served God
80	Aghenes the paynes forbode.	Against the pagans' injunction.
	Ther he servede Criste	There she served Christ,
	That no payn hit ne wiste.	So that no pagan knew of it.
	Evre heo bad for Horn child	She continually prayed for Child Horn,
	That Jesu Crist him beo myld.	That Jesus Christ might be kind to him.
	Horn was in paynes honde	Horn was in pagan hands
	With his feren of the londe.	With his companions from the land.
	Muchel was his fairhede,	His noble grace stood out,
	For Jhesu Crist him makede.	For Jesus Christ had made him so.
	Payns him wolde slen,	The pagans would have killed him
90	Other al quic flen,	Or flayed him alive,
	Yef his fairnesse nere:	If not for his beauty;
	The children alle aslaye were.	The children would all be slain.
	Thanne spak on admirad -	Then one admiral spoke
	Of wordes he was bald, -	Who was bold in words:
	"Horn, thu art well kene,	"Horn, you are strong-willed,
	And that is wel isene.	That is clear to see.
	Thu art gret and strong,	You are great and strong,
	Fair and evene long;	Handsome and tall.
	Thu schalt waxe more	You will grow bigger
100	Bi fulle seve yere.	Before seven years more.
	Yef thu mote to live go	If you were to leave alive,
	And thine feren also,	And your company as well,
	Yef hit so bi falle,	It might so happen that
	Ye scholde slen us alle:	You would kill us all.
	Tharvore thu most to stere,	Therefore you are headed for sea,
	Thu and thine ifere;	You and your companions.
	To schupe schulle ye funde,	You will hustle onto the ship,
	And sinke to the grunde.	And sink to the bottom.
	The se you schal adrenche,	The sea will drown you,
110	Ne schal hit us noght ofthinche.	And we will have no regrets.
	For if thu were alive,	For if you were alive,
	With swerd other with knive,	We would all die,
	We scholden alle deie,	And you would avenge your father,
	And thi fader deth abeie."	With sword or with knife."
	The children hi broghte to stronde,	The youths were brought to the shore,
	Wringinde here honde,	Wringing their hands,
	Into schupes borde	And boarded the boat

	At the furste worde.	At the first command.[4]
	Ofte hadde Horn beo wo,	Often Horn had been sorrowful,
120	Ac nevre wurs than him was tho.	But never worse than he was then.
	The se bigan to flowe,	The sea began to rise,
	And Horn child to rowe;	And Child Horn began to sail.[5]
	The se that schup so fasste drof	The sea drove that ship so fast
	The children dradde therof.	That the children were terrified.
	Hi wenden towisse	They expected for certain
	Of here lif to misse,	To lose their lives,
	Al the day and al the night	Through all the day and all the night
	Til hit sprang dailight,	Until daylight had sprung,
	Til Horn sagh on the stronde	Until Horn saw on the shore
130	Men gon in the londe.	Men walking about the land.
	"Feren," quath he, "yonge,	"Fellows," he said, "lads,
	Ich telle you tithinge:	I will tell you some good news:
	Ich here foyeles singe	I hear birds singing
	And that gras him springe.	And see the grass growing.
	Blithe beo we on lyve;	Let us be happy to be alive!
	Ure schup is on ryve."	Our boat is on the shore."
	Of schup hi gunne funde,	They hurried off the boat
	And setten fout to grunde.	And set their feet on the ground
	Bi the se side	By the seaside,
140	Hi leten that schup ride.	Letting the boat drift.
	Thanne spak him child Horn,	Then Child Horn, born in
	In Suddene he was iborn:	The Southlands, addressed it:[6]
	"Schup bi the se flode,	"Boat on the ocean tide,
	Daies have thu gode.	May you have good days
	Bi the se brinke,	On the brink of the sea.
	No water the nadrinke.	May you drink no water!
	Yef thu cume to Suddene,	If you return to the Southlands,
	Gret thu wel of myne kenne,	Greet my family well.
	Gret thu wel my moder,	Greet my mother well,
150	Godhild, Quen the gode,	Godhild, the good queen,
	And seie the paene king,	And tell the heathen king,
	Jesu Cristes withering,	Jesus Christ's enemy,
	That ich am hol and fer	That I am safe and sound
	On this lond arived her;	And have arrived here on this land.
	And seie that hei schal fonde	And say that they will feel
	The dent of myne honde."	The strike of my hand!"
	The children yede to tune,	The children went to the town,

[4] The children are set adrift and expected to drown. Tradition held that the sinful would die but the innocent would receive providential aid, as Bevis does (TEAMS). As with Godard and Havelock (519-36), the Saracens perhaps believe they will avoid sinning, as the *water* will be responsible for the childrens' deaths. In the *Man of Law's Tale* Custance's heathen mothers-in-law set her adrift twice for similar reasons (*CT* II.439-41 and 799-802).

[5] *Rowe*: TEAMS renders this as *rue*, i.e. Horn began to regret the sea waves, but several manuscripts have *rowen* and for Horn to take charge makes more sense within the poem's sentiments.

[6] *Suddene*: Scholars do not agree where this is and have posited areas in southern England as well as Sweden and Suðdene, i.e. southern Denmark. Like the character names, the locations may be as fanciful as Riverdale in an *Archie* comic. See also the notes to line 161 and 689.

	Bi dales and bi dune.	Over hills and over valleys.
	Hy metten with Almair King,	They met with King Almair.
160	Crist yeven him His blessing	May Christ give him His blessing!
	King of Westernesse	He was king of Westlands.[7]
	Crist yive him muchel blisse!	May Christ give him great peace!
	He him spac to Horn child	He spoke to Child Horn
	Wordes that were mild:	With words that were kind:
	"Whannes beo ye, faire gumes,	"Where are you from, fair lads,
	That her to londe beoth icume,	That you have come here,
	Alle throttene,	All thirteen of you,
	Of bodie swithe kene?	With such hardy bodies?
	Bi God that me makede,	By God who made me,
170	A swich fair verade	I never saw such a noble group
	Ne saugh ich in none stunde,	In any time
	Bi westene londe:	In western lands.
	Seie me wat ye seche."	Tell me what you are looking for."
	Horn spak here speche,	Horn made a speech there.
	He spak for hem alle,	He spoke for them all,
	Vor so hit moste bivalle:	For it was most fitting
	He was the faireste	As he was the fairest
	And of wit the beste.	And quickest of wits.
	"We beoth of Suddenne,	"We are from the Southlands.
180	Icome of gode kenne,	I come from a good family,
	Of Cristene blode,	Of Christian blood,
	And kynges swthe gode.	And a highly honorable king.
	Payns ther gunne arive	Pagans have arrived there
	And duden hem of lyve.	And taken his life.
	Hi sloghen and todroghe	They have slain and torn apart
	Cristene men inoghe.	Enough Christian men.
	So Crist me mote rede,	So may Christ help me,
	Us hi dude lede	They had us led
	Into a galeie,	Onto a galley
190	With the se to pleie,	To sport on the sea.
	Dai hit is igon and other,	One day passed, and another,
	Withute sail and rother:	Without sail or rudder.
	Ure schip bigan to swymme	Our boat began to drift
	To this londes brymme.	Toward the shore of this land.
	Nu thu might us slen and binde	You might slay us now or bind
	Ore honde bihynde.	Our hands behind us.
	Bute yef hit beo thi wille,	But if it is your will,
	Helpe that we ne spille."	Help us so that we do not die."
	Thanne spak the gode kyng	The good king then spoke.
200	Iwis he nas no nithing	I know he was no villain.
	"Seie me, child, what is thi name?	"Tell me, child, what is your name?
	Ne schaltu have bute game."	You will have nothing but leisure."
	The child him answerde,	The boy answered him
	Sone so he hit herde:	As soon as he heard the king:

[7] *Westernesse*: Like *Suddene*, this seems to ambiguously mean western England. Schofield suggests the Isle of Man based on the French manuscript where the queen flees to *Ardenne*, a Manx word and now The Ard (18-19). William Henry Schofield, *The Story of Horn and Rimenhild* (Baltimore: Modern Language Association of America, 1903). But see the note to line 689 for different clues.

	"Horn ich am ihote,	"I am called Horn.
	Icomen ut of the bote,	I came out of the boat
	Fram the se side.	From the sea side.
	Kyng, wel mote thee tide."	Sire, may you have good fortune."
	Thanne hym spak the gode king,	Then the good king spoke to him,
210	"Well bruc thu thin evening.	"May your name carry well![8]
	Horn, thu go wel schulle	Horn, you will travel well
	Bi dales and bi hulle;	By valley and by hill.
	Horn, thu lude sune,	Horn, you will loudly sound
	Bi dales and bi dune;	By plain and by dune.
	So schal thi name springe	Your name will resound
	Fram kynge to kynge,	From king to king,
	And thi fairnesse	And your nobility
	Abute Westernesse,	Around the Westlands.
	The strengthe of thine honde	The strength of your hand
220	Into evrech londe.	Will be known in every land.
	Horn, thu art so swete,	Horn, you are so sweet,
	Ne may ich the forlete."	I cannot abandon you."
	Hom rod Aylmar the Kyng	Almair the king rode home with
	And Horn mid him, his fundling,	Horn alongside him, his foundling,
	And alle his ifere,	And all his companions
	That were him so dere.	Who were so dear to him.
	The kyng com into halle	The king came into the hall
	Among his knightes alle;	Among all of his knights.
	Forth he clupede Athelbrus,	He called forth Athelbruce,
230	That was stiward of his hus.	Who was steward of his house.
	"Stiward, tak nu here	"Steward, now take here
	My fundlyng for to lere	My foundling, to teach him
	Of thine mestere,	Your trade,
	Of wude and of rivere,	Of hunting and hawking,
	And tech him to harpe	And teach him to harp
	With his nayles scharpe,	With his fingernails sharp;
	Bivore me to kerve,	And to carve meat before me
	And of the cupe serve.	And to serve from the cup.[9]
	Thu tech him of alle the liste	Tutor him in all the skills
240	That thu evre of wiste,	That you ever learned,
	And his feiren thou wise	And guide his companions
	In to othere servise.	Into other services.
	Horn thu undervonge	Take charge of Horn
	And tech him of harpe and songe."	And train him in harp and song."
	Ailbrus gan lere	Athelbruce began to teach
	Horn and his yfere.	Horn and his company.
	Horn in herte laghte	Horn took to heart
	Al that he him taghte.	All that he taught him
	In the curt and ute,	In the court and outside it.
250	And elles al abute	And every man around
	Luvede men Horn child,	Loved Child Horn,

[8] *Well bruc thu thin evening*: Garbaty has *well bruc thu thi neuening*, "may you long enjoy your name." The king is making a series of puns on Horn's name, that his 'sound' or reputation will travel widely.

[9] These are traditional duties of the squire, and Chaucer's squire similarly serves by cutting meat "biforn his fader at the table" (*CT* I.100).

	And mest him luvede Rymenhild,	And Rimenhild loved him the most,
	The kynges owene doghter.	The king's own daughter.
	He was mest in thoghte;	He was first in her thoughts.
	Heo luvede so Horn child	She loved Child Horn so much
	That negh heo gan wexe wild:	That she nearly grew mad.
	For heo ne mighte at borde	For she could not speak a word
	With him speke no worde,	With him at the table
	Ne noght in the halle	Or in the hall
260	Among the knightes alle,	Among all the knights,
	Ne nowhar in non othere stede.	Or anywhere in another place.
	Of folk heo hadde drede:	She was afraid of being seen.
	Bi daie ne bi nighte	By day and by night,
	With him speke ne mighte.	She could not speak with him.
	Hire soreghe ne hire pine	Neither her sorrow nor her pain
	Ne mighte nevre fine.	Might ever have an end.
	In heorte heo hadde wo,	She had sadness in her heart,
	And thus hire bithoghte tho:	And so she decided then
	Heo sende hire sonde	She would send her word
270	Athelbrus to honde,	To Althelbruce's hand,
	That he come hire to,	That he come to her,
	And also scholde Horn do,	And Horn as well,
	Al in to bure,	Together into her bedroom,
	For heo gan to lure;	For she had begun to look pale.
	And the sonde seide	And the message said
	That sik lai that maide,	That the maiden lay sick,
	And bad him come swithe	And asked him to come quickly
	For heo nas nothing blithe.	For she was not well at all.
	The stward was in herte wo,	The steward was distressed at heart,
280	For he nuste what to do.	For he did not know what to do.
	Wat Rymenhild hure thoghte	What Rimenheld's intentions were
	Gret wunder him thughte,	Seemed very mysterious to him,
	Abute Horn the yonge	To bring the young Horn
	To bure for to bringe.	Into her chamber.
	He thoghte upon his mode	He turned it over in his mind
	Hit nas for none gode:	But it was for no good.
	He tok him another,	He took someone else with him,
	Athulf, Hornes brother.	Athulf, Horn's brother in arms.
	"Athulf," he sede, "right anon	"Athulf," he said, "you will go
290	Thu schalt with me to bure gon	With me right away to the chamber
	To speke with Rymenhild stille	To speak with Rimenhild privately
	And witen hure wille.	And find out her will.
	In Hornes ilike	In Horn's likeness
	Thu schalt hure biswike:	You will fool her.
	Sore ich me ofdrede	I am sorely afraid
	Heo wolde Horn misrede."	She would lead Horn astray."
	Athelbrus gan Athulf lede,	Athelbruce escorted Athulf
	And into bure with him yede:	And went with him into the bower.
	Anon upon Athulf child	Upon that, Rimenhild began
300	Rymenhild gan wexe wild:	To grow unrestrained with Athulf.
	Heo wende that Horn hit were	She thought it was Horn
	That heo havede there:	That she had there.
	Heo sette him on bedde;	She set him on the bed
	With Athulf child he wedde;	And began to woo Athulf.
	On hire armes tweie	She embraced him

	Athulf heo gan leie.	In her two arms.
	"Horn," quath heo, "wel longe	"Horn," she said, "for the longest time
	Ich habbe thee luved stronge.	I have loved you passionately.
	Thu schalt thi trewthe plighte	You must swear your faithfulness
310	On myn hond her righte,	On my hand right here,
	Me to spuse holde,	To hold me as your spouse,
	And ich thee lord to wolde."	And for me to have you as lord."
	Athulf sede on hire ire	Athulf whispered in her ear,
	So stille so hit were,	As gently as possible,
	"Thi tale nu thu lynne,	"Stop your talking now,
	For Horn nis noght her inne.	For Horn is not in here.
	Ne beo we noght iliche:	We are not alike;
	Horn is fairer and riche,	Horn is more handsome and strong,
	Fairer bi one ribbe	Fairer by a rib
320	Thane eni man that libbe:	Than any man that lives!
	Thegh Horn were under molde	Even if Horn were under the earth
	Other elles wher he wolde	Or wherever else he was,
	Other henne a thusend mile,	Or a thousand miles from here,
	Ich nolde him ne thee bigile."	I cannot deceive him or you!"
	Rymenhild hire biwente,	Rimenhild changed her mood,
	And Athelbrus fule heo schente.	And reviled Athelbruce foully.
	"Hennes thu go, thu fule theof,	"Get out of here, you foul thief!
	Ne wurstu me nevre more leof;	You will never again be dear to me.
	Went ut of my bur,	Leave my bower,
330	With muchel mesaventur.	With cursed luck!
	Schame mote thu fonge	May shame undo you
	And on highe rode anhonge.	And hang you high on the gallows!
	Ne spek ich noght with Horn:	I have not spoken to Horn.
	Nis he noght so unorn;	He is not so plain!
	Horn is fairer thane beo he:	Horn is fairer than this man is.
	With muchel schame mote thu deie."	May you die in great disgrace!"
	Athelbrus in a stunde	In a moment, Athelbruce
	Fel anon to grunde.	Fell to the ground.
	"Lefdi min oghe,	"My dear lady,
340	Lithe me a litel throghe!	Listen to me for a moment!
	Lust whi ich wonde	Hear why I hesitated
	Bringe thee Horn to honde.	To bring Horn to your hand.
	For Horn is fair and riche,	For Horn is fair and rich,
	Nis no whar his iliche.	And there is no one his equal anywhere.
	Aylmar, the gode Kyng,	Almair, the good king,
	Dude him on mi lokyng.	Placed him in my care.
	Yef Horn were her abute,	If Horn were about here,
	Sore I me dute	I would be sorely worried
	With him ye wolden pleie	That you would go too far[10]
350	Bitwex you selve tweie.	With the two of you alone.
	Thanne scholde withuten othe	Then, beyond question,
	The kyng maken us wrothe.	The king would make us sorry.

[10] *Ye wolden pleie*: *Play* in ME covers a variety of meanings, from innocent merriment to battle to sexual intercourse. Athelbruce is delicately suggesting that young passion would get the better of both of them. His concern is that the king would view the seduction of his daughter as treason, as also happens in *Amis and Amiloun*.

	Rymenhild, foryef me thi tene,	Rimenhild, forgive me your anger,
	Lefdi, my quene,	Lady, my queen,
	And Horn ich schal thee fecche,	And I will bring you Horn,
	Wham so hit recche."	No matter who cares about it."
	Rymenhild, yef he cuthe,	Rimenhild, as much as she could,
	Gan lynne with hire muthe.	Kept her mouth quiet.
	Heo makede hire wel blithe;	She made herself cheerful and
360	Wel was hire that sithe.	Things were well with her then.
	"Go nu," quath heo, "sone,	"Go now," she said, "at once,
	And send him after none,	And send him after noon
	On a squieres wise.	In a squire's disguise.
	Whane the kyng arise	When the king rises
	To wude for to pleie,	To sport in the woods,
	Nis non that him biwreie.	There is no one who will betray him.
	He schal with me bileve	He will stay with me
	Til hit beo nir eve,	Until it is nearly night,
	To haven of him mi wille;	So that I have my will with him.
370	After ne recche ich what me telle."	I don't care what is said about me after."
	Aylbrus wende hire fro;	Athelbruce departed from her.
	Horn in halle fond he tho	He found Horn in the hall,
	Bifore the kyng on benche,	On a bench before the king
	Wyn for to schenche.	To pour him wine.
	"Horn," quath he, "so hende,	"Horn," he said, "so noble,
	To bure nu thu wende,	Go to the chamber
	After mete stille,	After the meal, quietly,
	With Rymenhild to dwelle;	To stay with Rimenhild.
	Wordes swthe bolde,	If you have strong words,
380	In herte thu hem holde.	Hold them in your heart.
	Horn, beo me wel trewe;	Horn, be true to my counsel
	Ne schal hit thee nevre rewe."	And you will never regret it."[11]
	Horn in herte leide	Horn took to heart
	Al that he him seide;	All that he said to him.
	He yeode in wel righte	He went right away
	To Rymenhild the brighte.	To Rimenhild the beautiful.
	On knes he him sette,	He set himself on his knees
	And sweteliche hure grette.	And greeted her sweetly.
	Of his feire sighte	From his fair appearance
390	Al the bur gan lighte.	All the room began to glow.
	He spac faire speche -	He spoke a pleasing speech;
	Ne dorte him noman teche.	He needed no man to teach him.
	"Wel thu sitte and softe,	"You sit graciously and softly,
	Rymenhild the brighte,	Shining Rimenhild,
	With thine maidenes sixe	With your six maidens
	That the sitteth nixte.	That you sit next to.
	Kinges stward ure	Our king's steward
	Sende me in to bure;	Sent me to your room.
	With thee speke ich scholde.	I am to speak with you.
400	Seie me what thu woldest:	Tell me what you wish
	Seie, and ich schal here	To say, and I shall hear
	What thi wille were."	What your will is."

[11] MS Harleian 2253, *Shal þe nout arewe*, gives a better sense of Athelbruce's warning to Horn.

	Rymenhild up gan stonde	Rimenhild stood up
	And tok him bi the honde:	And took him by the hand.
	Heo sette him on pelle	She set him on a fur cover
	Of wyn to drinke his fulle:	And gave him wine to drink his fill.
	Heo makede him faire chere	She showed him good cheer
	And tok him abute the swere.	And took him about the neck.
	Ofte heo him custe,	She continually kissed him,
410	So wel so hire luste.	As much as she pleased.[12]
	. . . . .	. . . . .
H	Welcome horn þus sayde	"Welcome, Horn!",
406	Rymenild þat mayde	The maid then whispered.
	An even & amorewe	"By day and night,
	For þe ich habbe sorewe	For you I am in sorrow.
	For þe y have no reste	For you I have no rest,
410	Ne slepe me ne lyste	Nor can I find a way to sleep."
	. . . . .	. . . . .
411	"Horn," heo sede, "withute strif,	"Horn," she said, "without doubt,
	Thu schalt have me to thi wif.	You must have me for your wife.
	Horn, have of me rewthe,	Horn, have pity on me,
	And plist me thi trewthe.	And pledge me your promise."
	Horn tho him bithoghte	Horn thought to himself
	What he speke mighte.	What he might say.
	"Crist," quath he, "thee wisse,	"May Christ guide you," he said,
	And yive thee hevene blisse	And give you Heaven's joy
	Of thine husebonde,	In your husband,
420	Wher he beo in londe.	Wherever he is in the land.
	Ich am ibore to lowe	I was born too low
	Such wimman to knowe.	To have such a woman.
	Ich am icome of thralle	I come from a serf's home
	And fundling bifalle.	And ended up a foundling.
	Ne feolle hit the of cunde	It would not be proper for you
	To spuse beo me bunde.	To wed me as a spouse.
	Hit nere no fair wedding	It would not be a fair wedding
	Bitwexe a thral and a king."	Between a peasant and a king."
	Tho gan Rymenhild mislyke	Rimenhild was distaught then
430	And sore gan to sike:	And began to sigh bitterly.
	Armes heo gan bughe;	Her arms began to bow
	Adun heo feol iswoghe.	And she fell down in a swoon.
	Horn in herte was ful wo	Horn was grieved in his heart
	And tok hire on his armes two.	And took her in his two arms.
	He gan hire for to kesse	He began to kiss her repeatedly
	Wel ofte mid ywisse.	With growing confidence.
	"Lemman," he sede, "dere,	"Darling," he said, "dear one,
	Thin herte nu thu stere.	Take charge of your heart now.
	Help me to knighte	Help me to become a knight,
440	Bi al thine mighte,	With all your might,
	To my lord the king	By my lord the king
	That he me yive dubbing:	So that he will give me dubbing.[13]

[12] Rimenhild's wooing seems abrupt here, and Hall believes the copyist has missed some lines (note to 410, p. 118, in TEAMS). The inserted six lines are from MS Harleian 2253, in Hall.

	Thanne is mi thralhod	Then my serfdom
	I went in to knighthod	Will be turned into knighthood
	And I schal wexe more,	And I will grow to more, dear,
	And do, lemman, thi lore."	And obey your instruction."
	Rymenhild, that swete thing,	Rimenhild, that sweet thing,
	Wakede of hire swoghning.	Woke from her swoon.
	"Horn," quath heo, "wel sone	"Horn," she said, "very soon
450	That schal beon idone.	That will be done!
	Thu schalt beo dubbed knight	You will be dubbed a knight
	Are come seve night.	Before seven nights have passed.
	Have her this cuppe	Take this cup here,
	And this ryng ther uppe	And this ring with it,
	To Aylbrus the stuard,	To Athelbruce the steward,
	And se he holde foreward.	And see that he keeps his word.
	Seie ich him biseche,	Say that I pleaded,
	With loveliche speche,	With words of affection,[14]
	That he adun falle	For him to fall down
460	Bifore the king in halle,	Before the king in the hall
	And bidde the king arighte	And ask the king directly
	Dubbe thee to knighte.	To dub you a knight at once.
	With selver and with golde	He will be well-rewarded
	Hit wurth him wel iyolde.	With silver and with gold.
	Crist him lene spede	May Christ grant him success
	Thin erende to bede."	In pursuing your case."
	Horn tok his leve,	Horn took his leave,
	For hit was negh eve.	For it was nearly evening.
	Athelbrus he soghte	He looked for Athelbruce
470	And yaf him that he broghte,	And gave him what he brought
	And tolde him ful yare	And told him quickly
	Hu he hadde ifare,	How he had fared,
	And sede him his nede,	And told him his desires,
	And bihet him his mede.	And promised him his reward.
	Athelbrus also swithe	Athelbruce, just as quickly,
	Wente to halle blive.	Went promptly to the hall.
	"Kyng," he sede, "thu leste	"Sire," he said, "please listen
	A tale mid the beste.	To a tale as good as the best.
	Thu schalt bere crune	Tomorrow you will bear
480	Tomoreghe in this tune;	Your crown in this town;
	Tomoreghe is thi feste:	Tomorrow is your feast.
	Ther bihoveth geste.	It is fitting to enjoy yourself.
	Hit nere noght for loren	It would not be a wasted effort
	For to knighti child Horn,	To knight Child Horn
	Thine armes for to welde:	To bear your arms.
	God knight he schal yelde."	He will make a good knight."

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[13] Hall points out that an unfree man being knighted would have been acceptable under the laws of Ethelred but would have been rare by the thirteenth century (note to 439). Horn is of course already royal, though he ostensibly wishes to minimize the king's potential anger if he accedes to Rimenhild's desires.

[14] *With loveliche speche*: Who the 'loving words' are for is not clear, and ME has not yet worked out conventions of indirect speech. Rimenhild seemingly asks Horn to tell Athelbruce that she is asking him with fondness. TEAMS also suggests that the king is meant to understand that she is asking him with a daughter's affection.

	The king sede sone,	The king soon replied,
	"That is wel idone.	"That is well thought.
	Horn me wel iquemeth;	I am well pleased with Horn.
490	God knight him bisemeth.	It seems he will be a fine knight.
	He schal have mi dubbing	He will have my dubbing
	And after wurth mi derling.	And after he will be my favorite.
	And alle his feren twelf	And as for his twelve companions,
	He schal knighten himself:	He will knight them himself.
	Alle he schal hem knighte	He will dub them all
	Bifore me this nighte."	Before me this night."
	Til the light of day sprang	Until the light of day sprang,
	Ailmar him thughte lang.	Almair was deep in thought.
	The day bigan to springe;	The day began to spring.
500	Horn com bivore the kinge,	Horn came before the king
	Mid his twelf yfere,	With his twelve companions,
	Sume hi were luthere.	Though some of them were wicked.
	Horn he dubbede to knighte	He dubbed Horn a knight
	With swerd and spures brighte.	With a sword and shining spurs.
	He sette him on a stede whit:	He set him on a white steed;
	Ther nas no knight hym ilik.	There was no knight like him.
	He smot him a litel wight	He struck him a light blow[15]
	And bed him beon a god knight.	And charged him to be a worthy knight.
	Athulf fel aknes thar	Athulf fell on his knees there
510	Bivore the King Aylmar.	Before King Almair.
	"King," he sede, "so kene	"Sire, so valiant," he said,
	Grante me a bene:	"Grant me a favor.
	Nu is knight Sire Horn	Now Sir Horn is a knight,
	That in Suddene was iboren;	Who was born in the Southlands.
	Lord he is of londe	He is lord of the land
	Over us that bi him stonde;	Over all of us who stand near him.
	Thin armes he hath and scheld	He has your arms and shield
	To fighte with upon the feld:	To fight with on the field.
	Let him us alle knighte	Let him knight us all,
520	For that is ure righte."	For that is our right."
	Aylmar sede sone ywis,	Almair answered at once, in truth,
	"Do nu that thi wille is."	"Do now what your will is."
	Horn adun lighte	Horn knelt down
	And makede hem alle knightes.	And made them all knights.
	Murie was the feste	The feast was merry,
	Al of faire gestes:	Filled with fine entertainments.
	Ac Rymenhild nas noght ther,	But Rimenhild was not there,
	And that hire thughte seve yer.	And it seemed like seven years to her.
	After Horn heo sente,	She sent for Horn,
530	And he to bure wente.	And he went to her chamber.
	Nolde he noght go one;	But he would not go alone,
	Athulf was his mone.	As Athulf was his companion.
	Rymenhild on flore stod:	Rimenhild stood on the floor,
	Hornes come hire thughte god:	Pleased with Horn's coming,

[15] *He smot him a litel wight*: Dubbing by tapping a kneeling knight with a sword is a late medieval development. Dubbing originally involved a firm box on the ear, cheek, or neck (as is probably the case here) or an embrace around the neck. See also Hall's note (page 126).

	And sede, “Welcome, Sire Horn,	And said, “Welcome, Sir Horn,
	And Athulf knight the biforn.	And Sir Athulf before you.
	Knight, nu is thi time	Knight, now is the time
	For to sitte bi me.	For you to sit by me.
	Do nu that thu er of spake:	Do now what you spoke about before;
540	To thy wif thu me take.	Take me to be your wife.
	Ef thu art trewe of dedes,	If you are true to your words,
	Do nu ase thu sedes.	Do now as you said.
	Nu thu hast wille thine,	Now that you have your will,
	Unbind me of my pine.”	Release me from my pain.”
	“Rymenhild,” quath he, “beo stille!	“Rimenhild,” he said, “be still!
	Ich wulle don al thi wille,	I will do all that you want
	Also hit mot bitide.	When the time is right.
	Mid spere I schal furst ride,	I will first ride with a spear
	And mi knighthod prove,	And prove my knighthood
550	Ar ich thee ginne to woghe.	Before I begin to court you.
	We beth knightes yonge,	We are both young knights,
	Of o dai al isprunge;	Sprung up in one day,
	And of ure mestere	And this is the custom
	So is the manere:	Of our profession.
	With sume othere knighte	It is good for a knight’s lover
	Wel for his lemman fighte	That he fight with some other knight
	Or he eni wif take;	Before he takes a wife.
	Forthi me stondeth the more rape.	For you I go in greater haste.
	Today, so Crist me blesse,	Today, so may Christ bless me,
560	Ich wulle do pruesse,	I will prove my abilities,
	For thi luve in the felde	For your love, in the field,
	Mid spere and mid schelde.	With spear and shield.
	If ich come to lyve,	If I come back alive,
	Ich schal thee take to wyve.”	I will make you my wife.”
	“Knight,” quath heo, “trewe,	“Knight so true,” she answered,
	Ich wene ich mai thee leve:	“I know that I can trust you.
	Tak nu her this gold ring:	Take this gold ring here.
	God him is the dubbing;	The detailing on it is fine;
	Ther is upon the ringe	On the ring is engraved
570	Igrave “Rymenhild the yonge”:	‘Rimenhild the Young.’
	Ther nis non betere anonder sunne	There is none better under the sun
	That eni man of telle cunne.	That any man can speak of.
	For my luve thu hit were	Wear it for my love,
	And on thi finger thu him bere.	And bear it on your finger.
	The stones beoth of suche grace	The stones are of such power
	That thu ne schalt in none place	That you need not, in any place,
	Of none duntes beon ofdrad,	Be afraid of any blows,
	Ne on bataille beon amad,	Nor be maddened in battle,
	Ef thu loke theran	If you look upon it
580	And thenke upon thi lemman.	And think of your sweetheart.
	And Sire Athulf, thi brother,	And Sir Athulf, your brother,
	He schal have another.	He will have another.
	Horn, ich thee biseche	Horn, I plead for you,
	With loveliche speche,	With loving words,
	Crist yeve god erndinge	That Christ give you a good result
	Thee aghen to bringe.”	And bring you back again.”
	The knight hire gan kesse,	The knight kissed her
	And heo him to blesse.	And she blessed him.

	Leve at hire he nam,	He took his leave of her
590	And in to halle cam:	And came into the hall.
	The knightes yeden to table,	The knights went to dinner,
	And Horne yede to stable:	And Horn went to the stable.
	Thar he tok his gode fole,	There he took his fine horse,
	Also blak so eny cole.	As black as any coal.
	The fole schok the brunie	The foal shook its armor[16]
	That al the curt gan denie.	So that it resounded through the court.
	The fole bigan to springe,	The horse began to spring,
	And Horn murie to singe.	And Horn began to sing merrily.
	Horn rod in a while	In a while Horn had ridden
600	More than a myle.	More than a mile.
	He fond o schup stonde	He found an anchored ship,
	With hethene honde.	Filled with heathen hounds.
	He axede what hi soghte	He asked what they were looking for
	Other to londe broghte.	Or had brought to the land.
	An hund him gan bihelde	One pagan dog beheld him
	That spac wordes belde:	As he spoke belligerent words:
	"This lond we wullegh winne	"We will conquer this land
	And sle that ther is inne."	And slay those who are in it."
	Horn gan his swerd gripe	Horn gripped his sword
610	And on his arme wype.	And wiped it on his arm.
	The Sarazins he smatte	He struck at the Saracens
	That his blod hatte;	So that his blood grew hot.
	At evreche dunte	With every blow
	The heved of wente;	A head flew off.
	Tho gunne the hundes gone	Then the hounds began
	Abute Horn a lone:	To surround the lone Horn.
	He lokede on the ringe,	He looked on the ring
	And thoghte on Rimenilde;	And thought of Rimenhild.
	He slogh ther on haste	He slayed there in his rush
620	On hundred bi the laste,	At least a hundred,
	Ne mighte noman telle	Nor might anyone count
	That folc that he gan quelle.	The men that he destroyed.
	Of alle that were alive,	Of all who had arrived,[17]
	Ne mighte ther non thrive.	None would succeed there.
	Horn tok the maisteres heved,	Horn took the leader's head,
	That he hadde him bireved	Which he had lost because of him,
	And sette hit on his swerde,	And set it on his sword,
	Anoven at than orde.	On top of the point.
	He verde hom into halle,	He traveled home into the hall
630	Among the knightes alle.	Among all the knights.
	"Kyng," he sede, "wel thu sitte,	"Sire," he announced, "sit easily
	And alle thine knightes mitte.	With all your knights beside you.
	Today, after mi dubbing,	Today, after my dubbing,
	So I rod on my pleing	As I rode for sport,
	I fond o schup rowe	I found a row of ships
	Mid watere al byflowe	Surrounded by the waters,

[16] *The fole schok the brunie*: Horses were commonly armored only after the late twelfth century (Hall, note to 591). Horn is knighted on a white steed (505) and so either this is a slip or he has several horses.

[17] *Alive*: Harleian 2253 MS has *aryve*.

	Al with Sarazines kyn,	All with Saracen kin,
	And none londisse men	To torment you and all
	To dai for to pine	That is yours this day,
640	Thee and alle thine.	With no one on the land to help.
	Hi gonne me assaille:	They tried to attack me,
	Mi swerd me nolde faille:	But my sword would not fail me.
	I smot hem alle to grunde,	I struck them all to the ground
	Other yaf hem dithes wunde.	Or gave them deadly wounds.
	That heved I thee bringe	I bring you the head
	Of the maister kinge.	Of the chief king.
	Nu is thi wile iyolde,	Now your effort is rewarded,
	King, that thu me knighty woldest."	Sire, for making me a knight."
	A moreghe tho the day gan springe,	In the morning when day began to spring,
650	The king him rod an huntinge.	The king rode out to go hunting.
	At hom lefte Fikenhild,	Fickenhild was left home,
	That was the wurste moder child.	Who was the worst mother's child.
	Horn ferde into bure	Horn went into the bower
	To sen aventure.	To look for diversion.
	He saw Rymenild sitte	He found Rimenhild pining
	Also heo were of witte.	As if she were out of her wits.
	Heo sat on the sunne	She sat in the window sun
	With tieres al birunne.	With tears running down.
	Horn sede, "Lef, thin ore!	Horn said, "Dear, your patience!
660	Wi wepestu so sore?"	Why are you weeping so sorely?"
	Heo sede, "Noght I ne wepe,	She said, "I do not weep for nothing,
	Bute ase I lay aslepe	But as I lay asleep,
	To the se my net I caste,	I cast my net to the sea,
	And hit nolde noght ilaste;	And it would not stay together.
	A gret fiss at the furste	At the first moment a great fish
	Mi net he gan to berste.	Began to burst through my net.
	Ich wene that ich schal leose	I believe that I will lose
	The fiss that ich wolde cheose."	The fish that I wish to choose."
	"Crist," quath Horn, "and Seint Stevene	Horn replied, "May Christ and Saint
670	Turne thine swevene.	Stephen amend your dream!
	Ne schal I thee biswike,	I will not deceive you,
	Ne do that thee mislike.	Nor do what displeases you.
	I schal me make thin owe	I will make myself your own,
	To holden and to knowe	To hold and to be known
	For everech othere wighte,	To every other person,
	And tharto mi treuthe I thee plighte."	And to that I pledge my oath."
	Muchel was the ruthe	There was great dismay
	That was at thare truthe,	In that betrothal,
	For Rymenhild weop ille,	For Rimenhild wept bitterly
680	And Horn let the tires stille.	Until Horn stopped her tears.
	"Lemman, quath he, "dere,	"Lover," he said, "dear heart,
	Thu schalt more ihere.	There is more to hear.
	Thi sweven schal wende	Your dream will show that
	Other sum man schal us schende.	Some other man will harm us.
	The fiss that brak the lyne,	The fish that broke the line,
	Ywis he doth us pine.	Truly, he will cause us pain.
	That schal don us tene,	That result will bring us grief,

	And wurth wel sone isene.”	And will soon be seen.”
	Aylmar rod bi Sture,	Almair rode by the Stour,[18]
690	And Horn lai in bure.	And Horn lay in the room.
	Fykenhild hadde envye	Fickenhild was jealous
	And sede thes folye:	And spoke these lies:
	“Aylmar, ich thee warne	“Almair, I must warn you:
	Horn thee wule berne:	Horn will destroy you.
	Ich herde whar he sede,	I heard what he said,
	And his swerd forth leide,	And his sword is laid ready
	To bringe thee of lyve,	To take your life
	And take Rymenhild to wyve.	And to take Rimenhild as his wife.
	He lith in bure	He is lying in her chamber,
700	Under coverture	Under the bedcovers
	By Rymenhild thi doghter,	With your daughter Rimenhild,
	And so he doth wel ofte.	And he does this often.
	And thider thu go al right,	If you go there straightaway,
	Ther thu him finde might.	You will find him there.
	Thu do him ut of londe,	Banish him out of the land
	Other he doth thee schonde!”	Before he brings you to ruin!”
	Aylmar aghen gan turne	Almair began to turn back
	Wel modi and wel murne.	In great anger and distress.
	He fond Horn in arme	He found Horn in her arms,
710	On Rymenhilde barme.	In Rimenhild’s embrace.
	“Awey ut,” he sede, “fule theof,	“Away, out,” he said, “foul thief!
	Ne wurstu me nevremore leof!	You will never be dear to me again!
	Wend ut of my bure	Get out of this room
	With muchel messaventure.	With cursed fortune!
	Wel sone bute thu flitte,	Unless you flee at once,
	With swerde ich thee anhitte.	I will strike you with my sword![19]
	Wend ut of my londe,	Get out of my land,
	Other thu schalt have schonde.”	Or you will have greater shame!”
	Horn sadelede his stede	Horn saddled his steed
720	And his armes he gan sprede.	And laid out his arms.
	His brunie he gan lace	He began to lace his chainmail
	So he scholde in to place.	As if he were going to battle.
	His swerd he gan fonge:	He seized his sword
	Nabod he noght to longe.	And did not linger long;
	He yede forth blive	He went forth quickly
	To Rymenhild his wyve.	To Rimenhild, his betrothed.
	He sede, “Lemman derling,	He said, “Darling, dear one,
	Nu havestu thi swevening.	Now you have your dream.
	The fiss that thi net rente,	The fish that tore your net
730	Fram thee he me sente.	Has now been sent from you.
	Rymenhild, have wel godne day:	Rimenhild, goodbye.

[18] *Sture*: TEAMS and Garbaty claim this is the Mersey, but there is a River Stour running through Stourport-on-Severn and Kidderminster, near Worcester. If this is ‘southern’ to the poet, perhaps *Westernesse* is much further northwest, only limited by Ireland. *Suddene* might then refer to southern stretches of the Danelaw, but Worcester was part of Mercia and not occupied by the Danes.

[19] This exposure scene is similar to the duke’s discovery of Amis and Belisaunt, or even of the emir and Floris and Blancheflor. The king is relatively lenient here in not attempting to execute Horn by his own hand in a rage or by trial as the emir does.

	No leng abiden I ne may.	I cannot stay any longer,
	In to uncuthe londe,	But will go to unknown lands
	Wel more for to fonde;	To find a new life.
	I schal wune there	I will stay there
	Fulle seve yere.	A full seven years.
	At seve yeres ende,	At the end of seven years,
	Yef I ne come ne sende,	If I do not come or send word,
	Tak thee husebonde;	Take a husband
740	For me thu ne wonde.	And do not wait for me.
	In armes thu me fonge,	Take me in your arms
	And kes me wel longe."	And kiss me for a while."
	Heo custe him wel a stunde	She kissed him for a long time
	And Rymenhild feol to grunde.	And Rimenhild swooned to the ground.
	Horn tok his leve:	Horn took his leave;
	Ne mighte he no leng bileve;	He could not stay any longer.
	He tok Athulf, his fere,	He embraced his friend
	Al abute the swere,	Athulf about the neck
	And sede, "Knight so trewe,	And said, "Knight so true,
750	Kep wel mi luve newe.	Keep my new lover well.
	Thu nevre me ne forsoke:	Do not ever forsake me!
	Rymenhild thu kep and loke.	Protect and look after Rimenhild."
	His stede he gan bistride,	He mounted his steed
	And forth he gan ride:	And began to ride forth.
	To the havene he ferde,	He traveled to the harbor
	And a god schup he hurede,	And hired a sturdy ship
	That him scholde londe	That would take him
	In westene londe.	To western lands.
	Athulf weop with ighe	Athulf wept from his eyes
760	And al that him isighe.	In seeing all that.
	The whyght him gan stonde,	The sea breeze carried him
	And drof til Hirelonde.	And drove him to Ireland.
	To londe he him sette	He set foot on land
	And fot on stirop sette.	And put his feet in stirrups.
	He fond bi the weie	He found, on his way,
	Kynges sones tweie;	The king's two sons.
	That on him het Harild,	One called himself Harold
	And that other Berild.	And the other Berild.
	Berild gan him preie	Berild asked of him
770	That he scholde him seie	That he would say
	What his name were	What his name was,
	And what he wolde there.	And what he wanted there.
	"Cutberd," he sede, "ich hote,	"Cutbeard is my name," he said.[20]
	Icomen ut of the bote,	"I come from out of a boat
	Wel feor fram biweste	From far away on the western coast[21]
	To seche mine beste."	To seek my fortune."

[20] *Cutberd*: The name may not have any significance, and Harleian MS 2253 has *Godmod*. Garbaty posits an influence from the legend of the Anglo-Saxon bishop Saint Cuthbert (c. 634-687), who was also set adrift and landed in Galloway, Scotland (note to 773). For more on possible borrowings from saints' legends, see Irene P. McKeehan, "The Book of the Nativity of St. Cuthbert," *PMLA* 48 (1933): 981-99.

[21] *Biweste*: 'by way of the west' or 'from the west' does not make sense from the perspective of Ireland. The poet perhaps means 'western England' or 'west Danelaw.'

	Berild gan him nier ride	Bereld rode nearer him
	And tok him by the bridel:	And took him by the bridle.
	"Wel beo thu, knight, ifounde;	"You are well met, knight!
780	With me thu lef a stunde.	Stay with me a while.
	Also mote I sterve,	As sure as I must die,
	The king thu schalt serve.	You shall serve the king!
	Ne sagh I nevre my lyve	I never saw such a fair knight
	So fair knight aryve."	Arrive here in all my life."
	Cutberd heo ladde in to halle,	They led Cutbeard into the hall
	And hi a kne gan falle:	And fell on to their knees.
	He sette him a knewelyng	They set themselves kneeling
	And grette wel the gode king.	And courteously greeted the good king.
	Thanne sede Berild sone:	Then Bereld said at once,
790	"Sire King, of him thu hast to done;	"Sire King, you have duties for him.
	Bitak him thi lond to werie;	Entrust him to defend your land.
	Ne schal hit noman derie,	No man will harm him,
	For he is the faireste man	For he is the noblest man
	That evre yut on thi londe cam."	That ever yet came to this land."
	Thanne sede the king so dere,	Then the dear king said,
	"Welcome beo thu here.	"You are welcome here.
	Go nu, Berild, swithe,	Go now, Berild, quickly,
	And make him ful blithe.	And make him at ease.
	And whan thu farst to woghe,	And if you go courting,
800	Tak him thine glove:	Give him your glove.[22]
	Iment thu havest to wyve,	If you intend to marry someone,
	Awai he schal thee dryve;	He will outshine you!
	For Cutberdes fairhede	Because of Cutbeard's manliness
	Ne schal thee nevre wel spede."	You would surely never succeed."
	Hit was at Cristemasse,	It was on Christmas Day,
	Neither more ne lasse;	Neither before or after,
	Ther cam in at none	When at noon a giant
	A geaunt swthe sone,	Abruptly came inside,
	Iarmed fram paynyme	Armed from pagan lands,
810	And seide thes ryme:	Who said this rhyme:
	"Site stille, Sire Kyng,	"Be still, Sire King,
	And herkne this tything:	And listen to what I say.
	Her buth paens arived;	Pagan warriors have arrived,
	Wel mo thane five	Far more than five.
	Her beoth on the sonde,	They are on the shore,
	King, upon thy londe;	King, on your land.
	On of hem wile fighte	Tomorrow one of them will fight
	Aghen thre knightes.	Against three of your knights.
	Yef other thre slen ure,	If the three slay our one,
820	Al this lond beo youre;	This land will remain yours.
	Yef ure on overcometh your threo,	If our one overcomes your three,
	Al this lond schal ure beo.	All this kingdom will be ours.
	Tomoreghe be the fightinge,	Tomorrow will be the battle,
	Whane the light of daye springe."	When the light of day springs."

[22] *Tak him thine glove*: The meaning of the line is opaque. The king perhaps praises Horn's handsomeness and teases his son by saying that Berild should give Horn his glove when he is courting to show that Horn is not a competitor, as otherwise Berild will be outclassed. See TEAMS and Hall, note to lines 793-7.

	Thanne sede the Kyng Thurston,	King Thurston said after,
	“Cutberd schal beo that on;	“Cutbeard will be one,
	Berild schal beo that other,	And Berild will be the other,
	The thridde Alrid his brother;	And Alfred, his brother, the third.
	For hi beoth the strengeste	For they are the strongest
830	And of armes the beste.	And the finest in arms.
	Bute what schal us to rede?	But what shall we do?
	Ich wene we beth alle dede.”	I expect we will all be dead!”
	Cutberd sat at borde	Cutbeard sat at the table
	And sede thes wordes:	And said these words:
	“Sire King, hit nis no righte	“Sire King, it is not right
	On with thre to fighte:	For one to fight with three,
	Aghen one hunde,	For three Christian men
	Thre Cristen men to fonde.	To take on one heathen hound.
	Sire, I schal alone,	Sire, I will go alone,
840	Withute more ymone,	Without any other companions.
	With mi swerd wel ethe	With my sword I will easily
	Bringe hem thre to dethe.”	Bring the three of them to death.”
	The king aros amoreghe,	In the morning, the king rose,
	That hadde muchel sorghe;	With great misgivings.
	And Cutberd ros of bedde,	And Cutbeard got out of bed
	With armes he him schredde:	And fitted himself with arms.
	Horn his brunie gan on caste,	He cast on his chainmail coat
	And lacede hit wel faste,	And laced it tightly,
	And cam to the kinge	And came to the king
850	At his up risinge.	When he had risen up.
	“King,” he sede, “cum to felde,	“Sire,” he said, “come to the field
	For to bihelde	To behold
	Hu we fighte schulle,	How the fighting will go,
	And togare go wulle.”	And we will go together.”
	Right at prime tide	Right at the first light,
	Hi gunnen ut ride	They rode out
	And funden on a grene	And met on the green.
	A geaunt swthe kene,	The giant was very keen,
	His feren him biside	With his companions by him,
860	Hore deth to abide.	Waiting to bring their deaths.
	The ilke bataille	Cutbeard began to fight
	Cutberd gan asaille:	The agreed battle.
	He yaf dentes inoghe;	He struck blows enough,
	The knightes felle iswoghe.	And the warriors became faint.
	His dent he gan withdraghe,	He began to ease off his strikes,
	For hi were negh aslaghe;	For they were nearly slain,
	And sede, “Knights, nu ye reste	And said, “Sirs, you may rest now
	One while ef you leste.”	For a while if you like.”
	Hi sede hi nevre nadde	They said they had never had
870	Of knighte dentes so harde,	Such hard blows from a knight,
	Bote of the King Murry,	Except from King Murray,
	That wes swithe sturdy.	Who was also very formidable.
	He was of Hornes kunne,	He was from Horn’s family,
	Iborn in Suddene.	Born in the Southlands.
	Horn him gan to agrise,	Horn began to shudder,
	And his blod arise.	And his blood rose.
	Bivo him sagh he stonde	He saw standing before him the men
	That driven him of lond	Who had driven him from his land

	And that his fader slogh.	And killed his father.
880	To him his swerd he drogh.	He drew his sword to himself.
	He lokede on his rynge	He looked at his ring,
	And thoghte on Rymenhilde.	And thought of Rimenhild.
	He smot him thuregh the herte,	He stabbed them through their chests,
	That sore him gan to smerte.	Which pained them harshly.
	The paens that er were so sturne	The pagans, who were so fierce earlier,
	Hi gunne awei urne;	Began to run away.
	Horn and his compaynye	Horn and his company
	Gunne after hem wel swithe highe	Took after them in great haste
	And sloghen alle the hundes	And slaughtered all the hounds
890	Er hi here schipes funde.	Before they could reach their ships.
	To dethe he hem alle broghte.	He brought them all to death;
	His fader deth wel dere hi boghte.	They paid dearly for his father's murder.
	Of alle the kynges knightes	Of all the king's knights,
	Ne scathede wer no wighte,	Not a person was hurt
	Bute his sones tweie	Except for his two sons,
	Bifore him he sagh deie.	Whom he saw die before him.
	The king bigan to grete	The king began to weep
	And teres for to lete.	And to let tears fall.
	Me leiden hem in bare	Men laid them on a funeral bier
900	And burden hem ful yare.	And buried them right away.
	The king com into halle	The king came into the hall
	Among his knightes alle.	Among all of his knights.
	"Horn," he sede, "I seie thee,	"Horn," he said, "I say to you,
	Do as I schal rede thee.	Do as I will advise you.
	Aslaghen beth mine heirs,	Both of my heirs are dead,
	And thu art knight of muchel pris,	And you are a knight of great fame,
	And of grete strengthe,	And of great strength,
	And fair o bodie lengthe.	And fair, with a tall body.
	Mi rengne thu schalt welde,	You will rule my kingdom
910	And to spuse helde	And will have for a wife
	Reynild, mi doghter,	Renild, my daughter,
	That sitteth on the lofte."	Who waits upstairs."
	"O Sire King, with wronge	"Oh, Sire King, it would be wrong
	Scholte ich hit underfonge,	For me to accept
	Thi doghter, that ye me bede,	Your daughter that you offer me,
	Ower rengne for to lede.	Or to govern your realm.
	Wel more ich schal thee serve,	It is better that I serve you,
	Sire Kyng, or thu sterve.	Sire, before you die.[23]
	Thi sorwe schal wende	Your sorrow will be relieved
920	Or seve yeres ende.	Before seven years' end.
	Whanne hit is wente,	When they have passed,
	Sire King, yef me mi rente.	Sire, give me my reward.
	Whanne I thi doghter yerne,	If I ask for your daughter,
	Ne shaltu me hire werne."	You will not refuse me."
	Cutberd wonede there	Cutbeard lived there
	Fulle seve yere	For a full seven years,
	That to Rymenild he ne sente	And neither sent word to Rimenhild

[23] *Sterve*: in OE and ME *starve* has the more general meaning of 'die.' It only later gained the more specific meaning of dying of hunger.

	Ne him self ne wente.	Nor did he journey himself.
	Rymenild was in Westernesse	Rimenhild was in the Westlands
930	With wel muchel sorinesse.	In great sorrow.
	A king ther gan arive	Another king arrived there
	That wolde hire have to wyve;	Who wanted to have her as his wife.
	Aton he was with the king	He was in accord with the king
	Of that ilke wedding.	On the matter of the wedding.
	The daies were schorte,	The days were so short
	That Rimenhild ne dorste	That Rimenhild did not dare
	Leten in none wise.	To obstruct it in any way.
	A writ he dude devise;	She dictated a letter,
	Athulf hit dude write,	And it was written by Athulf,
940	That Horn ne luvede noght lite.	Who did not love Horn lightly.
	Heo sende hire sonde	She sent her messenger
	To evereche londe	To every land
	To seche Horn the knight	To seek Horn the knight,
	Ther me him finde mighte.	Wherever he might find him.
	Horn noght therof ne herde	Horn heard nothing of it
	Til o day that he ferde	Until one day when he went
	To wude for to schete.	Into the woods to hunt,
	A knave he gan imete.	And he met a servant there.
	Horn seden, "Leve fere,	Horn said, "Dear fellow,
950	What sechestu here?"	What are you looking for here?"
	"Knight, if beo thi wille,	"Knight, if it is your will,
	I mai thee sone telle.	I will soon tell you.
	I seche fram biweste	I come from the English coast
	Horn of Westernesse	Seeking Horn of the Westlands
	For a maiden Rymenhild,	For a maiden, Rimenhild,
	That for him gan wexe wild.	Who is growing mad for his sake.
	A king hire wile wedde	A king will marry her
	And bringe to his bedde,	And bring her to his bed,
	King Modi of Reynes,	King Moody of Furness,[24]
960	On of Hornes enemis.	One of Horn's enemies.
	Ich habbe walke wide,	I have walked far
	Bi the se side;	Along the sea side.
	Nis he nowar ifunde.	He is nowhere to be found.
	Walawai the stunde!	Alas the hour!
	Wailaway the while!	Alas the time!
	Nu wurth Rymenild bigiled."	Now Rimenhild has been deceived!"
	Horn iherde with his ires,	Horn heard with his own ears
	And spak with bidere tires:	And said through bitter tears,
	"Knave, wel thee bitide!	"Lad, good fortune is with you!
970	Horn stondeth thee biside.	Horn stands in front of you.
	Aghen to hure thu turne	Turn back to her again
	And seie that heo nu murne,	And tell her not to mourn,
	For I schal beo ther bitime,	For I will be there in good time,
	A Soneday by prime."	On Sunday by sunrise."
	The knave was wel blithe	The servant was very glad
	And highede aghen blive.	And hurried back quickly.

[24] *Reynes*: Perhaps Furness, Lancashire, in the Lake District. Schofield argues that the French MS has *Fenice* and that the English *Reynis* might be a corruption (15).

	The se bigan to throghe	But the sea began to surge
	Under hire woghe.	Under Rimenhild's walls,
	The knave there gan adrinke:	And the servant began to founder there.
980	Rymenhild hit mighte ofthinke.	Rimenhild thought she could see
	The see him con ded throwe	Him capsized in the ocean's rush,
	Under hire chambre wowe.	Under her chamber walls.
	Rymenhild undude the durepin	Rimenhild undid the door bolt
	Of the hus ther heo was in,	Of the house that she was in,
	To loke with hire ighe	To look with her eyes
	If heo oght of Horn isighe:	If she could see anything of Horn.
	Tho fond heo the knave adrent,	When she found the drowned servant
	That heo hadde for Horn isent,	That she had sent for Horn,
	And that scholde Horn bringe.	Who was to bring him home,
990	Hire fingres heo gan wringe.	She began to wring her hands.
	Horn cam to Thurston the King	Horn went to Thurston the king
	And tolde him this tithing.	And told him this news.
	Tho he was iknowe	Then he was made aware
	That Rimenhild was his oghe;	How Rimenhild was Horn's own,
	Of his gode kenne	About Horn's noble father,
	The King of Suddenne,	The king of the Southlands,
	And hu he slogh in felde	And how he killed on the field
	That his fader quelde,	The men who murdered his father.
	And seide, "King the wise,	Horn said, "Wise king,
1000	Yeld me mi servise.	Reward me for my service.
	Rymenhild help me winne,	Help me to win Rimenhild
	That thu noght ne linne:	And do not fail me,
	And I schal do to spuse	And I will have your daughter
	Thi doghter wel to huse:	Married into a good family.
	Heo schal to spuse have	She will have for a husband
	Athulf, mi gode felaghe,	Athulf, my best friend,
	God knight mid the beste	A good knight among the best,
	And the treweste."	And the truest."
	The king sede so stille,	The king said gently,
1010	"Horn, have nu thi wille."	"Horn, have your will now."
	He dude writes sende	He had letters sent
	Into Yrlonde	Around Ireland
	After knightes lighte,	For keen knights,
	Irisse men to fighte.	Fighting Irish men.
	To Horn come inoghe	Enough came to Horn
	That to schupe droghe.	And boarded the ship,
	Horn dude him in the weie	And Horn got underway
	On a god galeie.	In a strong galley.
	The wind him gan to blowe	The wind began to blow
1020	In a litel throghe.	In a little while.
	The se bigan to posse	The sea began to push them
	Right in to Westernesse.	Right into the Westlands.
	Hi strike seil and maste	They struck the sail and mast,
	And ankere gunne caste,	And cast off their anchor
	Or eny day was sprunge	Before another day had sprung
	Other belle irunge.	Or a bell was rung.
	The word bigan to springe	The word began to spread
	Of Rymenhilde weddinge.	Of Rimenhild's wedding.
	Horn was in the watere,	Horn was on the sea
1030	Ne mighte he come no latere.	And could not be late.

	He let his schup stonde,	He let his ship stand anchored
	And yede to londe.	And went ashore.
	His folk he dude abide	He had his company wait
	Under wude side.	At the side of the woods;
	Horn him yede alone	Horn made his way alone,
	Also he sprunge of stone.	As if he had sprung from the rocks.[25]
	A palmere he thar mette	He met a pilgrim there
	And faire hine grette:	And greeted him courteously.
	"Palmere, thu schalt me telle	"Pilgrim, you must tell me
1040	Al of thine spelle."	All that is happening."
	He sede upon his tale,	He said in his conversation,
	"I come fram o brudale;	"I've come from a bridal feast.[26]
	Ich was at o wedding	I was at the wedding
1044	Of a maide Rymenhild:	Of a maiden, Rimenhild.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
L	Fram honder chyrche wowe	Under the church walls nearby
	Þe gan louerd owe	She wedded a husband. [27]
	. . . . .	. . . . .
1045	Ne mighte heo adrighe	She could not dry
	That heo ne weop with ighe.	Her eyes from crying.
	Heo sede that heo nolde	She said that she would not
	Ben ispused with golde.	Be married with a gold ring!
	Heo hadde on husbonde	She had a husband,
1050	Thegh he were ut of londe.	Even if he was in another land.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
L	Mody myd strencþe hyre hadde	Moody had married her by force
	And in to toure ladde	And had her brought to the tower,
	. . . . .	. . . . .
1051	And in strong halle,	Into a strong hall
	Bithinne castel walle,	Inside the castle walls.
	Ther I was atte yate,	I was there at the gate
	Nolde hi me in late.	But they would not let me in.
	Modi ihote hadde	Moody had ordered men
	To bure that me hire ladde:	To take her to her bower.
	Away I gan glide:	I slipped away,
	That deol I nolde abide.	For I could not endure that scene.
	The bride wepeth sore,	The bride weeps bitterly,
1060	And that is muche deole."	And that is a great pity."
	Quath Horn, "So Crist me rede,	Horn said, "So help me Christ,
	We schulle chaungi wede.	We will exchange clothes!

[25] *Also he sprunge of stone*: Garbaty mentions "an ancient belief that the first men originated from stones, singly, and hence were solitary" (note to line 1034). Hall gives as examples Teutonic legends and the *Odyssey*, xix.162-3, where Penelope tells the beggar, "You must have ancestors, for you did not spring from a tree or a rock."

[26] Garbaty notes that pilgrims, who collected palm branches in the Holy Lands and were thus called *palmers*, were welcome guests at celebrations as they entertained everyone with their adventures. Refusing visitors during a wedding, as Moody does, was in very poor taste (note to 1037, 1052).

[27] Extra lines from MS Laud Misc. 108 (1076-7 and 1084-7). The lines make the sequence clearer: the pilgrim observed the public church ceremony before being shooed away from the reception. They also emphasize that Riminhild is married unwillingly and thus the marriage is both invalid and unconsummated.

	Have her clothes myne	Take my clothing here,
	And tak me thi sclavyne,	And give me your cloak.
	Today I schal ther drinke	Today I will drink there
	That some hit schulle ofthinke."	To something others will regret."
	His sclavyn he dude dun legge,	The pilgrim laid down his cloak
	And tok hit on his rigge,	And took Horn's clothes,
	He tok Horn his clothes:	And put them on his back.
1070	That nere him noght lothe.	They were not displeasing to him!
	Horn tok burdon and scrippe	Horn took the staff and bag
	And wrong his lippe.	And twisted his lip.
	He makede him a ful chere,	He gave himself a foul appearance
	And al bicolmede his swere.	And dirtied up his neck.
	He makede him unbicomelich	He made himself unattractive
	Hes he nas nevremore ilich.	As he had never looked before.
	He com to the gateward,	He came to the gatekeeper,
	That him answerede hard:	Who answered him coldly.
	Horn bad undo softe	Horn asked him softly to open it,
1080	Mani tyme and ofte;	Many times repeatedly.
	Ne mighte he awynne	He did not gain permission
	That he come therinne.	So that he might come in.
	Horn gan to the yate turne	Horn finally turned to the gate
	And that wiket unspurne.	And kicked out the wicket.
	The boye hit scholde abugge.	The oaf would pay for it!
	Horn threw him over the brigge	Horn threw him over the bridge
	That his ribbes him tobrake,	So that his ribs cracked,
	And suthe com in atte gate.	And swiftly came through the gate.
	He sette him wel loghe	He set himself down low,
1090	In beggeres rowe;	Among a row of beggars.
	He lokede him abute	He looked about him
	With his colmie snute;	With his dirty snout.
	He segh Rymenhild sitte	He saw Rimenhild pining
	Ase heo were of witte,	As if she were out of her wits,
	Sore wepinge and yerne;	Weeping sadly and earnestly.
	Ne mighte hure no man wurne.	No man might console her.
	He lokede in eche halke;	He looked in each corner,
	Ne segh he nowhar walke	But he did not see his friend
	Athulf his felawe,	Athulf walking anywhere,
1100	That he cuthe knowe.	As far as he could tell.
	Athulf was in the ture,	Athulf was in the tower,
	Abute for to pure	Keeping a lookout
	After his comynge,	For his coming,
	Yef schup him wolde bringe.	If a ship were to bring him.
	He segh the se flowe	He saw the ocean flow
	And Horn nowar rowe.	And Horn nowhere on it.
	He sede upon his songe:	He said in singing,
	"Horn, nu thu ert wel longe.	"Horn, you are slow to come.
	Rymenhild thu me toke	You entrusted Rimenhild to me,
1110	That I scholde loke;	That I should look after her.
	Ich habbe ikept hure evre;	I have always watched over her.
	Com nu other nevre:	Come now or never!
	I ne may no leng hure kepe.	I cannot protect her any longer,
	For soreghe nu I wepe."	And now I weep for sorrow."
	Rymenhild ros of benche,	Rimenhild rose from the bench
	Wyn for to schenche,	To pour some wine

	After mete in sale,	With the dinner in the hall,
	Bothe wyn and ale.	Both wine and ale.[28]
	On horn heo bar anhonde,	She carried a drinking horn in hand,
1120	So laghe was in londe.	As was the custom in the land.
	Knightes and squier	Knights and squires
	Alle dronken of the ber,	All drank the beer,
	Bute Horn alone	All except for Horn,
	Nadde therof no mone.	Who alone had no share of it.
	Horn sat upon the grunde;	Horn sat on the ground,
	Him thughte he was ibunde.	Thinking he was overcome.
	He sede, "Quen so hende,	He said, "Gracious queen,
	To meward thu wende;	Come toward me.
	Thu yef us with the furste;	Give us some first.
1130	The beggeres beoth ofthurste."	The beggars are thirsty."
	Hure horn heo leide adun,	She laid down her horn
	And fulde him of a brun	And filled a bowl with a gallon
	His bolle of a galun;	Of beer from a brown jug,
	For heo wende he were a glotoun.	For she assumed he was a drunkard.
	Heo seide, "Have this cuppe,	She said, "Drink your cup,
	And this thing theruppe.	And this portion as well.
	Ne sagh ich nevre, so ich wene,	I never saw, so far as I know,
	Beggere that were so kene."	A beggar that was so bold."
	Horn tok hit his ifere	Horn gave it to his companion
1140	And sede, "Quen so dere,	And said, "Dear queen,
	Wyn nelle ich muche ne lite	I do not want much wine,
	But of cuppe white.	Only a cupful of white.
	Thu wenest I beo a beggere,	You believe I am a beggar,
	And ich am a fissere,	But I am a fisherman
	Wel feor icome by este	Who has come far east
	For fissen at thi feste.	To fish at your feast.
	Mi net lith her bi honde,	My net lies nearby at hand
	Bi a wel fair stronde.	Along a fair shore.
	Hit hath ileie there	It has laid there
1150	Fulle seve yere.	A full seven years.
	Ich am icome to loke	I have come to find out
	Ef eni fiss hit toke.	If it has captured any fish.
	Ich am icome to fisse:	I have come as an angler,
	Drynke null I of dyssh:	Not to drink from a bowl.
	Drink to Horn of horne.	Drink to Horn with your horn,
	Feor ich am jorne."	For I have journeyed far."
	Rymenhild him gan bihelde;	Rimenheld looked at him
	Hire heorte bigan to chelde.	And her heart began to quake.
	Ne knew heo noght his fissing,	She did not understand his fishing
1160	Ne Horn hymselve nothing.	Or recognize Horn himself,
	Ac wunder hire gan thinke	But she thought it so mysterious
	Whi he bad to Horn drinke.	That she invited Horn to drink.
	Heo fulde hire horn with wyn	She filled her horn with wine,
	And dronk to the pilegrym.	And drank to the pilgrim.
	Heo sede, "Drink thi fulle,	She said, "Drink your fill,

[28] Pouring alcohol for the king and his guests is not a servile task but Rimenhild's royal privilege. In *Beowulf*, Hrothgar's wife Wealhþeow ceremoniously fills the warriors' cups in the mead hall (622-4).

	And suthe thu me telle	And tell me the truth,
	If thu evre isighe	If you ever saw
	Horn under wude lighe.”	Horn lying in the woods.”
	Horn dronk of horn a stunde	Horn drank from the horn a while
1170	And threu the ring to grunde.	And dropped the ring to the bottom.
	He seyde, “Quen, nou seche	He said, “Queen, look for
	Qwat is in thy drenche.”	What is in your drink.”
	The Quen yede to bure	The queen went to her chamber
	With hire maidenes foure.	With her four maidens.
	Tho fond heo what heo wolde,	She found what she wished then,
	A ring igraven of golde	A ring engraved of gold
	That Horn of hure hadde;	That she had given Horn.
	Sore hure dradde	She sorely dreaded
	That Horn isterve were,	That Horn was dead,
1180	For the ring was there.	For the ring was there.
	Tho sente heo a damesele	Then she sent a maiden
	After the palmere;	For the pilgrim.
	“Palmere,” quath heo, “trewe,	“Pilgrim,” she said, “be honest
	The ring that thu threwe,	About the ring that you dropped.
	Thu seie whar thu hit nome,	Say where you got it
	And whi thu hider come.”	And why you have come here.”
	He sede, “Bi Seint Gile,	He said, “By Saint Giles,
	Ich habbe go mani mile,	I have traveled many miles,
	Wel feor by yonde weste	Far beyond the west
1190	To seche my beste.	To seek my fortune.
	I fond Horn child stonde	I found Child Horn in a certain place
	To schupeward in londe.	Waiting to board a ship.
	He sede he wolde agesse	He said he was intending
	To arive in Westernesse.	To return to the Westlands.
	The schip nam to the flode	The ship took to the waters
	With me and Horn the gode;	With me and good Horn.
	Horn was sik and deide,	Horn was sick and dying,
	And faire he me preide:	And entreated me courteously,
	‘Go with the ringe	‘Go with the ring
1200	To Rymenhild the yonge.’	To Rimenhild the Young.’
	Ofte he hit custe,	He continually kissed it.
	God yeve his saule reste!”	May God give his soul rest!”
	Rymenhild sede at the furste,	Rimenhild exclaimed at once,
	“Herte, nu thu berste,	“Heart, now burst,
	For Horn nastu namore,	For you no longer have Horn,
	That thee hath pined so sore.”	Who has hurt you so sorely.”
	Heo feol on hire bedde,	She fell on her bed,
	Ther heo knif hudde,	Where she had hidden a knife
	To sle with king lothe	To slay the loathed king
1210	And hureselve bothe	And herself as well
	In that ulke nighte,	On that same night
	If Horn come ne mighte.	If Horn would not come.
	To herte knif heo sette,	She set the knife to her heart
	Ac Horn anon hire kepte.	But Horn quickly caught her.
	He wipede that blake of his swere,	He wiped the soot off his neck
	And sede, “Quen, so swete and dere,	And said, “Queen, so sweet and dear,
	Ich am Horn thin oghe.	I am your own Horn!
	Ne canstu me noght knowe?	Don’t you recognize me?
	Ich am Horn of Westernesse;	I am Horn of the Westlands.

1220	In armes thu me cusse.”	Kiss me in your arms!”
	Hi custe hem mid ywisse	They kissed each other, certainly,
	And makeden muche blisse.	And had great joy.
	“Rymenhild,” he sede, “I wende	“Rimenhild,” he said, “I must go
	Adun to the wudes ende:	Down to the woods’ end.
	Ther beth myne knightes	My knights are there,
	Redi to fighte;	Ready to fight,
	Iarmed under clothe,	Armed under their clothes.
	Hi schulle make wrothe	They will make the king
	The king and his geste	And his guests who have
1230	That come to the feste.	Come to the feast displeased!
	Today I schal hem teche	Today I will teach them
	And sore hem areche.”	And correct them harshly.”
	Horn sprong ut of halle	Horn sprang out of the hall
	And let his sclavin falle.	And let his cloak fall.
	The quen yede to bure	The queen ran to the chamber
	And fond Athulf in ture.	And found Athulf in the tower.
	“Athulf,” heo sede, “be blithe	“Athulf,” she said, “be glad,
	And to Horn thu go wel swithe.	And go to Horn quickly!
	He is under wude boghe	He is under the forest boughs
1240	And with him knightes inoghe.”	With knights enough with him.”
	Athulf bigan to springe	Athulf began to hurry
	For the tithinge.	Because of the news,
	After Horn he arnde anon,	And ran after Horn as quickly
	Also that hors mighte gon.	As a horse might go.
	He him overtok ywis;	In fact, he overtook him.
	Hi makede swithe muchel blis.	They made great rejoicing.
	Horn tok his preie	Horn called his band
	And dude him in the weie.	And set them on their way.
	He com in wel sone:	Very soon he came in;
1250	The yates were undone.	The gates were undone.
	Iarmed ful thikke	Armed heavily
	Fram fote to the nekke,	From head to foot,
	Alle that were therin	He made sorry
	Bithute his twelf ferin	Everyone who was inside
	And the King Aylmare,	At the celebration,
	He dude hem alle to kare,	Except his twelve companions
	That at the feste were;	And King Almair.
	Here lif hi lete there.	They forfeited their lives there!
	Horn ne dude no wunder	Yet Horn took no vengeance
1260	Of Fikenhildes false tunge.	On Fickenhild’s false tongue.
	Hi sworen othes holde,	He swore oaths of loyalty,
	That nevre ne scholde	That he would
	Horn nevre bitraie,	Never betray Horn,
	Thegh he at dithe laie.	Even if death threatened.
	Hi runge the belle	They rang the bell
	The wedlak for to felle;	To celebrate the wedding.
	Horn him yede with his	Horn went with his men
	To the kinges palais,	To the king’s palace.
	Ther was bridale swete,	There was a sweet wedding feast
1270	For riche men ther ete.	For the fine men who ate there.
	Telle ne mighte tunge	No tongue might tell
	That gle that ther was sunge.	Of the joys that were sung there.
	Horn sat on chaere,	Horn sat on the throne,

	And bad hem alle ihere.	And asked them all to listen.
	“King,” he sede, “thu luste	“Sire King,” he said, “listen to
	A tale mid the beste.	A tale among the best.
	I ne seie hit for no blame:	I do not tell it to blame you.
	Horn is mi name.	Horn is my name.
	Thu me to knight hove,	You raised me to be a knight,
1280	And knighthod have proved	And I have proven my knighthood.
	To thee, king, men seide	Men said to you, king,
	That I thee bitraide;	That I betrayed you.
	Thu makedest me fleme,	You made me flee
	And thi lond to reme;	And to leave your land.
	Thu wendest that I wroghte	You believed that I had done
	That I nevre ne thoghte,	What I had never thought of,
	Bi Rymenhild for to ligge,	To lay with Rimenhild,
	And that I withsegge.	And that I deny!
	Ne schal ich hit biginne,	Nor will I begin to do so
1290	Til I Suddene winne.	Until I win the Southlands.
	Thu kep hure a stunde,	Keep her for a time,
	The while that I funde	While I attempt
	In to min heritage,	To recover my heritage
	And to mi baronage.	And my own baronage.
	That lond I schal ofreche	I will take that land
	And do mi fader wreche.	And wreak vengeance for my father.
	I schal beo king of tune,	I will be lord of that town,
	And bere kinges crune;	And bear a king’s crown.
	Thanne schal Rymenhilde	Then Rimenhild will
1300	Ligge bi the kinge.”	Lie with a king!”
	Horn gan to schupe draghe	Horn took to the ship
	With his Irisse felaghes,	With his Irish fellows,
	Athulf with him, his brother:	With his brother Athulf by him.
	Nolde he non other.	He did not want any others.
	That schup bigan to crude;	The ship began to move
	The wind him bleu lude;	And the wind blew loudly.
	Bithinne daies five	Within five days
	That schup gan arive	The ship arrived
	Abute middelnighte.	Around midnight.
1310	Horn him yede wel righte;	Horn set forth right away.
	He tok Athulf bi honde	He took Athulf by the hand
	And up he yede to londe.	And went up onto the land.
	Hi founde under schelde	Under a shield they found a knight
	A knight hende in felde.	Who was valiant on the battlefield.
	Op the schelde was drawe	On the shield was drawn
	A crowch of Jhesu Cristes lawe.	A cross of the faith of Jesus Christ.
	The knight him aslepe lay	The knight lay asleep
	Al biside the way.	Along the pathway.
	Horn him gan to take	Horn took hold of him
1320	And sede, “Knight, awake!	And said, “Knight, wake up!
	Seie what thu kepest?	What you are guarding,
	And whi thu her slepest?	And why you are sleeping there?
	Me thinkth bi thine crois lighte,	I assume by your shining cross
	That thu longest to ure Drighte.	That you belong to our Lord.
	Bute thu wule me schewe,	But unless you show me,
	I schal thee tohewe.”	I will hack you to pieces.”
	The gode knight up aros;	The good knight rose up;

	Of the wordes him gros.	He was terrified by the words.
	He sede, “Ich serve aghenes my wille	He pleaded, “Against my will,
1330	Payns ful ylle.	I serve evil pagans!
	Ich was Cristene a while:	I was once a Christian.
	Tho icom to this ille	Then black Saracens
	Sarazins blake,	Came to this island,
	That dude me forsake.	Who made me abandon my faith.
	On Crist ich wolde bileve.	Otherwise I would follow Christ.
	On him hi makede me reve	They made me a guard
	To kepe this passage	To protect this passage
	Fram Horn that is of age,	From Horn, who is of age
	That wunieth biweste,	And lives in the Westlands,
1340	Knight with the beste;	A knight among the best.
	Hi sloghe with here honde	By their hands they killed
	The king of this londe,	The king of this land,
	And with him fele hundred,	And with him many hundreds.
	And therof is wunder	It is a mystery that he
	That he ne cometh to fighte.	Has not returned to fight!
	God sende him the righte,	May God send him the right,
	And wind him hider drive	And the wind, to drive him here,
	To bringe hem of live.	To take away their lives!
	He sloghen Kyng Murry,	They slaughtered King Murray,
1350	Hornes fader, king hendy.	Horn’s father, a gracious king.
	Horn hi ut of londe sente;	They exiled Horn out of the land;
	Twelf felawes with him wente,	Twelve fellows went with him,
	Among hem Athulf the gode,	Among them Athulf the good,
	Min owene child, my leve fode:	My own child, my dear son.
	Ef Horn child is hol and sund,	If Child Horn is whole and sound,
	And Athulf bithute wund,	And Athulf is without harm,
	He luveth him so dere,	He loved my son so dearly that
	And is him so stere.	He was like a guiding star to him.
	Mighte I seon hem tweie,	If I could see the two of them,
1360	For joie I scholde deie.”	I would die for joy.”
	“Knight, beo thanne blithe	“Then rejoice, knight,
	Mest of alle sithe;	More than ever before!
	Horn and Athulf his fere	Horn and Athulf his friend
	Bothe hi ben here.”	Are both here.”
	To Horn he gan gon	He rushed to Horn
	And grette him anon.	And embraced him at once.
	Muche joie hi makede there	They made great joy there
	The while hi togadere were.	While they were together.
	“Childre,” he sede, hu habbe ye fare?	“My boys,” he said, “how have you fared?
1370	That ich you segh, hit is ful yare.	It is a long time since I saw you.
	Wulle ye this lond winne	Will you win back this land
	And sle that ther is inne?”	And slay those who rule it?”
	He sede, “Leve Horn child,	He continued, “Dear Child Horn,
	Yut lyveth thi moder Godhild:	You mother Godhild still lives.
	Of joie heo miste	She would have great joy
	If heo thee alive wiste.”	If she knew you were alive.”
	Horn sede on his rime,	Horn said in his speech,
	“Iblessed beo the time	“Blessed be the time
	I com to Suddene	When I came to the Southlands
1380	With mine Irisse menne:	With my Irish men!
	We schulle the hundes teche	We will teach the hounds

	To speken ure speche.	To speak as we want![29]
	Alle we hem schulle sle,	We will slaughter them all
	And al quic hem fle."	And quickly flay them."
	Horn gan his horn to blowe;	Horn began to sound his horn
	His folk hit gan iknowe;	And his men heard it.
	Hi comen ut of stere,	They came out of the stern,
	Fram Hornes banere;	From under Horn's banner.
	Hi sloghen and fughten,	They killed and fought
1390	The night and the ughten.	From night until morning.
	The Sarazins cunde	Of the Saracens' kind,
	Ne lefde ther non in th'ende.	None were left in the end.[30]
	Horn let wurche	Horn ordered that chapels
	Chapeles and chirche;	And churches be built;
	He let belles ringe	He had bells rung,
	And masses let singe.	And masses sung.
	He com to his moder halle	He came to his mother's hall
	In a roche walle.	In the rock cliffside,
	Corn he let serie,	Where he had food readied
1400	And makede feste merie;	And held a merry feast.
	Murye lif he wroghte.	He made their lives happy.
	Rymenhild hit dere boghte.	But Rimenhild paid dearly for it,
	Fikenhild was prut on herte,	For Fickenhild was proud at heart
	And that him dude smerte.	And it would bring him pain.
	Yonge he yaf and elde	He gave money to young and old
	Mid him for to helde.	To build alliances with him.
	Ston he dude lede,	He had stone brought in,
	Ther he hopede spede,	Hoping for success there
	Strong castel he let sette,	By having a strong castle built,
1410	Mid see him biflette;	Filled around with sea water.
	Ther ne mighte lighte	No one might land there,
	Bute foghel with flighte.	Except for birds in flight,
	Bute whanne the se withdrowe,	But when the sea drew back,
	Mighte come men ynoghe.	Men might come enough.
	Fikenhild gan wende	Fickenhild turned his attention
	Rymenhild to schende.	To shaming Rimenhild.
	To woghe he gan hure yerne;	He began to court her intensely;
	The kyng ne dorste him werne.	The king did not dare prevent him.
	Rymenhild was ful of mode;	Rimenhild was sick at heart,
1420	He wep teres of blode.	And she wept tears of blood.
	That night Horn gan swete	That night, Horn became feverish
	And hevie for tomete	And began to have nightmares
	Of Rymenhild, his make,	About Rimenhild, his mate.
	Into schupe was itake.	She was taken onto a ship,
	The schup bigan to blenche:	The boat began to capsize,
	His lemman scholde adrenche.	And his lover was about to drown.
	Rymenhild with hire honde	Rimenhild wished to swim back
	Wolde up to londe;	To land with her arms,

[29] *To speken ure speche*: Hall interprets this as a euphemism for "we will teach them a humiliating lesson" (note to 1366), whereas Garbaty is more prosaic: "they will meet our spoken terms" (note to 1380).

[30] TEAMS makes 1391-2 a simple sentence, so that the *Saracens* leave nothing in the end for the locals, but it does not seem to fit contextually here.

	Fikenhild aghen hire pelte	But Fickenhild threw her back
1430	With his swerdes hilte.	With his sword's hilt.
	Horn him wok of slape	Horn woke from his sleep
	So a man that hadde rape.	Like a man in urgent haste.
	"Athulf," he sede, "felaghe,	"Athulf," he said, "my brother,
	To schupe we mote draghe.	We must get on board the ship!
	Fikenhild me hath idon under	Fickenhild has deceived me
	And Rymenhild to do wunder.	And has put Rimenhild in danger.
	Crist, for his wundes five,	May Christ, for his five wounds,
	Tonight me thuder drive."	Drive us toward there tonight!"
	Horn gan to schupe ride,	Horn set off on his ship
1440	His feren him biside.	With his companions beside him.
	Fikenhild, or the dai gan springe,	Fickenhild, before the day sprang,
	Al right he ferde to the kinge,	Went straightaway to the king
	After Rymenhild the brighte,	For Rimenhild the bright,
	To wedden hire bi nighte.	To marry her before sunrise.
	He ladde hure bi the derke	He took her in the darkness
	Into his nywe werke.	Into his new fortress.
	The feste hi bigunne,	The festivities began
	Er that ros the sunne.	Before the sun rose,
	Er thane Horn hit wiste,	And before Horn knew of it.
1450	Tofore the sunne upriste,	Before the sun was up,
	His schup stod under ture	His ship stood under the tower
	At Rymenhilde bure.	Near Rimenhild's chamber.
	Rymenhild, litel weneth heo	Rimenhild little suspected
	That Horn thanne alive beo.	That Horn was alive.
	The castel thei ne knewe,	They did not know the castle,
	For he was so nywe.	For it was so new.
	Horn fond sittinde Arnoldin,	Then Horn found Arnold,
	That was Athulfes cosin,	Who was Athulf's cousin,
	That ther was in that tide,	Who was at that moment
1460	Horn for tabide.	Sitting and waiting for Horn.
	"Horn knight," he sede, "kinges sone,	"Sir Horn," he said, "son of the king,
	Wel beo thu to londe icome.	Welcome to this land!
	Today hath ywedde Fikenhild	This morning Fickenhild has married
	Thi swete lemman Rymenhild.	Your sweet lover Rimenhild.
	Ne schal I thee lie:	I will not lie to you;
	He hath giled thee twie.	He has deceived you twice.
	This tur he let make	He had this tower made,
	Al for thine sake.	All for your sake.
	Ne mai ther come inne	No man may get inside
1470	Noman with none ginne.	By any contriving.
	Horn, nu Crist thee wisse,	Horn, may Christ guide you now
	Of Rymenhild that thu ne misse."	So that you do not lose Rimenhild."
	Horn cuthe al the liste	Horn knew all the tricks
	That eni man of wiste.	That any man might know of.
	Harpe he gan schewe,	He brought out a harp,
	And tok felawes fewe,	And took a few fellows,
	Of knightes swithe snelle	Very keen knights, who disguised
	That schrudde hem at wille.	Themselves as they wished.
	Hi yeden bi the gravel	They went along the sand
1480	Toward the castel.	Toward the castle.
	Hi gunne murie singe	They began to sing merrily
	And makede here gleowinge.	And made harping music.

	Rymenhild hit gan ihere	Rimenhild heard it
	And axede what hi were.	And asked who they were.
	Hi sede hi weren harpurs	They replied that they were harpists
	And sume were gigours.	And some were fiddlers.
	He dude Horn in late	They let Horn in
	Right at halle gate.	Right through the hall gate.
	He sette him on the benche,	He set himself on the bench
1490	His harpe for to clenche.	And grasped his harp.
	He makede Rymenhilde lay,	He played Rimenhild a lay,
	And heo makede walaway.	And made her a lament.
	Rymenhild feol yswoghe	Rimenhild fell in a swoon then;
	Ne was ther non that loughe.	There was no one there who laughed!
	Hit smot to Hornes herte	It pierced to Horn's heart
	So bitere that hit smerte.	So bitterly that it pained him.
	He lokede on the ringe	He looked on the ring
	And thoghte on Rymenhilde:	And thought of Rimenhild.
	He yede up to borde	He went up to the table
1500	With gode swerdes orde:	With a good sword edge.
	Fikenhildes crune	He made Fickenhild's head
	Ther he fulde adune,	Fall to the ground,
	And al his men a rowe,	And struck down
	Hi dude adun throwe.	All his men in a row,
	Whanne hi weren aslaghe	And when they were dead,
	Fikenhild hi dude todraghe.	He cut apart Fickenhild.
	Horn makede Arnoldin thare	There Horn made Arnold king
	King after King Aylmare	To follow King Almair,
	Of al Westernesse	Of all the Westlands,
1510	For his meoknesse.	For his gentleness.
	The king and his homage	The king and his vassals
	Yeven Arnoldin trewage.	Gave Arnold tribute.[31]
	Horn tok Rymenhild bi the honde	Horn took Rimenhild by the hand
	And ladde hure to the stronde,	And led her to the shore,
	And ladde with him Athelbrus,	And took along Athelbruce,
	The gode stward of his hus.	The good steward of the house.
	The se bigan to flowe,	The sea began to flow,
	And Horn gan to rowe.	And Horn began to sail.
	Hi gunne for to arive	They arrived where
1520	Ther King Modi was sire.	King Moody had been lord.
	Athelbrus he makede ther king	He made Athelbruce their king,
	For his gode teching:	For his good teaching;
	He yaf alle the knightes ore	He gave all the knights clemency
	For Horn knightes lore.	Because of Sir Horn's counsel.
	Horn gan for to ride;	Horn sailed away again,
	The wind him blew wel wide.	And the wind blew him far away.
	He arivede in Yrlonde,	He arrived in Ireland, where he
	Ther he wo fonde,	Had found bittersweet fortune.[32]

[31] In MS Cambridge Library, the sense is that the aged Almair will be succeeded by Arnold as king and that the knights pay respect to him. Hall suggests a possible darker reading of MS Laud Misc. 108, where 1545 is *utrage* instead of *truage.* If so, Almair is deposed and 1507-12 would read more like "Horn made Arnold king there, after King Almair, the knights, and the baronage did him all kinds of outrage." Yet MS Harleian 2253 agrees more with the Cambridge MS, and Horn has earlier reconciled with Almair (1275-1300).

	Ther he dude Athulf child	There he had young Athulf
1530	Wedden maide Reynild.	Wed maid Reynild.
	Horn com to Suddenne	Then Horn came home to the Southlands,
	Among al his kenne;	Among all of his kin.
	Rymenhild he makede his quene;	He made Rimenhild his queen
	So hit mighte wel beon.	So that all might be well.
	Al folk hem mighte rewe	All the people who loved them truly
	That loveden hem so trewe:	Might grieve for them now,
	Nu ben hi bothe dede -	For now they are both dead.
	Crist to hevene hem lede!	May Christ lead them to Heaven!
	Her endeth the tale of Horn	Here ends the tale of Horn,
1540	That fair was and noght unorn.	Who was noble and never cowardly.
	Make we us glade evre among,	Let us always together be glad,
	For thus him endeth Hornes song.	For thus ends Horn's song.
	Jesus, that is of hevene king,	May Jesus, who is Heaven's king,
	Yeve us alle His swete blessing.	Give us all His sweet blessing.
1545	Amen.	Amen.

[32] Garbaty explains this confusing line: *fonde* does not refer to Horn's last arrival in Ireland but his first, where he finds refuge but also *woe* because of the deaths of Harild and Berild (note to 1526).

King Horn, Real Kings, and the Auchinleck *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*

Medieval English romances usually have apparent roots in French analogues or folktale, but the genesis of *King Horn* remains especially obscure. TEAMS uses an amalgam of three variant manuscripts, University Library Cambridge Gg.4.27.2, Harleian 2553, and Laud Misc. 108, all from the mid-late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. The incomplete *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild* in Auchinleck is later than *King Horn* but current consensus holds that all versions derive from a common Anglo-Norman original of about 1170, *Horn et Rimenhild*.[1] Schofield argued in 1901 that *King Horn* was geographically centered on the Isle of Man, for centuries a Norse stronghold, and that the essential tale derived from Norse legend.[2] The names in *King Horn* are "French transformations of Germanic names,"[3] but other versions retain more Anglo-Saxon trappings. Haþulf of *Horn Childe* (Murray in *King Horn*) implies the historic Eadulf who was earl of Northumbria in 966,[4] or might be the enemy of Beowulf's father: "wearþ he Heaþolafe / to handbonan… þanon he gesohte / Suðdena folc" ("he came to slay Heatholaf with his own hand… from there he searched out the South-Danes," 460-3).[5] But these connections and explanations are as murky as the geographical *King Horn* locations *Westernesse* and *Suddene*.

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[1] Matthew L. Holford, "History and Politics in *Horn Child and Maiden Rimnild*," *Review of English Studies* 57:229 (2006): 151.

[2] William Henry Schofield, *The Story of Horn and Rimenhild* (Baltimore: Modern Language Association of America, 1903), 26.

[3] Schofield, 52-3.

[4] Schofield, 69.

[5] Daniel H. Haigh, *The Anglo-Saxon Sagas: An Examination of Their Value as Aids to History* (London: John Russell Smith, 1861), 64-5.

Holford complains that the Auchinleck *Horn Childe* (HC) has been critically overlooked or disparaged in relation to the *King Horn* (KH) poems, although Mills has edited a recent critical edition.[6] Holford argues that HC was written for the political purpose of creating a comforting foundational narrative for English nationalism during or after the reign of Edward II, a king who had failed to quell Scottish and Welsh rebellions. For such an audience "the defence of the realm would have had particular resonance."[7] Thus the HC poet inserts several new scenes such as Haþeolf's defeat of the Danes and his fatal battle against the Irish, patterned on allegedly historical events. Later legends in North Yorkshire refer to Danish bones stored "by Seyn Sibiles Kirke" (HC 84)[8] and the murderous King Malcan (223) suggests the historical Scottish Malcolm. The poem retains a more traditional sense in its Anglo-Saxon heroic ethos, and the poet has perhaps freely adapted his sources to imply such a nationalistic program.

In the ongoing scholarly dispute over the place names the messages that KH communicates to its audience have equally been neglected. Like HC the KH poet alters the narrative to suit the interests and agendas of his time period. Critics have unfavorably compared the spare style of the English KH to the more elegant and sophisticated French *Horn et Rimenhild* (HR). McKnight complains that such compressions weaken the story both narratively and stylistically. Unlike Rimenhild's less-than-subtle courtship, the

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[6] Holford, "History and Politics," 149. Holford refers to *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Middle English Texts 20 (Heidelberg, 1988).

[7] Holford, "History and Politics," 167.

[8] Matthew L. Holford, "A Local Source for *Horn Child and Maiden Rimnild*," *Medium Aevum* 74:1 (2005): 34-41.

French Rimenhild "understands the arts of coaxing and of coquetry."[9] Scholars previously dated KH as early as 1225, making it one of the first English romances, but it has lately been moved to the 1270s or later with a terminus of about 1290,[10] the likely date of the Laud manuscript which also contains *Havelock*. Much as *Havelock* might have been a delicately coded ideal for the young Edward I (1272 -1307) to emulate,[11] might KH also have been revised with the subtle intention of evoking either Edward I or his father Henry III (1216-72)?

Allen posits an argument for Henry III, noting among other linkages that Henry lost his father (John) at age nine and was betrayed in his youth by an intimate named Fawkes de Breauté,[12] with the Fawkes/Fickel similarity much like the God*rich*/God*ard* stewards in *Havelock* who suggest the disloyal Richard, earl of Cornwall (1209-72) and Henry's brother. Yet Henry apparently had little interest in English or chivalrous romance, unlike Edward who "had been a great lover of all sides of knightly activity since his youth."[13] To make such an argument involves a simplification of a complex of sources and unanswered questions about authorial intentions and KH's audience. Yet the text of the poem suggests that one of the poet's themes might have been the education of a young prince. The trope is evinced in KH's purposefully universal setting, in the

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[9] George H. McKnight, *King Horn, Floriz and Blancheflur, The Assumption of Our Lady* (London: EETS, 1901), xi. Compare also Belisaunt's courtship of Amis, in which she is so aggressive in her emotions that she threatens Amis with a false charge of rape unless he accepts her.

[10] Diane Speed, "The Saracens of *King Horn*," *Speculum* 65:3 (1990): 564.

[11] Discussed in the chapter here on *Havelock* as well as in David Staines' "*Havelok the Dane*: A Thirteenth-Century Handbook for Princes," *Speculum* 51:4 (1976): 602-623.

[12] Rosamund Allen, *King Horn* (New York: Garland, 1984), 113.

[13] N. Denholm-Young, "Feudal Society in the Thirteenth Century: The Knights," *History* 29 (1944): 118, quoted in Allen, 113.

replacement of specific historical enemies by generic antagonists, and in the emphasis on Horn's courtly and leadership qualities. All of these emphases imply an instructive model for an English king less prominent in the heroic mood of HC.

As the hero of *Bevis of Hampton* rushes around Europe and the Middle East, he enters cities and places with now-obscure names, but most are traceable and the poet is hardly to blame for names shifting over seven centuries. HC states its initial setting as north of the Humber (10), and the poet gives precise locations such as York, Stainmore, Westmorland, and Wales. The Anglo-Norman HR also has *Suddene* but Horn's boat drifts to *Bretaigne* (106) and his Irish adventures are set specifically in Dublin (HR 2937). Yet of the three main settings of KH—Ireland, Westernesse, and Suddene—the last two are impossibly vague. No agreement has been reached on whether the placenames signify Scandinavia, Wales, or anything at all, though the west coast of England probably fits most closely as within easy travel of Ireland.[14] No one also seems to have asked why, when other romances unambiguously state Warwick, Lincoln, London, or Lombardy as the homes of their heroes, KH has such nebulous settings. Either the poet assumes a local audience's knowledge or something else is intended.

We know that Chaucer was especially careful not to annoy the powerful in the Ricardian court and perhaps learned from Froissart "not to attach his poetry too closely to the trivia of court life."[15] His writings respond to and obliquely reference broad trends but avoid the current topical allusions of a Langland. Chaucer had good reasons to remain a

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[14] For a discussion of the placenames see Schofield and also Speed, 564-66. Schofield (564) notes that Horn's journeys are all between one day (1441) and five (1307), indicating that the locations are close to Ireland if the poet has realism as a goal.

[15] Derek Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), 69.

useful and nonthreatening courtier. Even a highly admiring portrayal of Richard might have brought him trouble during the Merciless Parliament and after Richard's deposition. HC, the Northern version of the story in Auchinleck, reflects an interest in other English power centers, and ones by then safely chronologically and geographically distant from London politics.[16] *Havelock*, KH's manuscript companion, has Lincoln as its main locale but the story occurs in the sentimental and finished past of "are dawes" (27).

If the KH poet intended to praise Edward in his depiction of Horn, he may have chosen a generic geographical backdrop in order to avoid too close an identification with the real king's problems. Edward spent much of his later reign fighting rebellions in Wales and Scotland. Despite his plaudit on his tomb as *Malleus Scotorum*, "Hammer of the Scots," and glowing portraits by historians Edward's forces achieved mixed results. Being awarded the crown lands of Wales in 1254 by his father accomplished nothing. As king, Edward preferred to use diplomacy to rein in such agitators as Llewlyn ap Gruffuld in 1277, but when battle was unavoidable it was a never-ending task, as further revolts occurred in 1282, 1287, and 1294.[17] Scotland was equally defiant, but Edward had already antagonized parliament with endless requests for money to fight Wales and France and did not face Scotland until the 1290s.[18] Again, after short-term victories new uprisings followed, and Edward died in 1307 en route to Scotland to deal with fresh mutinies. Edward had few issues with Ireland, and correspondingly KH has Ireland in the

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[16] Ralph Hanna, *London Literature 1300-1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 130.

[17] Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England 1225-1360* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 148-162.

[18] Prestwich, 165-8.

story but perhaps cautiously avoids including Wales and the Scottish kings, all central to HC's narrative but in real life likely points of frustration rather than glory for Edward and the English court.

The KH poet does not seem heavily invested in making Horn a saintly soldier for Christ beyond the routine Christian/Saracen antagonism. Horn identifies with the sleeping knight on the shores of Westernesse as "me thinkth bi thine crois lighte / that thu longest to ure Drighte" (1323-4) and later has "chapeles and chirche" (1394) built, but Horn chiefly fights for land, love, and revenge and not for God. His skirmishes in Suddene against Fickenhild and Modi, presumably also Christians, have no religious purposes. His mother adopts an anchoress's life but out of self-protection, and upon liberation she enjoys a "feste merie" (1400). Elsewhere the poet reduces Horn's thrashing of a hundred Saracens, nearly a 400-line scene in HR, into an "after-dinner recreation"[19] of some thirty lines. Yet KH curiously retains the Saracens from the French even though no Arab fleets ever reached England and Auchinleck more logically has Danes.[20] KH is careful to have the invaders strand the children on a *galeie*, an Arabic loanword first appearing in English here,[21] where HC has the usual *schipes*. KH still has Horn disguise himself as Cutberd in Ireland (773), perhaps a vestige of the story's possible Norse roots

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[19] McKnight, viii.

[20] *Saracen* might also have denoted all pagans, including Danes. But the poet states that the Saracens threaten death to all "bute hi here laye asoke / and to here toke" ("unless they renounced their faith and took theirs," 69-70). The Vikings generally desired booty and land and not converts. For a discussion of the definition of *Saracen* see Speed, 567-8 who argues that the term could include Danes in KH—but she notes that the French poet explicitly uses *asfricanz*, *Affrike*, *aufricant*, and *Perse* in describing the Saracens (HR 297, 1298, 2907, 3000).

[21] Sebastian I. Sobecki, "The 2000 Saracens of *King Horn*," *Notes and Queries* 52:4 (2005): 443-4.

as Horn has no need for secrecy if the Arabs are his enemy. Why does the poet have Saracens in England?

Horn's battles in Ireland, Suddene, and Westernesse form a geographical trio but "no direct causal connection between the story threads"[22] which would impute meaning to the grouping or the placenames seems to exist. Horn simply sojourns in Ireland until events call him back. Similarly, the Saracens perform no indispensible role beyond narratively propelling Horn's exile and return motif. Their improbable inclusion as the story's antagonists might have reminded an audience of Edward's crusading ventures between 1268-74 but perhaps again reflected a diplomatic desire to avoid depicting the enemies who really were troubling English lands. Holford argues that HC specifically invokes Wales and Scotland to portray an idealized united England which was in real life under renewed and severe threat.[23] But by the time of Auchinleck the tale was increasingly antique and unlikely to be supposed a portrait of Edward III, who at any rate was successful in finally pacifying the Scots, more than compensating for Edward II's kingly and martial inabilities.

KH gives fewer lines to the battle scenes with Horn's antagonists than HR, but even compared to HC, a poem of likely similar length, KH's combat scenes are understated. Auchinleck HC features additional battles even within the extant fragment. Haþeolf fights both Danes and Irish, and unlike Murray's sudden seaside ambush the poet lavishes attention on their eleven-day preparation for war with the usual "brinis briȝt" (HC 173) formulas. Horn has an extra clash in arms with a knight in Wales and breaks

[22] Hynes-Berry, 657.

[23] Holford, 161.

"his arm & his schulderban" (633), and he falls King Elidan (Thurston) to the ground in jousting (673). The poet stresses that "no man of Yrland / miȝt stond a dint of his hand" (781-82) and at the end of the battle Horn has won Blavain (804), the sword of his father's slayer. In KH Horn chivalrously offers the enemy knights a breathing space and only rises to righteous rage when informed that they are the same men who killed his father. The poem lacks the grim and distinctly Anglo-Saxon warrior ethos of the Auchinleck analogue.

The narrative stress on Horn's *lof* and fighting prowess in HC also comes at the cost of what little courtliness remains in the abridged English texts from the French. Hynes-Berry calls the character development in KH "skimpy,"[24] but the poet attempts to give some limited shading to Horn's personality beyond HC's sole focus on the chopping of heads. In KH Horn repeatedly receives favor through his nobility by Saracens, Almair, and Rimenhild herself rather than through armed might. The king praises Horn's nobility by joking that he will steal the heart of whatever woman his son woos (802-4), a courtly quality—along with the description of Horn's good looks in childhood (10-16)—absent from HC. Horn gains admittance to Thurston's court by being a "fair knight" (KH 784) rather than fighting his way in through Wales. Upon meeting the Irish king Horn and the princes "sette him a knewelyng" (KH 787), and Horn proves himself to Thurston with his charm rather than through jousting for eighteen days (HC 667). The delicate interplay and romance of the recognition scene in Suddene where Horn costumes himself as a minstrel

[24] Mary Hynes-Berry, "Cohesion in *King Horn* and *Sir Orfeo*," *Speculum* 50:4 (1975): 652.

and riddles Rimenhild like a courtly Odysseus vanishes in HC to be replaced with yet another battle.

Whereas HC repeatedly stresses Horn's warrior skills, KH creates an aura of aristocratic courtesy less vital to HC. Edward I has sometimes been called the English Justinian, yet his interest in administrative reform and the nurturing of parliamentary structures should not be seen as a sign of martial impotence. Though the battle was lost Edward fought well at Evesham at age 25 and he would be praised as "in armis strenuus" ("mighty in arms").[25] Edward was tall and imposing and was respected, if not loved.[26] Neither he nor his father Henry III occasioned the insults of effeminacy and indecision Edward II would receive. Yet despite the incessant irritation of flare-ups in Wales and Scotland and the brief baronial revolt, Edward I grew up in and initially ruled in a period relatively untroubled by war; Henry named him after Edward the Confessor, a king remembered as pious but unsuccessful in battle.[27] Again, a poet interested in an oblique royal portrait in KH might well have directed his attention towards other kingly attributes to praise in Horn. Edward was devoted to his wife to an extent unusual in the English monarchy and KH not surprisingly focuses on the heroic travails of Horn's patient pursuit of Riminhild.

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[25] Matthew of Westminster, *Flores Historiarum*, ed. H.R. Lurard, Rolls Series (London, 1890), 3:19, quoted in David Staines, "*Havelok the Dane*: A Thirteenth-Century Handbook for Princes," *Speculum* 51 (1976): 618.

[26] Prestwich, 178.

[27] Prestwich, 29.

McKnight observes that the Horn story involves two intersecting narratives of Horn's exile/return and his separation/reunion with Rimenhild.[28] The weighting favors the courtly love story in KH to the point that the poet has "a strange reduplication"[29] of Horn's previous landing in Suddene, where Rimenhild again faces a coerced marriage and Horn takes a second disguise to deliver her. HC is very much about land, and Horn constantly receives land grants and bequests in each of the three kingdoms, so much so that Rimenhild's importance diminishes. In KH proper marital love and kingship are mutually supportive, and Horn refuses to sleep with Rimenhild until he has attained his crown: "thanne schal Rymenhilde / ligge bi the kinge!" (KH 1189-90). HC states that "Horn brouȝt her to his bedde" (1112), preventing any such climactic connection. Holford notes that

> The 'love' and 'war' elements of the plot are, consequently, less well integrated than in the other versions. In *King Horn*, Horn looks at the ring which Rimnild has given him before defeating important adversaries; there are no such moments in *Horn Child*. Rather than marriage, the action of *Horn Child* is directed towards Horn's recovery of his inheritance…[30]

Beowulf has no strong love interest, but by the English romance period it may not be coincidence that a poem like *Gamelyn* which lacks a marriage narrative also lacks aristocratic heroes. Havelock may push people into the mud but his marriage to Goldeboru thematically (and legally) connects him to the English crown. The HC Horn amasses vast land holdings, but the denouement seems more conducive to baronial than royal sentiments. KH inextricably links courtly love with kingly deportment, and when

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[28] George H. McKnight, "Germanic Elements in the Story of *King Horn*," *PMLA* 15:2 (1900): 222.

[29] James R. Hurt, "The Texts of *King Horn*." *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 7:1 (1970): 50.

[30] Holford, "History and Politics," 153-4.

"Rymenhild he makede his quene" (1533) the end of the poem quickly comes as Horn's kingdom has been established in full.

Fundamentally, the HC Horn is a warrior and the KH Horn is already a king in childhood. The KH poet steadily depicts Horn with prescient leadership qualities befitting his inborn royalty. As the Saracens dispatch Horn, he enters the boat with twelve children who follow him as his *comitatus*, whereas HC has eight children (19) and lacks the episode. The numeration implies Christ and his disciples, particularly when Fickenhild later betrays him in the fashion of a Judas. Horn captains the marooned ship (122) and within a short space of 1545 lines he undertakes six sea journeys, returning to Rimenhild by boat on a Sunday at sunrise (974). Whereas the ocean panics the other children and drowns the messenger, "Horn's control over the elemental power of the sea demonstrates his superiority."[31] The poet delicately depicts Horn's aristocratic courtesy. Houlac (Almair) dubs Horn "& oper mani" (424) where in KH Horn receives grace to "do nu that thi wille is" (522) and dub them himself. As a subtle touch, in HC Horn attempts to return into the king's favor after being lied about by Fickel with the gift of a hart, and is forced to leave when Houlac answers that "it is for nouȝt" (559). In KH Horn receives a more compelling threat of execution but perhaps displays some injured pride in defiantly lacing his chainmail for battle (721).

Rimenhild's role also has narrative and thematic implications. All we really know about her "is that she loves Horn,"[32] though she has a passion and temper which reminds

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[31] Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 32.

[32] Hynes-Berry, 653.

McKnight of Freyja.[33] HC has a rougher edge and when Houlac (Almair) suspects Rimenhild of dallying with Horn "he bete hir so / þat sche gan blede" (499). Yet women play a more proactive role in HC than in KH. Rimenhild has a steadier disposition as she courts Horn and then gives him a sword and a hue-changing ring, explaining its function (571-6). Elidan's (Thurston's) daughter Acula has medical abilities and "of woundes was sche sleiȝe" (HC 761), just as in *Bevis of Hampton* the assertive Josian has healing skills after Bevis faces similar injuries in battle.

In KH, despite Rimenhild's passionate ire against Athelbruce, she is in the wrong. The good steward, a rarity in medieval romance, rightly worries that "ye wolden pleie / bitwex you selve tweie" (349-50) and risk Almair's wrath. From then on Rimenhild does little more than "wexe wild" as she awaits Horn's return, threatening to slay her coerced husband "and hureselve bothe" (1210). The effect enhances Horn's kingly dominance through her passivity. Much as feminist critiques of courtly love have argued,[34] while the more genteel KH elevates Horn's devotion to Rimenhild to be coequal to kingship, her actions ironically are restricted in comparison to the more Germanic HC, where Rimenhild is a lesser objective for Horn but retains more actual agency. To make a further speculation, both Henry III's and Edward I's foreign spouses were devoted wives but disliked by the English for their French ambitions and followers. Henry's wife Eleanor of Provence was pelted with vegetables and debris by a London mob as she rode

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[33] McKnight, 228.

[34] Millet charges that "both the courtly and the romantic versions of love are 'grants' which the male concedes out of his total power. Both have had the effect of obscuring the patriarchal character of Western culture and in their general tendency to attribute impossible virtues to women, have ended by confirming them in a narrow and often remarkably conscribing sphere of behavior." Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (1969) (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 37.

on a royal barge in 1263,[35] and Edward's wife endured similar xenophobia. A poem in which Horn's queen seems to be "tamed" into obedience might have had particular appeal to an English audience.

What might Chaucer have made of the Horn story? He certainly knew of it or read it as he mentions "Horn child" as one of the "romances of prys" (897) in *Sir Thopas*. He may have seen HC, uniquely in Auchinleck, or read or heard other versions. Yet the work seems to have had little impression on *Thopas*, and Charbonneau finds only minor and tenuous textual connections—with Thopas "whit was his face as payndemayn / his lippes rede as rose" (725-6) and with Horn "whit so the flur / rose red was his colur" (15-16)[36]—and these lines come from KH. Chaucer might have taken less interest in a Northern romance simplistic enough to be boiled down into a ballad, which it would be later in the form of "Hind Horn." Chaucer likely would have enjoyed the defter touch of KH with its finer, courtlier rendering of the hero and the longer and more elegant HR even more so.

Yet King Horn has its own political subthemes relevant to its time period overlaid on its entertaining narrative. Working from possible Norse or French analogues of the story, the Auchinleck *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild* depicts a heroic Germanic warrior who ably fights for *lof*, land, and Rimenhild, in that order of priority. KH has a more aristocratic atmosphere which prioritizes Horn's noble fairness, his courtly love toward Rimenhild, and his kingly leadership. Though Havelock is slightly earthier and

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[35] Prestwich, 112.

[36] Joanne A. Charbonneau, "*Sir Thopas*," in *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Robert M. Correale, and Mary Hamel (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 665.

more passive, both characters display the sort of regal character and charisma appropriate to a king. Possibly both poets gently allude to Edward I in this portrait, a charismatic king who combined an able and intelligent hand at administration with a firm personal will, and whose wife enjoyed and patronized romances.[37] Edward, had he ever heard of *King Horn*, might have found the tale pleasing, particularly in his latter days of declining popularity when Eleanor was deceased and Horn's happy ending was eluding him.

[37] Prestwich notes that Eleanor was a cultured women who owned a library of romances, and "some Arthurian works were dedicated to her" (137), though probably none in English.

CHAPTER 9

Sir Degare

Sir Degare is well-preserved in six manuscripts: Auchinleck (c. 1330), British Library MS Egerton 2862 (c. 1400), Cambridge University Library MS Ff. 2.38 (c. 1450), Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson Poetry 34 (c. 1450), Bodleian Library MS Douce 261 (dated 1561), and British Library Add. MS 27879 (dated 1650). There are also several sixteenth-century print editions. I take as my text source Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury, eds. *Sir Degaré. The Middle English Breton Lays.* Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995. http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/degarfrm.htm. Laskaya *et al*. chiefly use Auchinleck as a base text and use Cambridge to supply the missing ending. Among the few modern editions is Walter Hoyt French & Charles Brockway Hale, eds., *Middle English Metrical Romances* (1930).

1	Lysteneth, lordinges, gente and fre, Ich wille you telle of Sire Degarre: Knightes that were sometyme in londe Ferli fele wolde fonde And sechen aventures bi night and dai, Hou thai mighte here strengthe asai; So dede a knyght, Sire Degarree: Ich wille you telle wat man was he. In Litel Bretaygne was a kyng	Listen, lordings, noble and generous, And I will tell you about Sir Degare. There were once in this land knights, A wondrous number, who would By day and night seek out adventures To see how they might test their valor. So did one knight, Sir Degare. I will tell you what kind of man he was. In Brittany there was a king[1]
10	Of gret poer in all thing, Stif in armes under sscheld, And mochel idouted in the feld. Ther nas no man, verraiment, That mighte in werre ne in tornament, Ne in justes for no thing, Him out of his sadel bring,	With great might in all things, Stout in arms wielded under his shield, And greatly feared on the field. There was no man, truly, Who faced him in war or tournament Or in jousts who might by any means Force him out of his saddle

[1] *Litel Bretaygne*: This may either refer to 'Little Britain'—Brittany, or more specifically the northwest tip between Brest and Quimper. There are few other placename clues, and the poet may simply be giving the *lay* a suitably mythical Celtic setting.

	Ne out of his stirop bringe his fot,	Or bring his feet out of his stirrups,
	So strong he was of bon and blod.	So strong was he in body and blood.
	This Kyng he hadde none hair	This king had no heir,
20	But a maidenchild, fre and fair;	Other than a young maiden, noble and fair.
	Here gentiresse and here beauté	Her courtliness and her beauty
	Was moche renound in ich countré.	Were renowned in every land.
	This maiden he loved als his lif,	He loved this maiden as much as his life.
	Of hire was ded the Quene his wif:	The queen, his wife, had died having her;
	In travailing here lif she les.	She had lost her life in childbirth.
	And tho the maiden of age wes	And when the maiden was of age,
	Kynges sones to him speke,	The sons of kings asked him,
	Emperours and Dukes eke,	Emperors and dukes as well,
	To haven his doughter in mariage,	To have his daughter in marriage,
30	For love of here heritage;	For the love of their heritage.
	Ac the Kyng answered ever	But the king always answered
	That no man sschal here halden ever	That no man should ever have her
	But yif he mai in turneying	Unless he could throw him
	Him out of his sadel bring,	Out of his saddle in tourneying,
	And maken him lesen hise stiropes bayne.	And make him lose both his stirrups.
	Many assayed and myght not gayne.	Many tried and did not succeed.
	That ryche Kynge every yere wolde	Every year that noble king would
	A solempne feste make and holde	Proclaim and hold a magnificent feast
	On hys wyvys mynnyng day,	On the memorial day of his wife,[2]
40	That was beryed in an abbay	Who was buried in an abbey
	In a foreste there besyde.	In a forest nearby.
	With grete meyné he wolde ryde,	With a great company he would ride
	Hire dirige do, and masse bothe,	And perform a dirge and mass as well,
	Poure men fede, and naked clothe,	Feed the poor and clothe the naked,
	Offring brenge, gret plenté,	Bring offerings, in great plenty,
	And fede the covent with gret daynté.	And support the convent with lavish gifts.
	Toward the abbai als he com ride,	As he came riding toward the abbey,
	And mani knyghtes bi his side,	With many knights by his side,
	His doughter also bi him rod.	His daughter also rode with him
50	Amidde the forest hii abod.	As they journeyed in the forest.
	Here chaumberleyn she clepede hire to	She called her chamberlain to her,
	And other dammaiseles two	And two other maidens,
	And seide that hii moste alighte	And said that they must dismount
	To don here nedes and hire righte;	To relieve themselves as their natural right.[3]
	Thai alight adoun alle thre,	All three of them dismounted,
	Tweie damaiseles and ssche,	The two damsels and her,
	And longe while ther abiden,	And paused there a long while
	Til al the folk was forht iriden.	Until all the company had ridden past.
	Thai wolden up and after wolde,	They wanted to mount and ride after them,
60	And couthen nowt here way holde.	But could not find their way.
	The wode was rough and thikke, iwis,	These woods were rough and thick, I know,
	And thai token the wai amys.	And they took the wrong way.

[2] *Mynnyng day*: A 'minding day' was a day "set apart for prayers and penances for the soul of a dead person" (French & Hale 289, quoted in TEAMS). As in many of these romances, building a religious house for prayers for the dead was common among the nobility. W.H. French and C. B. Hale, ed., *The Middle English Metrical Romances* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964).

[3] *To don here nedes and hire righte*: the poet considers answering nature's call "a natural right" (TEAMS).

	Thai moste souht and riden west	They should have gone south but rode west,
	Into the thikke of the forest.	Into the thick of the forest.
	Into a launde hii ben icome,	They came into a land
	And habbeth wel undernome	And saw clearly
	That thai were amis igon.	That they had gone astray.
	Thai light adoun everichon	Each of them dismounted
	And cleped and criede al ifere,	And called and cried together,
70	Ac no man aright hem ihere.	But no man heard them well enough.
	Thai nist what hem was best to don;	They did not know what was best to do.
	The weder was hot bifor the non;	The weather was hot before noon.
	Hii leien hem doun upon a grene,	They laid themselves down on a green,
	Under a chastein tre, ich wene,	Under a chestnut tree, as I know,[4]
	And fillen aslepe everichone	And everyone fell asleep
	Bote the damaisele alone.	Except for the princess alone.
	She wente aboute and gaderede floures,	She walked about and gathered flowers
	And herknede song of wilde foules.	And listened to the songs of wild birds.
	So fer in the launde she goht, iwis,	She strayed so far in the land, indeed,
80	That she ne wot nevere whare se is.	That she did not know where she was.
	To hire maidenes she wolde anon.	She wanted to go back at once to her ladies,
	Ac hi ne wiste never wat wei to gon.	But she did not know which way to walk.
	Whenne hi wende best to hem terne,	Wherever she thought it best to turn,
	Aweiward than hi goth wel yerne.	In her hurrying she ended up further away.
	"Allas!" hi seide, "that I was boren!	"Alas," she said, "that I was ever born!
	Nou ich wot ich am forloren!	Now I know that I am lost!
	Wilde bestes me willeth togrinde	Wild beasts will grind me up
	Or ani man me sschulle finde!"	Before any man will find me!"
	Than segh hi swich a sight:	Then she saw such a sight.
90	Toward hire comen a knight,	Toward her came a knight,
	Gentil, yong, and jolif man;	A graceful, young, and handsome man,
	A robe of scarlet he hadde upon;	With a robe of scarlet upon him.
	His visage was feir, his bodi ech weies;	His face and body were fair in every way,
	Of countenaunce right curteis;	And his appearance was perfectly noble,
	Wel farende legges, fot, and honde:	With well-shaped legs, feet, and hands.
	Ther nas non in al the Kynges londe	There was no one in all the king's land
	More apert man than was he.	Who was more chivalrous than he was.
	"Damaisele, welcome mote thou be!	"Lady, may you be welcome!
	Be thou afered of none wihghte:	Do not be afraid of any man.
100	Iich am comen here a fairi knyghte;	I have come here as a fairy knight.
	Mi kynde is armes for to were,	Our nature is to wear arms,
	On horse to ride with scheld and spere;	And to ride on horse with shield and spear,
	Forthi afered be thou nowt:	And so do not be afraid!
	I ne have nowt but mi swerd ibrout.	I have brought nothing but my sword.
	Iich have iloved the mani a yer,	I have loved you for many a year,
	And now we beth us selve her,	And now we are here by ourselves.
	Thou best mi lemman ar thou go,	You will be my lover before you go,
	Wether the liketh wel or wo."	Whether you like it or not."
	Tho nothing ne coude do she	There was nothing she could do
110	But wep and criede and wolde fle;	But cry and shout and try to flee,

[4] *Chastein tre*: TEAMS points out that chestnut trees not only represent Christian chastity but serve as a medial point between reality and fairy otherworlds. Like Queen Herodis in *Sir Orfeo*, the maidens fall asleep, but here the princess does not.

	And he anon gan hire at holde,	But he seized her at once
	And dide his wille, what he wolde.	And did his will as he desired.[5]
	He binam hire here maidenhod,	He took away her maidenhead,
	And seththen up toforen hire stod.	And soon after stood over her.
	"Lemman," he seide, "gent and fre,	"Lover," he said, "noble and free,
	Mid schilde I wot that thou schalt be;	I know that you will be with child,
	Siker ich wot hit worht a knave;	And know for sure it will be a boy.
	Forthi mi swerd thou sschalt have,	For this you shall take my sword.
	And whenne that he is of elde	And when he is of age,
120	That he mai himself biwelde,	So that he may protect himself,
	Tak him the swerd, and bidde him fonde	Give him the sword, and tell him to try
	To sechen his fader in eche londe.	To seek his father in every land.
	The swerd his god and avenaunt:	The sword is firm and powerful.
	Lo, as I faugt with a geaunt,	Listen to me; as I fought with a giant,
	I brak the point in his hed;	I broke the point in his head.
	And siththen, when that he was ded,	And later, when he was dead,
	I tok hit out and have hit er,	I took it out and have it here,
	Redi in min aumener.	Ready in my pouch.
	Yit paraventure time bith	If by chance the time comes
130	That mi sone mete me with:	That my son meets with me,
	Be mi swerd I mai him kenne.	I will know him by my sword.
	Have god dai! I mot gon henne."	Good day to you! I must go on."
	Thi knight passede as he cam.	The knight disappeared, just as he came.
	Al wepende the swerd she nam,	All in tears, she took the sword,
	And com hom sore sikend,	And came back sighing bitterly
	And fond here maidenes al slepend.	And found her maidens all sleeping.
	The swerd she hidde als she mighte,	She hid the sword as best she could,
	And awaked hem in highte,	And awakened them in haste,
	And doht hem to horse anon,	And ordered them to their horses at once
140	And gonne to ride everichon.	And for everyone to ride.
	Thanne seghen hi ate last	Then at last she saw
	Tweie squiers come prikend fast.	Two squires coming, riding swiftly.
	Fram the Kyng thai weren isent,	They were sent from the king
	To white whider his doughter went.	To find out where his daughter went.
	Thai browt hire into the righte wai	They showed her the right way
	And comen faire to the abbay,	And they came pleasantly to the abbey.
	And doth the servise in alle thingges,	They did every part of the service,
	Mani masse and riche offringes;	With many masses and rich offerings.
	And whanne the servise was al idone	And when the ceremony was all done,
150	And ipassed over the none,	And the afternoon was past,
	The Kyng to his castel gan ride;	The king rode back to the castle,
	His doughter rod bi his side.	And his daughter rode by his side,
	And he yemeth his kyngdom overal	And he ruled over all his kingdom,
	Stoutliche, as a god king sschal.	Stoutly, as a good king does.
	Ac whan ech man was glad an blithe,	But when each man was glad and at ease,
	His doughter siked an sorewed swithe;	His daughter sickened and grieved sorely.

[5] In *Sir Orfeo* the queen is abducted by the fairy king, but here the princess is raped. TEAMS notes that actual sexual assault is rare in medieval romance, and notes the connection to the Wife of Bath's tale. Loomis states that no other analogue of the Loathly Lady story has a rape incident and posits that Chaucer might have been reminded of *Degare*. Laura Hibbard Loomis, "Chaucer and the Breton Lays of the Auchinleck," *Studies in Philology* 38:1 (1941): 30-1.

	Here wombe greted more and more;	Her womb grew greater and greater.
	Therwhile she mighte, se hidde here sore.	While she could, she hid herself miserably.
	On a dai, as hi wepende set,	One day as she sat weeping,
160	On of hire maidenes hit underyet.	One of her maidens noticed it.
	"Madame," she seide, "par charité,	"Madam," she said, "for charity's sake,
	Whi wepe ye now, telleth hit me."	Why are you crying now, tell me."
	"A! gentil maiden, kinde icoren,	"Oh, gentle maiden, chosen one,
	Help me, other ich am forloren!	Help me, for otherwise I am lost.
	Ich have ever yete ben meke and milde:	I have always been obedient and mild.
	Lo, now ich am with quike schilde!	Listen, now I am with a living child!
	Yif ani man hit underyete,	If anyone realized it,
	Men wolde sai bi sti and strete	People would say my father the king
	That mi fader the King hit wan	Had me near some sty or back alley,[6]
170	And I ne was never aqueint with man!	For I was never intimate with a man!
	And yif he hit himselve wite,	And if he himself learns of it,
	Swich sorewe schal to him smite	It will strike his heart with such sorrow
	That never blithe schal he be,	That he will never be happy again,
	For al his joie is in me,"	For all his joy is in me."
	And tolde here al togeder ther	And she told her there in full
	Hou hit was bigete and wher.	How the child was fathered and where.
	"Madame," quad the maide, "ne care thou nowt:	"Madam," said the maid, "don't be anxious.
	Stille awai hit sschal be browt.	It will be taken quietly away.[7]
	No man schal wite in Godes riche	No man in God's realm will know
180	Whar hit bicometh, but thou and iche."	Where it went but you and I."
	Her time come, she was unbounde,	Her time came and she was unburdened
	And delivred al mid sounde;	And delivered, all in sound health.
	A knaveschild ther was ibore:	A boy was born there;
	Glad was the moder tharfore.	The mother was glad for it.
	The maiden servede here at wille,	The maid served her in her needs,
	Wond that child in clothes stille,	Silently wrapped the child in clothes,
	And laid hit in a cradel anon,	And laid it at once in a cradle,
	And was al prest tharwith to gon.	And was all ready to leave.
	Yhit is moder was him hold:	Yet his mother was faithful to him.
190	Four pound she tok of gold,	She took four pounds of gold,
	And ten of selver also;	And ten of silver as well,
	Under his fote she laid hit tho, -	And she laid it under his feet
	For swich thing hit mighte hove;	For such things as it might help with.
	And seththen she tok a paire glove	And then she took a pair of gloves
	That here lemman here sente of fairi londe,	Which her lover had sent her from fairyland
	That nolde on no manne honde,	And would not fit any man's hand,
	Ne on child ne on womman yhe nolde,	Nor on any child or a woman,

[6] *Bi sti and strete*: MED defines *sti* as a pigsty but also as a place of degradation. But compare MS Digby No. 86 "Love is sofft, love is swet, love is goed": "Love hath his stivart [steward] by sti and by strete." The poet may intend some irony in that Degare later does marry his mother, though without knowledge or consummation.

[7] John Boswell, in *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), states that child abandonment for economic or social reasons was endemic in the ancient and medieval world and may have been as high as 20-40% of all live births in some periods. Babies were abandoned to religious houses and often took church positions or became servants to nobility, although many landed in brothels. The maid seems suspiciously knowledgeable about how to discreetly deal with just such a situation.

	But on hire selve wel yhe wolde.	Except for herself, as she knew well.
	Tho gloven she put under his hade,	She put the gloves under his head,
200	And siththen a letter she wrot and made,	And then she wrote out a letter,
	And knit hit with a selkene thred	And tied it with a silk thread
	Aboute his nekke wel god sped	About his neck for God's blessing
	That who hit founde sscholde iwite.	That whoever found it would see
	Than was in the lettre thous iwrite:	What was thus written in the letter:
	"Par charité, yif ani god man	*For charity's sake, if any good man*
	This helples child finde can,	*Can save this helpless child,*
	Lat cristen hit with prestes honde,	*Let him be christened by a priest's hand,*
	And bringgen hit to live in londe,	*And raise him to live in the land,*
	For hit is comen of gentil blod.	*For he has come from noble blood.*
210	Helpeth hit with his owen god,	*Help him using his own goods,*
	With tresor that under his fet lis;	*With the treasure that lies under his feet.*
	And ten yer eld whan that he his,	*And when he is ten years old,*
	Taketh him this ilke gloven two,	*Give him these two gloves here*
	And biddeth him, wharevere he go,	*And instruct him, wherever he goes,*
	That he ne lovie no womman in londe	*Not to love any woman in the land*
	But this gloves willen on hire honde;	*Unless these gloves will go on her hands.*
	For siker on honde nelle thai nere	*For certain, they will never fit any hand*
	But on his moder that him bere."	*Except his mother who bore him.*
	The maiden tok the child here mide,	The maid took the child with her
220	Stille awai in aven tide,	And stole away in the evening,
	Alle the winteres longe night.	All the long winter's night.
	The weder was cler, the mone light;	The weather was clear, the moon was bright.
	Than warhth she war anon	Soon she was aware
	Of an hermitage in a ston:	Of a hermitage in a cliffside
	An holi man had ther his woniyng.	Where a holy man had his dwelling.
	Thider she wente on heying,	She went there in haste
	An sette the cradel at his dore,	And set the cradle at his door,
	And durste abide no lengore,	Not daring not wait any longer,
	And passede forth anon right.	And passed on right away.
230	Hom she com in that other night,	She came home the next day
	And fond the levedi al drupni,	And found the lady all despondent,
	Sore wepinde, and was sori,	Weeping bitterly and full of regret.
	And tolde hire al togeder ther	She told her in full there
	Hou she had iben and wher.	How she had fared and where she had been.
	The hermite aros erliche tho,	The hermit rose early,
	And his knave was uppe also,	And his servant was up as well,
	An seide ifere here matines,	And they said their matins together
	And servede God and Hise seins.	And worshipped God and His saints.
	The litel child thai herde crie,	They heard the little child crying
240	And clepede after help on hie;	And called for help in haste.[8]
	The holi man his dore undede,	The holy man unfastened his door
	And fond the cradel in the stede;	And found the cradle on the step.
	He tok up the clothes anon	He lifted up the cloths at once
	And biheld the litel grom;	And saw the little boy.
	He tok the letter and radde wel sone	He took and quickly read the letter
	That tolde him that he scholde done.	Which told him what he should do.
	The heremite held up bothe his honde	The hermit held up both his hands

[8] *On hie*: Or, possibly "They called for help from on high."

	An thonked God of al His sonde,	And thanked God for all His blessings,
	And bar that child in to his chapel,	And carried the child into his chapel,
250	And for joie he rong his bel.	And rang his bell for joy.
	He dede up the gloven and the tresour	He put away the gloves and the treasure
	And cristned the child with gret honour:	And baptized the child with great honor.
	In the name of the Trinité,	In the name of the Trinity,
	He hit nemnede Degarre,	He named it Degare.
	Degarre nowt elles ne is	Degare meant nothing else
	But thing that not never what hit is,	But something that is unknown,
	Other thing that is neggh forlorn also;	A thing that was almost lost.[9]
	Forthi the schild he nemnede thous tho.	For this the child was named so.
	The heremite that was holi of lif	The hermit, who led a holy life,
260	Hadde a soster that was a wif;	Had a sister who was a wife.
	A riche marchaunt of that countré	A rich merchant of that land
	Hadde hire ispoused into that cité.	Had married her in the city.
	To hire that schild he sente tho	He sent the child to her,
	Bi his knave, and the silver also,	And the silver as well, by his servant,
	And bad here take gode hede	And asked her to take good care
	Hit to foster and to fede,	To foster and raise him,
	And yif God Almighti wolde	And if God Almighty would
	Ten yer his lif holde,	Give him ten years of life,
	Ayen to him hi scholde hit wise:	She should arrange for him to return,
270	He hit wolde tech of clergise.	And he would teach him the clergy.
	The litel child Degarre	The little child Degare
	Was ibrout into that cité.	Was brought into the city.
	The wif and hire loverd ifere	The wife and her husband together
	Kept his ase hit here owen were.	Kept him as if he were their own.
	Bi that hit was ten yer old,	By the time he was ten years old,
	Hit was a fair child and a bold,	He was a fair and spirited child,
	Wel inorissched, god and hende;	Well-raised, kind, and courteous.
	Was non betere in al that ende.	There was no one better in all the area.
	He wende wel that the gode man	He fully thought that the good man
280	Had ben his fader that him wan,	Was his father who had begotten him,
	And the wif his moder also,	And the woman his mother also,
	And the hermite his unkel bo;	And the hermit his uncle as well.
	And whan the ten yer was ispent,	And when the tenth year had passed,
	To the hermitage he was sent,	He was sent to the hermitage.
	And he was glad him to se,	The hermit was glad to see him,
	He was so feir and so fre.	For he was so fair and so noble.
	He taughte him of clerkes lore	He taught him the lore of clerics[10]
	Other ten wynter other more;	For another ten years or more.
	And when he was of twenti yer,	And when he was in his twentieth year,
290	Staleworth he was, of swich pouer	He was sturdy and of such might
	That ther ne wan man in that lond	That there was no man in the land
	That o breid him might astond.	Who could stand one blow from him.
	Tho the hermite seth, withouten les,	Then the hermit said, without a lie,
	Man for himself that he wes,	That he was ready to be his own man,

[9] French *égaré* has the meaning of misplaced or strayed, and TEAMS gives the meaning of *Degarre* as "almost lost."

[10] *Clerkes lore*: Degare is receiving a Latin education. He is evidently not being groomed for priestly vows but for a lay position.

	Staleworht to don ech werk,	To do all his work with steadfastness,
	And of his elde so god a clerk,	And for his age a fine clerk.
	He tok him his florines and his gloves	He gave him his gold coins and gloves[11]
	That he had kept to hise bihoves.	That he had kept to fulfill his needs,
	Ac the ten pound of starlings	Except for the ten pounds of silver,
300	Were ispended in his fostrings.	Which were spent in raising him.
	He tok him the letter to rede,	He gave him the letter to read,
	And biheld al the dede.	And watched all that happened.
	"O leve hem, par charité,	"Oh, dear uncle, for charity's sake,
	Was this letter mad for me?"	Was this letter written for me?"
	"Ye, bi oure Lord, us helpe sschal!	"Yes, by our Lord, our help,
	Thus hit was," and told him al.	So it was," and he told him everything.
	He knelede adoun al so swithe,	The youth knelt down as quickly
	And thonked the ermite of his live,	And thanked the hermit for his life,
	And swor he nolde stinte no stounde	And swore he would not lose a moment
310	Til he his kinrede hadde ifounde.	Until he had found his kin.
	For in the lettre was thous iwrite,	For in the letter it was so written
	That bi the gloven he sscholde iwite	That by the gloves he would know
	Wich were his moder and who,	Who his mother was,
	Yhif that sche livede tho,	If she were still alive,
	For on hire honden hii wolde,	For they would fit on her hands
	And on non other hii nolde.	And would go on no other's.
	Half the florines he gaf the hermite,	He gave the hermit half the gold
	And halvendel he tok him mide,	And took the other half with him,
	And nam his leve an wolde go.	And made his goodbye and readied to go.
320	"Nai," seide the hermite, "schaltu no!	"No," said the hermit, "you must not.
	To seche thi ken mightou nowt dure	Your search for your kin will not last
	Withouten hors and god armure."	Without a horse and strong armor."
	"Nai," quad he, "bi Hevene Kyng,	"No," he replied, "by Heaven's king,
	Ich wil have first another thing!"	I will first have other assistance."
	He hew adoun, bothe gret and grim,	He chopped down a stout oak sapling,
	To beren in his hond with him,	Both huge and forbidding,[12]
	A god sapling of an ok;	To carry in his hand with him.
	Whan he tharwith gaf a strok,	When he gave a blow with it
	Ne wer he never so strong a man	There would be no strong man
330	Ne so gode armes hadde upon,	Wearing fine arms upon himself
	That he ne scholde falle to grounde;	Who would not fall to the ground.
	Swich a bourdon to him he founde.	He found for himself such an aid.
	Tho thenne God he him bitawt,	Then he commended the hermit to God
	And aither fram other wepyng rawt.	And each left the other, weeping.
	Child Degarre wente his wai	Child Degare made his way
	Thourgh the forest al that dai.	Through the forest all that day.
	No man he ne herd, ne non he segh,	He heard no man, nor did he see anyone
	Til hit was non ipassed hegh;	Until it was well into the afternoon.
	Thanne he herde a noise kete	Then he heard a loud noise

[11] *Florines*: Florins were gold coins first minted in Florence in 1252, and issued in England only once by Edward III in 1344. Several European countries had their own florins but not France.

[12] Degare declines a knight's gear in favor of an oak club as a sign of humility, as does Havelock, who fights with a door bar. TEAMS also gives Ferguson's note that oaks had significance both as objects of worship in the pagan Celtic world and as Christian symbols of faith and virtue. George Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols in Christian Art* (London: Zwemmer, 1955). See also the note to line 371.

340	In o valai, an dintes grete.	In a valley and a great clashing.
	Blive thider he gan to te:	He hurried that way swiftly,
	What hit ware he wolde ise.	Wanting to see what it was.
	An Herl of the countré, stout and fers,	An earl of the countryside, hardy and fierce,
	With a knight and four squiers,	With a knight and four squires,
	Hadde ihonted a der other two,	Had hunted a deer or two,
	And al here houndes weren ago.	And all their hounds were gone.
	Than was thar a dragon grim,	A fearsome dragon had appeared,
	Ful of filth and of venim,	Full of filth and venom,
	With wide throte and teth grete,	With a wide throat and great teeth,
350	And wynges bitere with to bete.	And wings to beat cruelly with.
	As a lyoun he hadde fet,	He had feet like a lion,
	And his tail was long and gret.	And his tail was long and massive.
	The smoke com of his nose awai	The smoke came from his nose
	Ase fer out of a chimenai.	Like a fire out of a chimney.
	The knyght and squiers he had torent,	He had torn apart the knight and squires
	Man and hors to dethe chent.	And sent man and horse to their deaths.
	The dragon the Erl assaile gan,	The earl began to face the dragon,
	And he defended him as a man,	And he defended himself as a man,
	And stoutliche leid on with his swerd,	And laid on stoutly with his sword,
360	And stronge strokes on him gerd;	And struck him with harsh blows.
	Ac alle his dentes ne greved him nowt:	But all his strokes gave him no harm.
	His hide was hard so iren wrout.	His hide was as tough as wrought iron.
	Therl flei fram tre to tre -	The earl fled from tree to tree,
	Fein he wolde fram him be -	Wanting only to escape from him,
	And the dragon him gan asail;	But the dragon began to attack him.
	The doughti Erl in that batail	In that battle the hardy earl
	Ofsegh this child Degarre;	Saw Child Degare, and shouted,
	"Ha! help!" he seide, "par charité!"	"Hey! Help! For charity's sake!"
	The dragoun seth the child com;	The dragon saw Degare coming.
370	He laft the Erl and to him nom	He left the earl and turned to him,
	Blowinde and yeniend also	Blowing and gaping as well,[13]
	Als he him wolde swolewe tho.	Wishing to swallow him there.
	Ac Degarre was ful strong;	But Degare was very powerful.
	He tok his bat, gret and long,	He took his club, great and long,
	And in the forehefd he him batereth	And battered him on the forehead
	That al the forehefd he tospatereth.	So that he shattered his skull.
	He fil adoun anon right,	The dragon fell down at once
	And frapte his tail with gret might	And slapped his tail with great force
	Upon Degarres side,	Upon Degare's side,
380	That up-so-doun he gan to glide;	So that he was thrown upside down.
	Ac he stert up ase a man	But Degare leaped up like a man
	And with his bat leide upan,	And laid on with his club,
	And al tofrusst him ech a bon,	And crushed each bone of his
	That he lai ded, stille as a ston.	So that he lay dead, as still as a stone.
	Therl knelede adoun bilive	The earl knelt down humbly
	And thonked the child of his live,	And thanked the youth for his life,

[13] *Yeniend*: Yawning, not in boredom but in stretching his mouth to swallow Degare. TEAMS cites French & Hale, who state that "monsters usually could not be injured with manmade weapons; they had to be fought with their own (see also the sword in *Beowulf*) or with primitive things like the club here, or even with bare hands" (299). Degare's choice of an oak is providential.

	And maked him with him gon	And had him go with him
	To his castel right anon,	To his castle straightaway,
	And wel at hese he him made,	And made him well at ease.
390	And proferd him al that he hade,	He offered him all that he had,
	Rentes, tresor, an eke lond,	Incomes, treasures, and lands as well,
	For to holden in his hond.	To hold in his hand.
	Thanne answerede Degarre,	Degare answered then,
	"Lat come ferst bifor me	"First let your lady come before me,
	Thi levedi and other wimmen bold,	With other noble women,
	Maidenes and widues, yonge and olde,	Maidens and widows, young and old,
	And other damoiseles swete.	And other sweet damsels.
	Yif mine gloven beth to hem mete	If my glove is proper
	For to done upon here honde,	To fit on their hands,
400	Thanne ich wil take thi londe;	Then I will accept your lands.
	And yif thai ben nowt so,	And if it is not so,
	Iich wille take me leve and go."	I will take my leave and go."
	Alle wimman were forht ibrowt	All the women were brought forth,
	In wide cuntries and forth isowt:	Sought from lands far and wide.
	Ech the gloven assaie bigan,	Each attempted to try on the gloves,
	Ac non ne mighte don hem on.	But none could put them on.
	He tok his gloven and up hem dede,	He took his gloves and put them away
	And nam his leve in that stede.	And made his goodbye in that hall.
	The Erl was gentil man of blod,	The earl was a well-bred man of courtesy,
410	And gaf him a stede ful god	And gave him a very fine steed
	And noble armure, riche and fin,	And noble armor, rich and strong,
	When he wolde armen him therin,	For when he wished to arm himself,
	And a palefrai to riden an,	And a palfrey to ride on,
	And a knave to ben his man,	And a servant to be his man.
	And yaf him a swerd bright,	He gave him a shining sword,
	And dubbed him ther to knyght,	And dubbed him a knight there,
	And swor bi God Almighti	And swore by God Almighty
	That he was better worthi	That he was far more worthy
	To usen hors and armes also	To have a horse and arms as well
420	Than with his bat aboute to go.	Than to walk about with his club.[14]
	Sire Degarre was wel blithe,	Sir Degare was well pleased,
	And thanked the Erl mani a sithe,	And thanked the earl many times.
	And lep upon hiis palefrai,	He leaped upon his palfrey
	And doht him forth in his wai;	And went forth on his way.
	Upon his stede righte his man,	His squire rode upon his steed,
	And ledde his armes als he wel can;	And carried his arms as he knew well to.
	Mani a jorné thai ride and sette.	They rode and set upon many a journey.
	So on a dai gret folk thei mette,	One day they met a great crowd,
	Erles and barouns of renoun,	With earls and barons of renown,
430	That come fram a cité toun.	Who came from a fortress city.
	He asked a seriaunt what tiding,	He asked an officer for news, where
	And whennes hii come and what is this thing?	They came from, and what was happening.
	"Sire," he seide, "verraiment,	"Sir," he said, "in truth,
	We come framward a parlement.	We are returning from a parliament.

[14] *Go*: *go* in romance often has the modern nuance of general action, but here the regular ME meaning *walk* is likely intended. Compare Chaucer's plea "go, litel bok, go" (*Troilus* V.1786). For general *go* OE also had *wendan*, indirectly leading to PDE past simple *went*.

	The King a gret counseil made	The king called a great council
	For nedes that he to don hade.	For needs he had to fulfill.
	Whan the parlement was plener,	When the assembly was in full session,
	He lette crie fer and ner,	He had it proclaimed, near and far,
	Yif ani man were of armes so bold	That if any man were so bold in arms
440	That with the King justi wold,	That he would joust with the king,
	He sscholde have in mariage	He would have his daughter
	His dowter and his heritage,	In marriage, his heritage,
	That is kingdom god and fair,	And his kingdom, fair and clear,
	For he had non other hair.	For he has no other heir.
	Ac no man ne dar graunte therto,	But no man dared accept the challenge,
	For mani hit assaieth and mai nowt do:	For many have tried and could not do it,
	Mani erl and mani baroun,	Many earls and many barons,
	Knightes and squiers of renoun;	And knights and squires of renown.
	Ac ech man, that him justeth with, tit	But each man who jousted with him
450	Hath of him a foul despit:	Has quickly been disgraced by him.
	Some he breketh the nekke anon,	With some he broke their neck at once,
	And of some the rig-bon;	And some their back-bone.
	Some thourgh the bodi he girt,	Some he thrusts through their body.
	Ech is maimed other ihirt;	Each is maimed or hurt.
	Ac no man mai don him no thing	But the king has such miraculous fortune
	Swich wonder chaunce hath the King.	That no man can do him any harm."
	Sire Degarre thous thenche gan:	Sir Degare began to think to himself,
	"Ich am a staleworht man,	"I am a sturdy man,
	And of min owen ich have a stede,	And I have a steed of my own,
460	Swerd and spere and riche wede;	Sword and spear, and rich armor.
	And yif ich felle the Kyng adoun,	And if I take down the king,
	Evere ich have wonnen renoun;	I will have won fame for ever.
	And thei that he me herte sore,	And if he hurts me badly,
	No man wot wer ich was bore.	No man knows where I was born.
	Whether deth other lif me bitide,	Whether life or death awaits me,
	Agen the King ich wille ride!"	I will ride against the king!"
	In the cité his in he taketh,	He took lodging in the town
	And resteth him and meri maketh.	And rested and amused himself.
	On a dai with the King he mette,	One day he met with the king,
470	And knelede adoun and him grette:	And knelt down and greeted him.
	"Sire King," he saide, "of muchel might,	"Sire king," he said, "of great might,
	Mi loverd me sende hider anon right	My lord has sent me here directly
	For to warne you that he	To notify you that, with your permission,
	Bi thi leve wolde juste with the,	He wishes to joust with you,
	And winne thi dowter, yif he mai;	And win your daughter, if he may.
	As the cri was this ender dai,	In answer to the call the other day,
	Justes he had to the inome."	He will prepare to joust with you."
	"De par Deus!" quath the King, "he is welcome.	"By God," exclaimed the king, "he is welcome!
	Be he baroun, be he erl,	Whether he is a baron or earl,
480	Be he burgeis, be he cherl,	Or townsman or peasant,
	No man wil I forsake.	I will overlook no man.
	He that winneth al sschal take."	He that wins shall take all."
	Amorewe the justes was iset;	The joust was set for the morning.
	The King him purveid wel the bet,	The king outfitted himself in the best manner
	And Degarre ne knew no man,	While Degare had no man's support;
	Ac al his trust is God upon.	But all his trust was in God.
	Erliche to churche than wente he;	He went early to church
	The masse he herde of the Trinité.	And heard the mass of the Trinity.

	To the Fader he offreth hon florine,	To the Father he offered one gold coin,
490	And to the Sone another al so fine,	And to the Son another just as fine,
	And to the Holi Gost the thridde;	And to the Holy Ghost the third.
	The prest for him ful yerne gan bidde.	The priest prayed for him fervently.
	And tho the servise was idon,	And when the service was done,
	To his in he wente wel son	He went at once to his inn
	And let him armi wel afin,	And had himself well-armed
	In god armes to justi in.	With good armor to joust in.
	His gode stede he gan bistride;	He mounted his fine steed,
	His squier bar his sschaft biside;	And his squire carried his lance alongside.
	In the feld the King he abide gan,	On the field he waited for the king,
500	As he com ridend with mani a man,	Who came riding with determination,
	Stoutliche out of the cité toun,	Coming out of the town with many men,
	With mani a lord of gret renoun;	With many a lord of great reputation.
	Ac al that in the felde beth	But everyone who was on the field
	That the justes iseth	Who saw the joust
	Seide that hi never yit iseghe	Said that they had never before seen
	So pert a man with here egye	With their eyes so distinguished a man
	As was this gentil Degarre,	As this noble Degare was,
	Ac no man wiste whennes was he.	But no man knew where he came from.
	Bothe thai gonne to justi than,	Both of them began to battle then,
510	Ac Degarre can nowt theron.	Though Degare did not know how to joust.
	The King hath the gretter schaft	The king had the larger lance
	And kan inowgh of the craft.	And knew the craft in full;
	To breke his nekke he had iment:	He intended to break Degare's neck,
	In the helm he set his dent,	And landed his blow in the helmet
	That the schaft al tosprong;	So that the shaft splintered apart.
	Ac Degarre was so strong	But Degare was so strong
	That in the sadel stille he set,	That he sat still in the saddle
	And in the stiropes held his fet;	And held his feet in the stirrups.
	For sothe I seie, withoute lesing,	I tell the truth, without a lie,
520	He ne couthe nammore of justing.	He know no more about jousting.
	"Allas!" quath the King, "allas!	"Alas," cried the king, "alas!
	Me ne fil nevere swich a cas,	Such a thing has never happened to me,
	That man that ich mighte hitte	That any man I might hit
	After mi strok mighte sitte!"	Would sit there after my blow!"
	He taketh a wel gretter tre	He seized a much greater lance
	And swor so he moste ithe,	And swore that he would succeed.
	"Yif his nekke nel nowt atwo,	"If his neck will not be broken,
	His rigg schal, ar ich hennes go!"	His backbone will, before I leave here!"
	He rod eft with gret raundoun	He rode again with great abandon
530	And thought to beren him adoun,	And thought to throw him down,
	And girt Degarre anon	And struck Degare at once,
	Right agein the brest-bon	Right against the breast-bone.
	The schaft was stef and wonder god,	The shaft was firm and wondrously strong,
	And Degarre stede astod,	But Degare reared up his horse,
	And al biforen he ros on heghth,	And as before he rose up high.
	And tho was he ifallen neghth;	And although Degare was nearly fallen,
	But as God Almighti wold,	As God Almighty wished,
	The schaft brak and might nowt hold,	The shaft broke and would not hold.
	And Degarre his cours out ritte,	Degare altered his course
540	And was agramed out of his witte.	And was angered beyond control.
	"Allas!" quath he, "for vilaynie!	"Alas," he said, "for the unfairness!
	The King me hath ismiten twie,	The king has struck me twice,

	And I ne touchede him nowt yete.	And I have not touched him at all yet.
	Nou I schal avise me bette!"	Now I will take a better course!"
	He turned his stede with herte grim,	He turned his steed with a fierce heart
	And rod to the King, and he to him,	And rode to the king, and he did to him,
	And togider thai gert ful right,	And they crashed directly together,
	And in the scheldes here strokes pight	And blows were struck on shields
	That the speres al toriveth	So that the spears were broken apart
550	And up right to here honde sliveth,	And split right up to their hands.
	That alle the lordings that ther ben	All the lords who were there
	That the justing mighte sen	And could see the jousting
	Seiden hi ne seghe never with egye	Said they never saw with their eyes
	Man that mighte so longe dreghye,	A man who could endure so long,
	In wraththe for nothing,	Who could in combat, for anything,
	Sitten a strok of here King;	Withstand a blow from their king.
	"Ac he his doughti for the nones,	"But he shows courage for the occasion,
	A strong man of bodi and bones."	A mighty man in flesh and bones!"
	The King with egre mod gan speke:	The king was in furious spirits and said,
560	"Do bring me a schaft that wil nowt breke!	"Go, bring me a shaft that will not break!
	A, be mi trewthe, he sschal adoun!	Now, by my word, he will go down!
	Thai he be strengere than Sampson;	Even if he is stronger than Sampson,
	And thei he be the bare qued,	Or if he is the naked devil himself,[15]
	He sschal adoun, maugré his heved!"	He will fall, in spite of his might!"
	He tok a schaft was gret and long,	He took a shaft that was huge and long,
	The schild another al so strong;	And Degare took another just as strong,
	And to the King wel evene he rit;	And he met the king in mid-course.
	The King faileth, and he him smit;	The king wavered, and Degare struck him.
	His schaft was strong and god withal,	His shaft was strong and firm throughout,
570	And wel scharped the coronal.	And the spear head was well-sharpened.
	He smot the Kyng in the lainer:	He stabbed the king in the armor straps;
	He might flit nother fer ne ner.	He could not flee, neither near or far.
	The King was strong and harde sat;	Yet the king was strong and sat firmly.
	The stede ros up biforn with that,	With that his steed reared before him,
	And Sire Degarre so thriste him than	And Sir Degare thrust at him,
	That, maugré whoso grochche bigan,	So that despite whoever began the grudge,
	Out of the sadel he him cast,	He threw the king out of the saddle,
	Tail over top, right ate last.	And finally, head over feet.
	Than was ther long houting and cri;	There was a long shouting and crying then,
580	The King was sor asschamed forthi;	And the king was sorely ashamed for it.
	The lordinges comen with might and mein	The lords came in force with their company
	And broughte the King on horse agein,	And brought the king to his horse again,
	An seide with o criing, iwis,	And said with one shout, in truth,
	"Child Degarre hath wonne the pris!"	"Child Degare has won the prize!"[16]
	Than was the damaisele sori,	Then the princess was sorry,
	For hi wist wel forwhi:	For she knew well what had happened,
	That hi scholde ispoused ben	That she had been promised

[15] *The bare qued*: 'Naked evil.' TEAMS explains that this is a euphemism for the devil, who cannot be named for fear of attracting him: "Speak of the devil!" The *Havelock* poet does not seem to share these qualms and compares both Godrich and Godard to *Sathanas* (1135, 2512).

[16] *Child Degarre*: Though Degare has already been knighted (416), for him to be called *child* (knight-in-training) even as a young adult is commonplace and not an insult. The lords may also see Degare's youth and inexperience and do not know his full rank.

	To a knight that sche never had sen,	To a knight that she had never seen,
	And lede here lif with swich a man	To lead her life with such a man
590	That sche ne wot who him wan,	That she did not know who had fathered him,
	No in what londe he was ibore;	Nor in what land he had been born.
	Carful was the levedi therefore.	And so the lady was miserable.
	Than seide the King to Degarre,	Then the king said to Degare,
	"Min hende sone, com hider to me:	"My noble son, come here to me.[17]
	And thou were al so gentil a man	If you are as decent a man
	As thou semest with sight upan,	As you seem to our sight,
	And ase wel couthest wisdomes do	And as skilful in wise deeds
	As thou art staleworht man therto,	As you are rugged and manly,
	Me thouwte mi kingdoms wel biset:	I think my kingdom will be well served.
600	Ac be thou werse, be thou bet,	But whether you are better or worse,
	Covenaunt ich wille the holde.	I will hold my agreement with you.
	Lo, her biforn mi barons bolde,	See, here before my brave barons,
	Mi douwter I take the bi the hond,	I give you my daughter's hand,
	And seise the her in al mi lond.	And award her to you with all my land.
	King thou scalt ben after me:	You will be king after me.
	God graunte the god man for to be!"	God grant that you be a good man!"
	Than was the child glad and blithe,	Then Degare was glad and joyful,
	And thonked the Kyng mani a sithe.	And thanked the king many times.
	Gret perveaunce than was ther iwrout:	Great preparations were made.
610	To churche thai were togidere ibrout,	They were brought together to church,
	And spoused that levedi verraiment,	And he married that lady, truly,
	Under Holi Sacrement.	Under the holy sacrament.
	Lo, what chaunse and wonder strong	See what fate and great wonder it is,
	Bitideth mani a man with wrong,	That misfortune should befall a man
	That cometh into an uncouthe thede	Who comes into an unknown land,
	And spouseth wif for ani mede	And takes a wife for whatever reward,
	And knowes nothing of hire kin,	Knowing nothing of her family,
	Ne sche of his, neither more ne min,	Nor she of his, neither more nor less,
	And beth iwedded togider to libbe	And to be wedded to live together,
620	Par aventoure, and beth neghth sibbe!	And by chance to be close kin!
	So dede Sire Degarre the bold	Thus did Sir Degare the valiant
	Spoused ther is moder	Wed his own mother there,
	And that hende levedi also	And that gracious lady as well
	Here owene sone was spoused to,	Was married to her own son,
	That sche upon here bodi bar.	Whom she bore from her own body.
	Lo, what aventoure fil hem thar!	See what chance brought them there!
	But God, that alle thingge mai stere,	But God, who can guide all matters,
	Wolde nowt that thai sinned ifere:	Did not wish for them to sin together.
	To chirche thai wente with barouns bolde;	They went to church with noble barons,
630	A riche feste thai gonne to holde;	And a rich feast was held for them.
	And wan was wel ipassed non	And when the afternoon had long passed
	And the dai was al idon,	And the day was all done,
	To bedde thai sscholde wende, that fre,	They wanted to go to bed, that noble pair,
	The dammaisele and Sire Degarre.	The princess and Sir Degare.
	He stod stille and bithouwte him than	But he stood still and thought to himself
	Hou the hermite, the holi man,	How the hermit, the holy man,

[17] *Min hende sone*: Calling a young man *son* is an unusual address in romance, and the audience might know or later realize the irony that Degare is the king's grandson.

	Bad he scholde no womman take	Ordered that he should take no wife,
	For faired ne for riches sake	For beauty or for riches,
	But she mighte this gloves two	Unless she might put these two gloves
640	Lightliche on hire hondes do.	Lightly on her hands.
	"Allas, allas!" than saide he,	"Alas, alas!" he said then,
	"What meschaunce is comen to me?	"What misfortune has come to me?
	A wai! witles wrechche ich am!	Oh, woe! I am a witless wretch!
	Iich hadde levere than this kingdam	I would rather be gone from this land,
	That is iseised into min hond	Than have this kingdom
	That ich ware faire out of this lond!"	That was given into my hand!"
	He wrang his hondes and was sori,	He wrung his hands and was miserable,
	Ac no man wiste therefore wi.	But no man knew why.
	The King parceyved and saide tho,	The king took notice and so he said,
650	"Sire Degarre, wi farest thou so?	"Sir Degare, why do you behave so?
	Is ther ani thing don ille,	Has anything wrong been done,
	Spoken or seid agen thi wille?"	Spoken, or said against your will?"
	"Ya, sire," he saide, "bi Hevene King!"	"Yes, Sire," he said, "by Heaven's king!
	"I chal never, for no spousing,	While I live I can never consort
	Therwhiles I live, with wimman dele,	With a woman in marriage,[18]
	Widue ne wif ne dammeisele,	Not a widow or wife or damsel,
	But she this gloves mai take and fonde	Unless she takes and tries these gloves
	And lightlich drawen upon hire honde."	And draws them lightly on her hands."
	His yonge bride that gan here,	His young bride overheard that,
660	And al for thout chaunged hire chere	And in realization her expression changed,
	And ate laste gan to turne here mod:	And at last her mood turned.
	Here visage wex ase red ase blod:	Her face blushed as red as blood.
	She knew tho gloves that were hire.	She knew those gloves were hers.
	"Schewe hem hider, leve sire."	"Show them here, dear sir."
	Sche tok the gloves in that stede	She took the gloves in that moment
	And lightliche on hire hondes dede,	And put them easily on her hands,
	And fil adoun, with revli crie,	And fell down in a doleful cry,
	And seide, "God, mercy, mercie!	And said, "God have mercy, mercy!
	Thou art mi sone hast spoused me her,	You are my boy who has married me here,
670	And ich am, sone, thi moder der.	And I am, son, your dear mother.
	Ich hadde the loren, ich have the founde;	I had lost you, I have found you.
	Blessed be Jhesu Crist that stounde!"	May Jesus Christ be blessed that moment!"
	Sire Degarre tok his moder tho	Then Sir Degare took his mother
	And helde here in his armes two.	And held her in his two arms,
	Keste and clepte here mani a sithe;	Kissing and embracing her many times.
	That hit was sche, he was ful blithe.	He was joyful, for it was her.
	Than the Kyng gret wonder hadde	The king had great puzzlement then
	Why that noise that thai made,	Over the fuss that they made,
	And mervailed of hire crying,	And wondered about her crying
680	And seide, "Doughter, what is this thing?"	And said, "Daughter, what is going on?"
	"Fader," she seide, "thou schalt ihere:	"Father," she said, "you will hear all.
	Thou wenest that ich a maiden were,	You thought that I was a maiden,
	Ac certes, nay, sire, ich am non:	But for sure, Sire, I am not.
	Twenti winter nou hit is gon	Twenty years have passed now
	That mi maidenhed I les	Since I lost my virginity

[18] *With wimman dele*: The MED states that *dele with* can mean sexual intercourse. While it fits the situation, Degare is probably not saying this to the king about his daughter.

	In a forest as I wes,	When I was in a forest.
	And this is mi sone, God hit wot:	And this is my son, God knows.
	Bi this gloves wel ich wot."	By these gloves I know it well."
	She told him al that sothe ther,	She told him all the truth there,
690	Hou the child was geten and wher;	How the child was fathered, and where,
	And hou that he was boren also,	And how he was born as well,
	To the hermitage yhe sente him tho,	How she sent him to the hermitage,
	And seththen herd of him nothing;	And after then heard nothing of him.
	"But thanked be Jhesu, Hevene King,	"But Jesus be thanked, Heaven's king,
	Iich have ifounde him alive!	I have found him alive!
	Ich am his moder and ek his wive!"	I am his mother and also his wife!"[19]
	"Leve moder," seide Sire Degarre,	"Dear mother," said Sir Degare,
	"Telle me the sothe, par charité:	"Tell me the truth, for charity's sake.
	Into what londe I mai terne	What land must I turn to,
700	To seke mi fader, swithe and yerne?"	Swiftly and readily, to find my father?"
	"Sone," she saide, "bi Hevene Kyng,	"Son," she said, "by Heaven's king,
	I can the of him telle nothing	I can tell you nothing of him,
	But tho that he fram me raught,	Except that when he departed from me,
	His owen swerd he me bitaught,	He entrusted me with his own sword,
	And bad ich sholde take hit the forthan	And ordered that I should give it to you
	Yif thou livedest and were a man."	If you lived to become a man."
	The swerd sche fet forht anon right,	She fetched the sword right away,
	And Degarre hit out plight.	And Degare pulled it out.
	Brod and long and hevi hit wes:	It was broad and long and heavy.
710	In that kyngdom no swich nes.	No such sword was known in that kingdom.
	Than seide Degarre forthan,	With that, Degare said,
	"Whoso hit aught, he was a man!	"Whoever owned it, he was a man!
	Nou ich have that ikepe,	Now that I have it in my possession,
	Night ne dai nel ich slepe	I will not rest day or night
	Til that I mi fader see,	Until I see my father,
	Yif God wile that hit so be."	If God wills that it be so."
	In the cité he reste al night.	He slept all night in the fortress.
	Amorewe, whan hit was dai-lit,	In the morning when it was daylight,
	He aros and herde his masse;	He rose and heard mass.
720	He dighte him and forth gan passe.	He prepared himself and went forth.
	Of al that cité than moste non	In all the city there was no one
	Neither with him riden ne gon	Who might ride or go with him,
	But his knave, to take hede	Except his servant, to take care
	To his armour and his stede.	Of his armor and his steed.
	Forth he rod in his wai	He rode forth on his way through
	Mani a pas and mani jurnai;	Many a pass and many a journey.
	So longe he passede into west	He traveled into the west a long time,
	That he com into theld forest	Until he came into the ancient forest
	Ther he was bigeten som while.	Where he was conceived before.
730	Therinne he rideth mani a mile;	He rode in it many a mile,
	Mani a dai he ride gan;	And went on for many a day,

[19] *Ich am his moder and ek his wive*: Again, while this line seems disturbing to the point of risible for a modern reader, the important point for a medieval audience is that the marriage was not consummated. This permits the quick annulment at the end (1092-3). TEAMS points out that *The Legend of Pope Gregory*, an Auchinleck text and a possible influence on *Degare*, also features a hero set adrift at birth who returns home to unwittingly marry his mother. Both stories suggest the Oedipal myth, but neither are tragedies.

	No quik best he fond of man,	Meeting no living beast that was tame.
	Ac mani wilde bestes he seghth	But he saw many wild animals,
	And foules singen on heghth.	And birds singing from on high.
	So longe hit drouwth to the night,	It continued until the fall of night,
	The sonne was adoune right.	When the sun had gone down.
	Toward toun he wolde ride,	He wanted to ride toward town,
	But he nist never bi wiche side.	But he did not know which way to go.
	Thenne he segh a water cler,	Then he saw clear waters,
740	And amidde a river,	And alongside the river,
	A fair castel of lim and ston:	A stately castle of lime and mortar.
	Other wonying was ther non.	There was no other dwelling.
	To his knave he seide, "Tide wat tide,	He said to his servant, "Come what may,
	O fote forther nel I ride,	I will not ride one foot farther,
	Ac here abide wille we,	But we will stay here
	And aske herberewe par charité,	And ask for harbor for charity's sake,
	Yif ani quik man be here on live."	If there is anyone alive staying here."
	To the water thai come als swithe;	They came to the water as quickly.
	The bregge was adoune tho,	The bridge was down,
750	And the gate open also,	And the gate was open as well,
	And into the castel he gan spede.	And they sped into the castle.
	First he stabled up his stede;	First he stabled his horse
	He taiede up his palefrai.	And tied up his palfrey.
	Inough he fond of hote and hai;	They found plenty of oats and hay.
	He bad his grom on heying	He asked his servant in haste
	Kepen wel al here thing.	To keep all their things well.
	He passed up into the halle,	He passed into the hall,
	Biheld aboute, and gan to calle;	Looked around, and began to call.
	Ac neither on lond ne on hegh	But he saw no living person,
760	No quik man he ne segh.	Either on the ground floor or higher.
	Amidde the halle flore	In the middle of the hall floor
	A fir was bet, stark an store,	A fire was raised, strong and blazing.
	"Par fai," he saide, "ich am al sure	"By my faith," he said, "I am sure
	He that bette that fure	That whoever made that fire
	Wil comen hom yit tonight;	Will come home tonight yet.
	Abiden ich wille a litel wight."	I will wait a little while."
	He sat adoun upon the dais,	He sat down on the platform,
	And warmed him wel eche wais,	And warmed himself well all over.
	And he biheld and undernam	Then he perceived and saw
770	Hou in at the dore cam	Coming in through the door
	Four dammaiseles, gent and fre;	Four ladies, noble and elegant.
	Ech was itakked to the kne.	Each was bare-legged from the knees down.
	The two bowen an arewen bere,	Two carried bows and arrows,
	The other two icharged were	And the others were laden
	With venesoun, riche and god.	With venison, rich and fine.
	And Sire Degarre upstod	Sir Degare stood up
	And gret hem wel fair aplight,	And greeted them very courteously,
	Ac thai answerede no wight,	But they did not answer at all.
	But yede into chaumbre anon	They only advanced into their chamber
780	And barred the dore after son.	And barred the door soon after.
	Sone therafter withalle	Following that, in a little while
	Ther com a dwerw into the halle.	A dwarf came into the hall.
	Four fet of lengthe was in him;	His body was four feet tall.
	His visage was stout and grim;	His appearance was firm and severe;
	Bothe his berd and his fax	Both his beard and his hair

	Was crisp an yhalew as wax;	Were crisp and yellow like wax.
	Grete sscholdres and quarré;	With large, square shoulders,
	Right stoutliche loked he;	He looked very rugged.
	Mochele were hise fet and honde	His feet and hands were as huge
790	Ase the meste man of the londe;	As the biggest men in the land.
	He was iclothed wel aright,	He was clothed very finely,
	His sschon icouped as a knight;	With his shoes scored like a knight's.[20]
	He hadde on a sorcot overt,	He had on an open overcoat,
	Iforred with blaundeuer apert.	Trimmed with white fur.
	Sire Degarre him biheld and lowggh,	Sir Degare saw him and laughed,
	And gret him fair inowggh,	And greeted him politely enough,
	Ac he ne answerede nevere a word,	But he did not answer a word.
	But sette trestles and laid the bord,	He only set supports and laid the table,
	And torches in the halle he lighte,	And lit torches in the hall,
800	And redi to the soper dighte.	And prepared to make supper.
	Than ther com out of the bour	Then there came out of the rooms
	A dammeisele of gret honour;	A young lady of great honor.
	In the lond non fairer nas;	There was no one fairer in the land.
	In a diapre clothed she was	She was dressed in patterned clothes,
	With hire come maidenes tene,	And ten maidens came with her,
	Some in scarlet, some in grene,	Some in scarlet, some in green,[21]
	Gent of bodi, of semblaunt swete,	Delicate in body and sweet in appearance.
	And Degarre hem gan grete;	Degare began to greet them,
	Ac hi ne answerede no wight,	But they answered no man
810	But yede to the soper anon right.	And only went right to their supper.
	"Certes," quath Sire Degarre,	"For certain," said Sir Degare,
	"Ich have hem gret, and hi nowt me;	"I have greeted them, and they ignored me.
	But thai be domb, bi and bi	Unless they are mute, by and by,
	Thai schul speke first ar I."	They shall speak first before I do!"
	The levedi that was of rode so bright,	The lady who had so bright a complexion
	Amidde she sat anon right,	Sat right down in the middle,
	And on aither half maidenes five.	With five maidens on either side.
	The dwerw hem servede al so blive	The dwarf served them swiftly
	With riche metes and wel idight;	With rich foods, sumptuously prepared.
820	The coppe he filleth with alle his might.	He filled the cup with all his attention.
	Sire Degarre couthe of curteisie:	Sir Degare knew court manners.
	He set a chaier bifore the levedie,	He set a chair before the lady
	And therin himselve set,	And sat himself there,
	And tok a knif and carf his met;	And took a knife and carved his meat.
	At the soper litel at he,	He ate lightly of the supper,
	But biheld the levedi fre,	But beheld the gracious lady,

[20] *His sschon icouped as a knight*: TEAMS cites both French & Hall, who state that this was a fashion where the upper part of shoes were scored to show the bright colors of the stockings underneath (311), and Laing, who notes that early editors dated the poem to the early thirteenth century from this style. David Laing, ed., *Sire Degarre, a Metrical Romance of the End of the Thirteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Abbotsford Club, 1849).

[21] *Some in scarlet, some in grene*: Scarlet could refer either to a type of woolen cloth or to the hue, though both had connotations of luxury or authority, being the color of cardinals' robes. Green was an ominous color suggesting untamed nature, and devils were depicted not as red but green. Medieval clothing, even for peasants, was not as drab as the modern stereotype suggests, but there is a special air of mystique to the attire here.

	And segh ase feir a wimman	Seeing as beautiful a woman
	Als he hevere loked an,	As he had ever looked upon,
	That al his herte and his thout	So that all his heart and his mind
830	Hire to love was ibrowt.	Were moved to love for her.
	And tho thai hadde souped anowgh,	And when they had eaten enough,
	The drew com, and the cloth he drough;	The dwarf came and withdrew the tablecloth.
	The levedis wessche everichon	Each one of the ladies washed
	And yede to chaumbre quik anon.	And went right away to her chamber.
	Into the chaumbre he com ful sone.	Degare quickly followed into the room.
	The levedi on here bed set,	The lady sat on her bed
	And a maide at here fet,	With a maid at her feet,
	And harpede notes gode and fine;	Who played music on a harp, sweet and fine.
	Another broughte spices and wine.	Another brought spices and wine.
840	Upon the bedde he set adoun	He sat down upon the bed
	To here of the harpe soun.	To listen to the harp's sound.
	For murthe of notes so sschille,	From enjoyment of the beautiful music,
	He fel adoun on slepe stille;	He fell down into a sound sleep,
	So he slep al that night.	And so he slept all that night.
	The levedi wreith him warm aplight,	The lady tucked him in warmly, I know,
	And a pilewe under his heved dede,	And placed a pillow under his head,
	And yede to bedde in that stede.	And went to bed in that place.
	Amorewe whan hit was dai-light,	In the morning, when it was daylight,
	Sche was uppe and redi dight.	She was up and already dressed.
850	Faire sche waked him tho:	Then she woke him up gently.
	"Aris!" she seide, "graith the, an go!"	"Get up," she said, "dress yourself and go."
	And saide thus in here game:	And she added playfully,
	"Thou art worth to suffri schame,	"You deserve to suffer shame,
	That al night as a best sleptest,	For sleeping like a beast all night
	And non of mine maidenes ne keptest."	And not protecting any of my maidens."[22]
	"O gentil levedi," seide Degarre,	"Oh, gracious lady," said Degare,
	"For Godes love, forgif hit me!	"For the love of God, forgive me!
	Certes the murie harpe hit made,	For sure, the merry harping caused it.
	Elles misdo nowt I ne hade;	Otherwise I would not have behaved so.
860	Ac tel me, levedi so hende,	But tell me, noble lady,
	Ar ich out of thi chaumber wende,	Before I go out of this room,
	Who is louerd of this lond?	Who is lord of this land?
	And who this castel hath in hond?	And who has this castle in hand?
	Wether thou be widue or wif,	Are you a widow or a wife,
	Or maiden yit of clene lif?	Or still a maiden, pure in body?
	And whi her be so fele wimman	And why are there so many women here,
	Allone, withouten ani man?"	Alone, without any man?"
	The dameisele sore sighte,	The damsel sighed sorely,
	And bigan to wepen anon righte,	And immediately began to cry.
870	"Sire, wel fain ich telle the wolde,	"Sir, I would gladly tell you
	Yif evere the better be me sscholde.	If it might ever do me any good.
	Mi fader was a riche baroun,	My father was a rich baron
	And hadde mani a tour and toun.	And had many a tower and town.
	He ne hadde no child but me;	He had no children but me.

[22] TEAMS cites Brewer, who feels that the lady is gently mocking Degare's virility for having "paid no attention to the ladies" (253). Derek Brewer, "Medieval Literature, Folk Tale, and Traditional Literature," *Dutch Quarterly Review of Anglo-American Letters* 11:4 (1981): 243-56.

	Ich was his air of his cuntré.	I was the heir of his country.
	In mené ich hadde mani a knight	In my company I had many knights,
	And squiers that were gode and light,	And squires who were good and able,
	An staleworht men of mester,	And sturdy men of skill,
	To serve in court fer and ner;	To serve the court near and far.
880	Ac thanne is thar here biside	But then there came around here
	A sterne knight, iknawe ful wide.	A cruel knight who is widely known.
	Ich wene in Bretaine ther be non	I believe there is no one in Brittany
	So strong a man so he is on.	So strong a man as he is.
	He had ilove me ful yore;	He had loved me for a long time,
	Ac in herte nevere more	But I could never in my heart
	Ne mighte ich lovie him agein;	Love him in return.
	But whenne he seghye ther was no gein,	But when he saw there was no use,
	He was aboute with maistri	He was ready to ravish
	For to ravisse me awai.	Me away with force.
890	Mine knightes wolde defende me,	My knights attempted to defend me,
	And ofte fowghten hi an he;	And they continually fought with him.
	The beste he slowgh the firste dai,	He slaughtered the best the first day,
	And sethen an other, par ma fai,	And then a second, by my faith,
	And sethen the thridde and the ferthe, -	And then the third and fourth,
	The beste that mighte gon on erthe!	The best that might walk on earth!
	Mine squiers that weren so stoute,	My squires who were so strong,
	Bi foure, bi five, thai riden oute,	Rode out, by four, by five,
	On hors armed wel anowgh:	On horses, armed well enough.
	His houen bodi he hem slough.	He destroyed them by his own hand.
900	Mine men of mester he slough alle,	He killed all of my skilled men
	And other pages of mine halle.	And other pages in my hall.
	Therfore ich am sore agast	For this I am sorely afraid
	Lest he wynne me ate last."	That he might finally conquer me."
	With this word sche fil to grounde,	With these words she fell to the ground
	And lai aswone a wel gret stounde.	And lay in a faint for a good while.
	Hire maidenes to hire come	Her maidens came to her
	And in hire armes up hire nome.	And took her up in their arms.
	He beheld the levedi with gret pité.	He looked at the lady with great pity.
	"Loveli madame," quath he,	"Lovely madam," he said,
910	"On of thine ich am here:	"I am here as one of yours.
	Ich wille the help, be mi pouere."	I will help you by my own power."
	"Yhe, sire," she saide, "than al mi lond	"Sir, yes," she said, "then I will give you
	Ich wil the give into thin hond,	All of my land into your hand,
	And at thi wille bodi mine,	As well as my body, at your will,
	Yif thou might wreke me of hine."	If you can avenge me of him."
	Tho was he glad al for to fighte,	Then he was glad to be able to fight,
	And wel gladere that he mighte	And even gladder that he might
	Have the levedi so bright	Have the lady so bright
	Yif he slough that other knight.	If he destroyed that other knight.
920	And als thai stod and spak ifere,	And as they stood and spoke together,
	A maiden cried, with reuful chere,	A maiden cried, with a doleful voice,
	"Her cometh oure enemi, faste us ate!	"Here comes our enemy toward us fast!
	Drauwe the bregge and sschet the gate,	Raise the bridge and shut the gate,
	Or he wil slen ous everichone!"	Or he will slay every one of us!"
	Sire Degarre stirt up anon	Sir Degare started up at once
	And at a window him segh,	And saw him through a window,
	Wel i-armed on hors hegh;	Well armed and high on his horse.
	A fairer bodi than he was on	He never saw a fairer body

	In armes ne segh he never non.	In arms than he was.
930	Sire Degarre armed him blive	Sir Degare armed himself swiftly
	And on a stede gan out drive.	And drove out on his steed.
	With a spere gret of gayn,	With a spear of great force
	To the knight he rit agein.	He rode toward the knight.
	The knighte spere al tosprong,	The knight broke the spear into pieces;
	Ac Degarre was so strong	But Degare was so strong
	And so harde to him thrast,	And thrust on him so hard,
	But the knight sat so fast,	That because the knight sat so firmly,
	That the stede rigge tobrek	The horse's backbone was broken
	And fel to grounde, and he ek;	And it fell to the ground with him.
940	But anon stirt up the knight	But the knight jumped up at once
	And drough out his swerd bright.	And drew out his bright sword.
	"Alight," he saide, "adoun anon;	"Get down," he said, "dismount right now.
	To fight thou sschalt afote gon.	To fight me you must go on foot.
	For thou hast slawe mi stede,	Because you have slain my steed,
	Deth-dint schal be thi mede;	A death blow will be your reward.
	Ac thine stede sle I nille,	I do not want to slay your horse;
	Ac on fote fighte ich wille."	I will fight you on foot."
	Than on fote thai toke the fight,	Then they took the fight to the ground,
	And hewe togidere with brondes bright.	And clashed together with shining blades.
950	The knight gaf Sire Degarre	The knight gave Sir Degare
	Sterne strokes gret plenté,	Harsh blows in great plenty,
	And he him agen also,	And he struck him in return as well,
	That helm and scheld cleve atwo.	So that helmet and shield were cut in two.
	The knight was agreved sore	The knight was sorely angered
	That his armour toburste thore:	That his armor was broken there.
	A strok he gaf Sire Degarre,	He gave Sir Degare a stroke
	That to grounde fallen is he;	That brought him to the ground.
	But he stirt up anon right,	But he stood up right away
	And swich a strok he gaf the knight	And gave the knight such a blow,
960	Upon his heved so harde iset	So powerfully set upon his head,
	Thurh helm and heved and bacinet	Through helmet and steel cap and head,
	That ate brest stod the dent;	That the stroke only stopped at the breast.
	Ded he fil doun, verraiment.	He fell down dead, in truth.
	The levedi lai in o kernel,	The lady stayed in the barricade
	And biheld the batail everi del.	And saw every moment of the battle.
	She ne was never er so blithe:	She was never before so happy
	Sche thankede God fele sithe.	And thanked God many times.
	Sire Degarre com into castel;	Sir Degare came into the castle
	Agein him com the dammaisel,	And the damsel came to him
970	And thonked him swithe of that dede.	And thanked him swiftly for his deeds.
	Into chaumber sche gan him lede,	She led him into her chamber
	And unarmed him anon,	And unarmed him at once,
	And set him hire bed upon,	And set him upon her bed
	And saide, "Sire, par charité,	And said, "Sir, for charity's sake,
	I the prai dwel with me,	I beg that you stay with me,
	And al mi lond ich wil the give,	And I will give you all my land,
	And miselve, whil that I live."	And myself, while I live."
	"Grant merci, dame," saide Degarre,	"Many thanks, my lady," said Degare,
	"Of the gode thou bedest me:	"For all the goods that you offer me.
980	Wende ich wille into other londe,	But I will travel to other lands,
	More of haventours for to fonde;	To find more adventures.
	And be this twelve moneth be go,	And after twelve months have passed,

	Agein ich wil come the to."	I will come back again to you."
	The levedi made moche mourning	The lady made great sadness
	For the knightes departing,	Over the knight's departing,
	And gaf him a stede, god and sur,	And gave him a steed, fine and sure,
	Gold and silver an god armur,	Gold and silver, and strong armor,
	And bitaught him Jhesu, Hevene King.	And entrusted him to Jesus, Heaven's king.
	And sore thei wepen at here parting.	They wept bitterly at their parting.
990	Forht wente Sire Degarre	Sir Degare went forth
	Thurh mani a divers cuntré;	Through many different lands,
	Ever mor he rod west.	Always riding west.
	So in a dale of o forest	And so one day in a forest valley
	He mette with a doughti knight	He met with a rugged knight
	Upon a stede, god and light,	On a steed, strong and lively,
	In armes that were riche and sur,	In arms that were rich and sturdy,
	With the sscheld of asur	With a shield of azure
	And thre bor-hevedes therin	With three boars' heads on them,[23]
	Wel ipainted with gold fin.	Finely painted with costly gold.
1000	Sire Degarre anon right	At once Sir Degare
	Hendeliche grette the knight,	Politely greeted the knight
	And saide, "Sire, God with the be;"	And said, "God be with you, sir."
	And thous agein answered he:	He answered in return,
	"Velaun, wat dost thou here,	"Villain, what are you doing here
	In mi forest to chase mi dere?"	In my forest, chasing my deer?
	Degarre answerede with wordes meke:	Degare replied with gentle words,
	"Sire, thine der nougt I ne seke:	"Sir, I do not want any of your deer.
	Iich am an aunterous knight,	I am a faithful knight,
	For to seche werre and fight."	Out to seek adventure and combat."
1010	The knight saide, withouten fail,	The knight said, without doubt,
	"Yif thou comest to seke batail,	"If you've come to seek battle,
	Here thou hast thi per ifounde:	You've found your match here!
	Arme the swithe in this stounde!"	Arm yourself fast in this place!"
	Sire Degarre and his squier	Sir Degare, with his squire,
	Armed him in riche atir,	Armed himself in rich clothing,
	With an helm riche for the nones,	With a fine helmet for the occasion.
	Was ful of precious stones	It was full of precious stones
	That the maide him gaf, saun fail,	That the maiden gave him, without doubt,
	For whom he did rather batail.	For whom he battled earlier.
1020	A sscheld he kest aboute his swere	He put a shield about his neck
	That was of armes riche and dere,	Which had rich and precious ornaments,
	With thre maidenes hevedes of silver bright,	With three maidens' heads of bright silver,
	With crounes of gold precious of sight.	And with costly-looking crowns of gold.
	A sschaft he tok that was nowt smal,	He took a shaft which was not small,
	With a kene coronal.	With a keen point.
	His squier tok another spere;	His squire took another spear
	Bi his louerd he gan hit bere.	And carried it alongside his lord.
	Lo, swich aventoure ther gan bitide -	See what fortune awaited them!
	The sone agein the fader gan ride,	The son began to ride against the father,
1030	And noither ne knew other no wight!	And neither knew who the other was!
	Nou biginneth the firste fight.	Now the first charge began.

[23] *Thre bor-hevedes*: Having boars' heads on a crest was common in Celtic heraldry and in many other nations, perhaps suggesting either the fierceness of the boar or a hunter who had defeated them.

	Sire Degarre tok his cours thare;	Sir Degare took his course there,
	Agen his fader a sschaft he bare;	Bearing a lance against his father.
	To bere him doun he hadde imint.	He intended to bear him down
	Right in the sscheld he set his dint;	And set his aim right on the shield.
	The sschaft brak to peces al,	The shaft broke into pieces,
	And in the sscheld lat the coronal.	And left the point in the shield.
	Another cours thai gonne take;	They began to take another charge.
	The fader tok, for the sones sake,	To attack the son, the father seized
1040	A sschaft that was gret and long,	A lance which was great and long,
	And he another also strong.	And Degare took another just as strong.
	Togider thai riden with gret raundoun,	They rode together with great violence,
	And aither bar other adoun.	But neither bore the other down.
	With dintes that thai smiten there,	With the blows that they struck there,
	Here stede rigges toborsten were.	Their horses' backs were broken.
	Afote thai gonne fight ifere	They started to battle on foot,
	And laiden on with swerdes clere.	And laid on with shining swords.
	The fader amerveiled wes	The father was puzzled
	Whi his swerd was pointles,	As to why Degare's sword was pointless,
1050	And seide to his sone aplight,	And said to his son, fittingly,
	"Herkne to me a litel wight:	"Listen to me for a moment.
	Wher were thou boren, in what lond?"	Where were you born, in what land?"
	"In Litel Bretaigne, ich understond:	"In Brittany, as I understand.
	Kingges doughter sone, witouten les,	I am a king's daughter's son, without a lie,
	Ac I not wo mi fader wes."	But I do not know who my father was."
	"What is thi name?" than saide he.	"What is your name?" he then asked.
	"Certes, men clepeth me Degarre."	"For certain, men call me Degare."
	"O Degarre, sone mine!	"Oh, Degare, my son!
	Certes ich am fader thine!	Truly, I am your father.
1060	And bi thi swerd I knowe hit here:	And I know it by your sword here.
	The point is in min aumenere."	The point is in my pouch."
	He tok the point and set therto;	He took the point and set it on.
	Degarre fel iswone tho,	Degare was overcome then,
	And his fader, sikerli,	And his father, certainly,
	Also he gan swony;	Also began to faint.
	And whan he of swone arisen were,	And when they rose from their shock,
	The sone cride merci there	The son asked for forgiveness there
	His owen fader of his misdede,	For his offence from his father,
	And he him to his castel gan lede,	Who invited Degare to his castle
1070	And bad him dwelle with him ai.	And asked him to stay with him forever.
	"Certes, sire," he saide, "nai;	"For certain, no sir," Degare said.
	Ac yif hit youre wille were,	"But if it is your will,
	To mi moder we wende ifere,	We will go together to my mother,
	For she is in gret mourning."	For she is in great anxiousness."
	"Blethelich," quath he, "bi Hevene Kyng."	"Gladly," he said, "by Heaven's king."
	Syr Degaré and hys father dere,	Sir Degare and his dear father[24]
	Into Ynglond they went in fere.	Went together into Brittany.
	They were armyd and well dyghtt.	They were armed and finely dressed.
	As sone as the lady saw that knyght,	As soon as the lady saw that knight,
1080	Wonther wel sche knew the knyght;	She knew him very well.

[24] At line 1076 Auchinleck stops, as a final page is missing. Editors generally use Bodleian Rawlinson Poetry 34 for the ending, although Bodleian transfers the setting to England (line 1077).

	Anon sche chaungyd hur colowr aryght,	At once her color changed entirely
	And seyd, "My dere sun, Degaré,	And she said, "My dear son, Degare,
	Now thou hast broughtt thy father wyth the!"	You have brought your father with you!"
	"Ye, madame, sekyr thow be!	"Yes, madam, you may be sure!
	Now well y wot that yt ys he."	Now I know well that it is him."
	"I thank, by God," seyd the kyng,	"I am thankful, by God," added the king.
	"Now y wot, wythowtt lesyng,	"Now I know, without a lie,
	Who Syr Degaré his father was!"	Who Sir Degare's father was."
	The lady swounyd in that plass.	The lady fell faint at that moment.
1090	Then afterward, now sykyrly,	Then afterwards, now in certainty,
	The knyghtt weddyd the lady.	The knight wedded the lady.
	Sche and hur sun were partyd atwynn,	She and her son's marriage was annulled,
	For they were to nyghe off kyn.	For they were too close of kin.
	Now went forth Syr Degaré;	Now Sir Degare went forth
	Wyth the kyng and his meyné,	With the king and his retinue,
	His father and his mother dere.	And his father and dear mother.
	Unto that castel thei went infere	They went together into the castle
	Wher that wonnyd that lady bryght	Where that shining lady lived
	That he hadd wonne in gret fyght,	That he had won in fierce combat,
1100	And weddyd hur wyth gret solempnité	And he married her with great ceremony
	Byfor all the lordis in that cuntré.	In front of all the lords in that country.
	Thus cam the knyght outt of his care;	Thus the knight came out of his troubles.
	God yff us grace well to fare.	May God give us grace to fare as well!
	Amen	Amen.
	The lyff of Syr Degaré	The life of Sir Degare,
1106	Both curteys and fre.	Both courteous and noble.

Sir Orfeo

Sir Orfeo survives in three manuscripts: Auchinleck (c. 1330), British Library MS Harley 3810 (c. 1400), and Caius College Library, MS 175 (c. 1500). I take as my text source Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury, eds. *Sir Orfeo*. *The Middle English Breton Lays.* Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995. http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/orfeofrm.htm. Laskaya *et al*. use mainly Auchinleck. Among the many modern editions of *Orfe*o are Thomas J. Garbáty, ed.. *Medieval English Literature* (1984) and French & Hale (1930).

1	We redeth oft and findeth y-write,	We often read and find written,[1]
	And this clerkes wele it wite,	And these clerks know them well,
	Layes that ben in harping	Lays set to harping,
	Ben y-founde of ferli thing:	Composed about marvelous things.
	Sum bethe of wer and sum of wo,	Some are about war and some woe,
	And sum of joie and mirthe also,	Some are about joy and fun as well,
	And sum of trecherie and of gile,	And some are about treachery and deceit,
	Of old aventours that fel while;	About old adventures that happened before.
	And sum of bourdes and ribaudy,	Some are about bawdy jokes and games,
10	And mani ther beth of fairy.	And many are about fairies.
	Of al thinges that men seth,	And of all things that men relate,
	Mest o love, forsothe, they beth.	Most, in truth, are about love.
	In Breteyne this layes were wrought,	These lays were crafted in Brittany,
	First y-founde and forth y-brought,	First found and then brought forth,
	Of aventours that fel bi dayes,	About adventures from the old times,
	Wherof Bretouns maked her layes.	For which Bretons made them into lays.
	When kinges might our y-here	When kings would hear somewhere
	Of ani mervailes that ther were,	Of any wonders that were there,
	Thai token an harp in gle and game	They took a harp in pleasure and fun
20	And maked a lay and gaf it name.	And made a lay and gave it a name.
	Now of this aventours that weren y-falle	Now of these adventures that took place,
	Y can tel sum, ac nought alle.	I can tell of some, but not all.
	Ac herkneth, lordinges that ben trewe,	But listen, lordings that are true,
	Ichil you telle of "Sir Orfewe."	And I will tell you the tale of *Sir Orfeo*.
	Orfeo mest of ani thing	Orfeo, more than any thing,
	Lovede the gle of harping.	Loved the joys of harping.

[1] The first thirty-nine lines are reconstructed from the Bodleian Library Ashmole 61 and Harley 3810 manuscripts, as a page is missing from Auchinleck. The introduction closely follows the *Lay de Freine*, also in Auchinleck.

	Siker was everi gode harpour	For certain, every good musician
	Of him to have miche honour.	Held him in great honor.
	Himself he lerned forto harp,	He taught himself to play the harp
30	And leyd theron his wittes scharp;	And then set his sharp wits to it.
	He lerned so ther nothing was	He learned so there was in no way
	A better harpour in no plas.	A better harpist anywhere.
	In al the warld was no man bore	In all the world there was no man born,
	That ones Orfeo sat bifore -	Who having once sat before Orfeo
	And he might of his harping here -	And heard his harping,
	Bot he schuld thenche that he were	Did not think himself
	In on of the joies of Paradis,	Among the joys of Paradise,
	Swiche melody in his harping is.	Such melody was in his playing.
	Orfeo was a king,	Orfeo was a king,
40	In Inglond an heighe lording,	A great lord in England,
	A stalworth man and hardi bo;	And both sturdy and brave.
	Large and curteys he was also.	He was generous and courteous as well.
	His fader was comen of King Pluto,	His father was a descendant of King Pluto,
	And his moder of King Juno,	And his mother one of King Juno,[2]
	That sum time were as godes yhold	Who were once considered gods
	For aventours that thai dede and told.	For the adventures they had and told of.
	This king sojournd in Traciens,	King Orfeo dwelled in Thrace,
	That was a cité of noble defens -	Which was a great and fortified city,
	For Winchester was cleped tho	For Winchester was then called
50	Traciens, withouten no.	Thrace, without any denying.[3]
	The king hadde a quen of priis	The king had a queen of great renown
	That was y-cleped Dame Heurodis,	Who was called Lady Herodis,
	The fairest levedi, for the nones,	The fairest lady at that time
	That might gon on bodi and bones,	Who might walk in flesh and bones,
	Ful of love and godenisse -	Full of love and goodness.
	Ac no man may telle hir fairnise.	No man could describe her beauty!
	Bifel so in the comessing of May	It so happened at the coming of May
	When miri and hot is the day,	When the day is warm and pleasant,
	And oway beth winter schours,	And winter showers have gone away,
60	And everi feld is ful of flours,	And every field is full of flowers,
	And blosme breme on everi bough	And blossoms appear on every bough,
	Over al wexeth miri anought,	Growing everywhere merrily enough,
	This ich quen, Dame Heurodis	That this queen, Lady Herodis,
	Tok to maidens of priis,	Took two maidens of noble worth
	And went in an undrentide	And went one late morning
	To play bi an orchardside,	To play by the side of an orchard,
	To se the floures sprede and spring	To see the flowers spring and blossom,
	And to here the foules sing.	And to hear the birds sing.
	Thai sett hem doun al thre	They set themselves down together
70	Under a fair ympe-tre,	Under a fine orchard tree,[4]

[2] *King Juno*: Pluto was god of the underworld and Juno was not a king but a goddess, Jupiter's wife. The poet rather clumsily tries to establish a mythical and pre-Christian setting for the main characters, complete with medieval armor and feudal social conventions.

[3] The poet again conflates the Greek myth of Orpheus with an English setting, and the audience would likely have cheerfully accepted this mythical reality where Winchester was once called *Thrace*, modern Bulgaria and northern Greece! Nevertheless, in Layamon's *Brut* Winchester is one of Arthur's main cities, and Geoffrey of Monmouth claims that the kings of Briton descend from Aeneas.

	And wel sone this fair quene	And soon this fair queen
	Fel on slepe opon the grene.	Fell asleep upon the green.[5]
	The maidens durst hir nought awake,	The maidens did not dare wake her,
	Bot lete hir ligge and rest take.	But let her lie and take her rest.
	So sche slepe til after none,	So she slept until after noon,
	That undertide was al y-done.	When the morning tide had passed.
	Ac, as sone as sche gan awake,	But as soon as she began to awaken,
	Sche crid, and lothli bere gan make;	She cried out, making a hideous face.
	Sche froted hir honden and hir fete,	She wrung her hands and her feet,
80	And crached hir visage - it bled wete -	And clawed her face until it bled.
	Hir riche robe hye al to-rett	She tore apart her rich robes
	And was reveyd out of hir wit.	And was driven out of her wits.
	The two maidens hir biside	The two maidens beside her
	No durst with hir no leng abide,	Did not dare to stay with her
	Bot ourn to the palays ful right	But ran to the palace straightaway
	And told bothe squier and knight	And told both squire and knight
	That her quen awede wold,	That their queen was going mad,
	And bad hem go and hir at-hold.	And begged them to go and take hold of her.
	Knightes urn and levedis also,	Knights ran, and ladies with them,
90	Damisels sexti and mo.	Damsels numbering sixty and more.
	In the orchard to the quen hye come,	They came to the queen in the orchard
	And her up in her armes nome,	And took her up in their arms,
	And brought hir to bed atte last,	And finally brought her to bed
	And held hir there fine fast.	And bound her there tightly.
	Ac ever she held in o cri	But she continually made one cry
	And wold up and owy.	And strained to rise and get away.
	When Orfeo herd that tiding	When Orfeo heard the news,
	Never him nas wers for nothing.	He was never so grieved by anything.
	He come with knightes tene	He came with ten knights
100	To chaumber, right bifor the quene,	To the chamber, right by the queen,
	And bi-held, and seyd with grete pité,	And beheld her and said with great pity,
	"O lef liif, what is te,	"Oh, dear one, what is wrong?
	That ever yete hast ben so stille	You have always been so mild,
	And now gredest wonder schille?	And now your voice is strange and shrill.
	Thy bodi, that was so white y-core,	Your body, which was so beautifully fair,
	With thine nailes is all to-tore.	Is clawed to pieces by your nails.
	Allas! thy rode, that was so red,	Alas! Your face, which was so bright,[6]
	Is al wan, as thou were ded;	Is all ashen, as if you were dead.
	And also thine fingres smale	And your delicate fingers as well

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[4] *Ympe-tre*: English gardens were highly sculpted versions of nature, and one of the gardener's arts were trees grafted from two species. The blurring of two tree-types also perhaps symbolizes the meeting of the real and fairy worlds. Seth Lerer, "Artifice and Artistry in *Sir Orfeo*," *Speculum* 60:1 (1985): 95-6.

[5] Sleeping under a tree in the morning asks for trouble in romance as "it openly invited the intervention of fairies and placed one in their power." Thomas J. Garbaty, *Sir Orfeo*, *Medieval English Literature* (Long Grove, Il: Waveland, 1984), note to lines 69-72. See also *Sir Launfal* for a similar occurence. One of the jokes of *Sir Thopas* is that Thopas intentionally sleeps outside in order to meet the fairy queen but nothing happens.

[6] *Thy rode, that was so red*: Red cheeks with a white complexion was a sign of medieval beauty, as it marked a woman aristocratic enough to not need to labor outside. Nevertheless, Sir Orfeo evidently sees that the queen is unhealthily pale from shock.

110	Beth al blodi and al pale.	Are all bloody and pale.
	Allas! thy lovesum eyyen to	Alas! Your two lovely eyes
	Loketh so man doth on his fo!	Look like a man does on his enemy.
	A, dame, ich biseche, merci!	Oh, lady, have mercy on us!
	Lete ben al this reweful cri,	Let go all this pitiful crying
	And tel me what the is, and hou,	And tell me what troubles you, and how,
	And what thing may the help now."	And what thing will help you now."
	Tho lay sche stille atte last	At last she lay still
	And gan to wepe swithe fast,	And immediately began to sob,
	And seyd thus the King to:	And said this to the king:
120	"Allas, mi lord, Sir Orfeo!	"Alas, my lord, Sir Orfeo!
	Sethen we first togider were,	Since we were first together, we have
	Ones wroth never we nere;	Never once been angry with each other,
	Bot ever ich have yloved the	But I have always loved you
	As mi liif and so thou me;	As much as my life, and you the same.
	Ac now we mot delen ato;	But now we must be split apart.
	Do thi best, for y mot go."	Do your best, for I must go!"
	"Allas!" quath he, "forlorn icham!	"Alas!" he shouted. "I am lost!
	Whider wiltow go, and to wham?	Where will you go, and to who?
	Whider thou gost, ichil with the,	Wherever you go, I will follow,
130	And whider y go, thou schalt with me."	And wherever I go, you will be with me."[7]
	"Nay, nay, Sir, that nought nis!	"No, no, sir, it cannot be!
	Ichil the telle al hou it is:	I will tell you all about it.
	As ich lay this undertide	As I lay down this morning
	And slepe under our orchardside,	And slept under the shade of our orchard,
	Ther come to me to fair knightes,	Two noble knights came to me,
	Wele y-armed al to rightes,	Well-armed, as was proper,
	And bad me comen an heighing	And requested that I come in haste
	And speke with her lord the king.	To speak with their lord, the king.
	And ich answerd at wordes bold,	I answered with bold words
140	Y durst nought, no y nold.	That I did not dare to, nor did I want to.
	Thai priked oyain as thai might drive;	They rode away as fast as they could.
	Tho com her king, also blive,	Then their king came, just as quickly,
	With an hundred knightes and mo,	With a hundred knights and more,
	And damisels an hundred also,	And a hundred damsels as well,
	Al on snowe-white stedes;	All on snow-white steeds,
	As white as milke were her wedes.	With their clothes as white as milk.
	Y no seighe never yete bifore	I never before saw
	So fair creatours y-core.	Such perfectly fair creatures!
	The king hadde a croun on hed;	The king had a crown on his head.
150	It nas of silver, no of gold red,	It was not silver, nor red gold,
	Ac it was of a precious ston -	But of a precious stone.
	As bright as the sonne it schon.	It shone as bright as the sun!
	And as son as he to me cam,	And as soon as he came to me,
	Wold ich, nold ich, he me nam,	Whether I liked it or not, he took me,
	And made me with him ride	And made me ride with him
	Opon a palfray bi his side;	Upon a palfrey by his side.
	And brought me to his palays,	He brought me to his palace,
	Wele atird in ich ways,	Which was well-decorated in every way,

[7] Sir Orfeo repeats Ruth 1:16. TEAMS notes that although Ruth is speaking to her mother-in-law Naomi, "the lines were frequently associated with holy matrimony."

	And schewed me castels and tours,	And showed me castles and towers,
160	Rivers, forestes, frith with flours,	Rivers, forests, woods with flowers,
	And his riche stedes ichon.	And each one of his fine steeds.
	And sethen me brought oyain hom	And after he brought me back home
	Into our owhen orchard,	Into our own orchard,
	And said to me thus afterward,	And said this to me after:
	"'Loke, dame, tomorwe thatow be	'See to it, madam, that tomorrow
	Right here under this ympe-tre,	You are right here under this tree,
	And than thou schalt with ous go	And then you will go with us
	And live with ous evermo.	And live with us forever.
	And yif thou makest ous y-let,	And if you make difficulties for us,
170	Whar thou be, thou worst y-fet,	Wherever you are, you will be fetched,
	And totore thine limes al	And your limbs all ripped apart,
	That nothing help the no schal;	So that nothing will help you at all.
	And thei thou best so totorn,	And even if you are so torn,
	Yete thou worst with ous y-born."'	You will still be carried away with us.'"
	When King Orfeo herd this cas,	When King Orfeo had heard this matter,
	"O we!" quath he, "Allas, allas!	"Oh, woe," he exclaimed, "alas, alas!
	Lever me were to lete mi liif	I would rather lose my life
	Than thus to lese the quen, mi wiif!"	Than lose the queen, my wife, in this way!"
	He asked conseyl at ich man,	He asked for counsel from each man,
180	Ac no man him help no can.	But no one could help him.
	Amorwe the undertide is come	The next day, when morning had come,
	And Orfeo hath his armes y-nome,	Orfeo took up his arms
	And wele ten hundred knightes with him,	And a good thousand knights with him,
	Ich y-armed, stout and grim;	Each well-armed, strong, and fierce.
	And with the quen wenten he	And with the queen he went
	Right unto that ympe-tre.	Right under that orchard tree.
	Thai made scheltrom in ich a side	They made a shield wall on each side[8]
	And sayd thai wold there abide	And said they would stand there
	And dye ther everichon,	And die to the last man
190	Er the quen schuld fram hem gon.	Before the queen would go from them.
	Ac yete amiddes hem ful right	But yet from right in the middle of them,
	The quen was oway y-twight,	The queen was snatched away,
	With fairi forth y-nome.	Taken from them by fairies.
	Men wist never wher sche was bicome.	Men did not know where she had gone.
	Tho was ther criing, wepe and wo!	Then there was crying, weeping, and woe!
	The king into his chaumber is go,	The king went to his chamber
	And oft swoned opon the ston,	And continually fell on the floor,
	And made swiche diol and swiche mon	And made such mourning and moaning
	That neighe his liif was y-spent -	That his life seemed nearly spent,
200	Ther was non amendement.	For there was no remedy.
	He cleped togider his barouns,	He called together his barons,
	Erls, lordes of renouns,	Earls, and lords of renown,
	And when thai al y-comen were,	And when they had all arrived,
	"Lordinges," he said, "bifor you here	"Lordings," he said, "before you all here,
	Ich ordainy min heighe steward	I appoint my high steward
	To wite mi kingdom afterward;	To rule my kingdom from here on.
	In mi stede ben he schal	In my place he will have authority

[8] *Scheltrom*: A "shield wall," the defense tactic of the Anglo-Saxon forces used at Hastings (Garbaty, note to 187).

	To kepe mi londes overal.	To manage all my lands.
	For now ichave mi quen y-lore,	For now I have lost my queen,
210	The fairest levedi that ever was bore,	The fairest lady who was ever born.
	Never eft y nil no woman se.	Never again will I see a woman!
	Into wildernes ichil te	I will go into the wilderness
	And live ther evermore	And live there forevermore,
	With wilde bestes in holtes hore;	With wild beasts in dark forests.
	And when ye understond that y be spent,	And when you learn that I am dead,
	Make you than a parlement,	Then call a parliament
	And chese you a newe king.	And choose yourselves a new king.
	Now doth your best with al mi thing."	Now do your best with all my affairs."
	Tho was ther wepeing in the halle	There was weeping in the hall,
220	And grete cri among hem alle;	And a great cry among them all.
	Unnethe might old or yong	Young and old could hardly speak
	For wepeing speke a word with tong.	A word with their tongue for weeping.
	Thai kneled adoun al y-fere	They kneeled down all together,
	And praid him, yif his wille were,	And pleaded with him, if it were his will,
	That he no schuld nought fram hem go.	That he would not desert them.
	"Do way!" quath he, "It schal be so!"	"Enough!" he said, "It shall be so!"
	Al his kingdom he forsoke;	He abandoned all his kingdom,
	Bot a sclavin on him he toke.	Taking only a pilgrim's cloak.
	He no hadde kirtel no hode,	He had neither tunic nor hood,
230	Schert, ne no nother gode,	Nor a shirt, nor any other goods.
	Bot his harp he tok algate	He continually held only his harp
	And dede him barfot out atte gate;	And passed barefoot by the gate.
	No man most with him go.	No man might go with him.
	O way! What ther was wepe and wo,	Alas! What weeping and woe there was
	When he that hadde ben king with croun	When he, who had been a king with a crown,
	Went so poverlich out of toun!	Went out of town in such poverty.
	Thurth wode and over heth	He walked through woods and bushes
	Into the wildernes he geth.	Into the wilderness.[9]
	Nothing he fint that him is ays,	He found nothing that would comfort him,
240	Bot ever he liveth in gret malais.	But always lived in great hardship.
	He that hadde y-werd the fowe and griis,	He who had worn rich and colorful furs,[10]
	And on bed the purper biis,	And slept on purple sheets in bed,
	Now on hard hethe he lith,	Now slept on the hard brush,
	With leves and gresse he him writh.	With leaves and grass to cover himself.
	He that hadde had castels and tours,	He who had castles and towers, now had
	River, forest, frith with flours,	Rivers, forests, and woods with flowers.
	Now, thei it comenci to snewe and frese,	Now that it began to snow and freeze,
	This king mot make his bed in mese.	This king had to make his bed in moss.
	He that had y-had knightes of priis	He who had knights of great estate,
250	Bifor him kneland, and levedis,	Kneeling before him with ladies,

[9] Why Orfeo enters an ascetic life in the woods is disputed. It may be an act of despair, atonement, or an expression of love for his wife. Gros Louis argues that Orfeo is not searching for Herodis: "The ten years he spends in the wilderness constitute a kind of penance, and because of it, Orfeo receives a gift of grace - Heurodis is returned to him" (247). Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis, "The Significance of Sir Orfeo's Self-Exile," *Review of English Studies* 18 (1967): 245-52. But see lines 129-30.

[10] *The fowe and griis*: The MED defines *fowe* as a "parti-colored fur" and *griis* as possibly fur from "the Russian grey squirrel in winter." The phrase shows up in numerous texts and evidently suggests warm and luxurious clothing.

	Now seth he nothing that him liketh,	Now saw nothing he liked
	Bot wilde wormes bi him striketh.	But wild serpents slithering past him.
	He that had y-had plenté	He who had plenty
	Of mete and drink, of ich deynté,	Of food and drink, of each delicacy,
	Now may he al day digge and wrote	Now had to dig and grub all day
	Er he finde his fille of rote.	Before he could find his fill of roots.
	In somer he liveth bi wild frut,	In summer he lived on wild fruit
	And berien bot gode lite;	And almost worthless berries.
	In winter may he nothing finde	In winter he could find nothing
260	Bot rote, grases, and the rinde.	But roots, grass, and bark.
	Al his bodi was oway dwine	All of his body dwindled away
	For missays, and al to-chine.	From hardship, and was all chapped.
	Lord! who may telle the sore	Lord, who could tell of the sorrow
	This king sufferd ten yere and more?	This king suffered for ten years and more?
	His here of his berd, blac and rowe,	The hair on his beard, dark and rough,
	To his girdel-stede was growe.	Had grown down to his waist.
	His harp, whereon was al his gle,	His harp, which was his only pleasure,
	He hidde in an holwe tre;	He hid in a hollow tree.
	And when the weder was clere and bright,	And when the weather was clear and bright,
270	He toke his harp to him wel right	He immediately took up his harp
	And harped at his owhen wille.	And played at his own will.
	Into alle the wode the soun gan schille,	The music resounded into the woods
	That alle the wilde bestes that ther beth	So that all the wild beasts that were there
	For joie abouten him thai teth,	Gathered around him for joy,
	And alle the foules that ther were	And all the birds that were there came,
	Come and sete on ich a brere	And each sat on a branch
	To here his harping a-fine -	To hear his fine harping,
	So miche melody was therin;	For there was so much melody there.
	And when he his harping lete wold,	And when he would stop playing,
280	No best bi him abide nold.	No beast would remain with him.
	He might se him bisides,	He seemed to see him nearby—
	Oft in hot undertides,	Often on warm mornings—
	The king o fairy with his rout	The king of fairyland with his company,
	Com to hunt him al about	Who had come to hunt around him,
	With dim cri and bloweing,	With distant cries and blowing of horns,
	And houndes also with him berking;	And barking hounds also with him.
	Ac no best thai no nome,	But they took no game,
	No never he nist whider they bicome	Nor did he ever know where they went.
	And other while he might him se	And at other times Orfeo might see him
290	As a gret ost bi him te,	As a great army passed by,
	Wele atourned, ten hundred knightes,	Well equipped, with a thousand knights,
	Ich y-armed to his rightes,	Each armed according to rights,
	Of cuntenaunce stout and fers,	With a stout and fierce appearance,
	With mani desplaid baners,	Each holding his drawn sword,
	And ich his swerd y-drawe hold -	And with many banners unfurled.
	Ac never he nist whider thai wold.	But he never knew where they were going.
	And otherwile he seighe other thing:	And sometimes he saw other things,
	Knightes and levedis com daunceing	Knights and ladies who came dancing
	In queynt atire, gisely,	In strange attire, elegantly
300	Queynt pas and softly;	And softly, with skilful steps.
	Tabours and trunpes yede hem bi,	Drums and trumpets went by them,
	And al maner menstraci.	And all types of musicians.
	And on a day he seighe him biside	And on one day he saw beside him
	Sexti levedis on hors ride,	Sixty ladies riding on horses,

	Gentil and jolif as brid on ris;	As joyful and fair as birds on boughs.
	Nought o man amonges hem ther nis;	Not one man was among them.
	And ich a faucoun on hond bere,	And each bore a falcon on her hand,
	And riden on haukin bi o rivere.	And rode on, hawking by a river.
	Of game thai founde wel gode haunt -	They found game in great plenty,
310	Maulardes, hayroun, and cormeraunt;	Mallards, herons, and cormorants.
	The foules of the water ariseth,	The birds of the water rose up,
	The faucouns hem wele deviseth;	And the falcons marked them precisely.
	Ich faucoun his pray slough -	Each falcon killed its prey.
	That seigh Orfeo, and lough:	Orfeo saw that and laughed.
	"Parfay!" quath he, "ther is fair game;	"By my faith," he said, "there's good sporting!
	Thider ichil, bi Godes name;	I'll go there, by God's name.
	Ich was y-won swiche werk to se!"	I would like to see such skill!"
	He aros, and thider gan te.	He got up, and went toward them.
	To a levedi he was y-come,	He came up to a lady,
320	Biheld, and hath wele undernome,	Beheld her, and realized clearly,
	And seth bi al thing that it is	And saw, by all things, that it was
	His owhen quen, Dam Heurodis.	His own queen, Lady Herodis.
	Yern he biheld hir, and sche him eke,	He gazed at her earnestly, and she did also.
	Ac noither to other a word no speke;	But neither said a word to the other.[11]
	For messais that sche on him seighe,	For the sadness that she saw in him,
	That had ben so riche and so heighe,	Who had been so rich and so exalted,
	The teres fel out of her eighe.	The tears fell out of her eyes.
	The other levedis this y-seighe	The other ladies saw this
	And maked hir oway to ride -	And made her ride away.
330	Sche most with him no lenger abide.	She could no longer stay with him.
	"Allas!" quath he, "now me is wo!"	"Alas!" he said, "now woe is me!
	Whi nil deth now me slo?	Why will death not take me?
	Allas, wreche, that y no might	Alas, wretch, that I do not
	Dye now after this sight!	Die now after this sight!
	Allas! to long last mi liif,	Alas! My life lasts too long
	When y no dar nought with mi wiif,	When I dare not do anything with my wife,
	No hye to me, o word speke.	Nor her with me, nor speak a word.
	Allas! Whi nil min hert breke!	Alas! Why does my heart not break!
	Parfay!" quath he, "tide wat bitide,	By my faith," he cried, "come what may,
340	Whiderso this levedis ride,	Wherever these ladies are riding,
	The selve way ichil streche -	I will hurry the same way.
	Of liif no deth me no reche."	I do not care about life or death."
	His sclavain he dede on also spac	He threw on his cloak as quickly,
	And henge his harp opon his bac,	And hung his harp on his back,
	And had wel gode wil to gon -	And was fully set on going.
	He no spard noither stub no ston.	He spared neither stump nor stone.[12]
	In at a roche the levedis rideth,	The ladies rode into a cliffside,
	And he after, and nought abideth.	And he followed and did not wait.
	When he was in the roche y-go,	When he had gone into the cave
350	Wele thre mile other mo,	Well over three miles,

[11] *Ac noither to other a word no speke*: Garbaty suggests an echo of the original Orpheus-Eurydice story in this "magic communication ban," but adds that in folklore mortals could not address fairies or they might disappear (note to 324).

[12] *He no spard noither stub no ston*: He did not spare his foot from hitting stump or stone, i.e. he ran with abandon. Compare *Havelock* (899), "Sparede he neyther tos ne heles."

	He com into a fair cuntray	He came into a fair country,
	As bright so sonne on somers day,	As bright as the sun on a summer's day,
	Smothe and plain and al grene -	Smooth and flat and all green.
	Hille no dale nas ther non y-sene.	Neither hill nor dale was to be seen.
	Amidde the lond a castel he sighe,	In the middle of the land he saw a castle,
	Riche and real and wonder heighe.	Rich and royal and incredibly high.
	Al the utmast wal	All of the outside wall
	Was clere and schine as cristal;	Was as clear and shining as crystal.
	An hundred tours ther were about,	A hundred towers surrounded it,
360	Degiselich and bataild stout.	With wondrous and firm battlements.[13]
	The butras com out of the diche	The supports rising out of the moat
	Of rede gold y-arched riche.	Were richly arched with red gold.
	The vousour was avowed al	The vaulted roofs were all adorned
	Of ich maner divers aumal.	With every kind of different finish.[14]
	Within ther wer wide wones,	There were spacious chambers inside,
	Al of precious stones;	All of precious stones.
	The werst piler on to biholde	The least pillar to look upon
	Was al of burnist gold.	Was all of burnished gold.
	Al that lond was ever light,	All the land was always light,
370	For when it schuld be therk and night,	For when it should have been dark and night,
	The riche stones light gonne	The rich stones shone
	As bright as doth at none the sonne.	As bright as the sun at noon.
	No man may telle, no thenche in thought,	No man could describe, nor imagine in thought,
	The riche werk that ther was wrought.	The rich work that was crafted there.
	Bi al thing him think that it is	All these things made him believe that it was
	The proude court of Paradis.	The proud court of Paradise.
	In this castel the levedis alight;	The ladies dismounted in this castle,
	He wold in after, yif he might.	And he wished to follow in, if he might.
	Orfeo knokketh atte gate;	Orfeo knocked on the gate.
380	The porter was redi therate	The porter was ready there
	And asked what he wold hav y-do.	And asked what he wanted.
	"Parfay!" quath he, "icham a minstrel, lo!	"By my faith," he said, "see, I am a minstrel.
	To solas thi lord with mi gle,	I am here to entertain your lord with music,
	Yif his swete wille be."	If it is his sweet will."
	The porter undede the gate anon	The porter undid the gate at once
	And lete him into the castel gon.	And let him go into the castle.
	Than he gan bihold about al,	Then he began to look all about,
	And seighe liggeand within the wal	And saw lying within the walls
	Of folk that were thider y-brought	People who were brought there,
390	And thought dede, and nare nought.	Who were thought dead, but were not.
	Sum stode withouten hade,	Some stood without a head,
	And sum non armes nade,	And some had no arms,
	And sum thurth the bodi hadde wounde,	And some had wounds through their bodies,

[13] *Bataild*: The towers had battlements, parapets, or other military or ornamental indentations in the walls (TEAMS and MED). *Degiselich*, perhaps "strange or wonderful," has no other citation besides *Orfeo* in the MED.

[14] *Divers aumal*: Probably *enamel*. Garbaty reads *animal*, suggesting painted creatures. The Auchinleck scribe does not dot *i*'s and so on the page it is a maddening *aumal*. Lerer argues that an enamel-like look achieved by painting on glass or foil was popular in late medieval architecture and calls the rendering *animal* "nonsensical." Lerer 99-100 and E. W. Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century* (Oxford: University Press, 1950), 407.

	And sum lay wode, y-bounde,	And some lay crazed in restraints,
	And sum armed on hors sete,	And some sat armed on horses,
	And sum astrangled as thai ete;	And some choked as they ate,
	And sum were in water adreynt,	And some were drowned in water,
	And sum with fire al forschreynt.	And some were burned up in fire.
	Wives ther lay on childe bedde,	Wives lay there in childbirth,
400	Sum ded and sum awedde,	Some of them dead and others driven mad,
	And wonder fele ther lay bisides	And an incredible number lay nearby,
	Right as thai slepe her undertides;	Just as if they were sleeping in the morning.
	Eche was thus in this warld y-nome,	Each was taken into this world,
	With fairi thider y-come.	Brought there by fairies.
	Ther he seighe his owhen wiif,	There he saw his own wife,
	Dame Heurodis, his lef liif,	Lady Herodis, his dear one,
	Slepe under an ympe-tre -	Sleeping under an orchard tree.
	Bi her clothes he knewe that it was he.	He knew by her clothes that it was she.
	And when he hadde bihold this mervails alle,	And when he had seen all these marvels,
410	He went into the kinges halle.	He went into the king's hall.
	Than seighe he ther a semly sight,	There he saw a stately sight,
	A tabernacle blisseful and bright,	A beautiful and bright canopy,
	Therin her maister king sete	Which their master the king sat under
	And her quen, fair and swete.	With their queen, fair and sweet.
	Her crounes, her clothes schine so bright	Her crown and her clothes shone so bright
	That unnethe bihold he him might.	That he could scarcely look upon her.
	When he hadde biholden al that thing,	When he had seen all these things,
	He kneled adoun bifor the king:	He knelt down before the king.
	"O lord," he seyd, "yif it thi wille were,	"O lord," he said, "if it is your will,
420	Mi menstraci thou schust y-here."	I would like you to hear my music."
	The king answered, "What man artow,	The king answered, "What sort of man
	That art hider y-comen now?	Are you who has come here now?
	Ich, no non that is with me,	Neither I nor anyone who is with me
	No sent never after the.	Ever sent for you!
	Sethen that ich here regni gan,	Since the time I began my reign,
	Y no fond never so folehardi man	I never met such a foolhardy man
	That hider to ous durst wende	Who dared to come to us,
	Bot that ic him wald ofsende."	Unless I wished him sent."
	"Lord," quath he, "trowe ful wel,	"Lord," he answered, "believe me well,
430	Y nam bot a pover menstrel;	I am only a poor minstrel.
	And, sir, it is the maner of ous	And sir, it is our practice
	To seche mani a lordes hous -	To seek many lord's houses.
	Thei we nought welcom no be,	Even if we are not welcomed,
	Yete we mot proferi forth our gle."	We must still offer our entertainment."
	Bifor the king he sat adoun	He sat down before the king
	And tok his harp so miri of soun,	And took his harp, of such merry sound,
	And tempreth his harp, as he wele can,	And tuned it, as he could skillfully,
	And blisseful notes he ther gan,	And began to play blissful notes,
	That al that in the palays were	So that all who were in the palace
440	Com to him forto here,	Came to hear him
	And liggeth adoun to his fete -	And lay down by his feet,
	Hem thenketh his melody so swete.	For they thought his melody so sweet.
	The king herkneth and sitt ful stille;	The king listened and sat quietly.
	To here his gle he hath gode wille.	He was very attentive to hear his playing
	Gode bourde he hadde of his gle;	And took great pleasure in his music.
	The riche quen also hadde he.	The rich queen did as well.
	When he hadde stint his harping,	When he had stopped his harping,

	Than seyd to him the king,	The king said to him,
	"Menstrel, me liketh wel thi gle.	"Minstrel, I'm well pleased with your songs.
450	Now aske of me what it be,	Now ask me for whatever you wish,
	Largelich ichil the pay;	And I will reward you generously.
	Now speke, and tow might asay."	Now speak, if you wish to prove it."
	"Sir," he seyd, "ich biseche the	"Sire," he said, "I beg of you
	Thatow woldest give me	That you would give me
	That ich levedi, bright on ble,	That lady with the shining face,
	That slepeth under the ympe-tree."	Who sleeps under the orchard tree."
	"Nay!" quath the king, "that nought nere!	"No," said the king, "that could never be!
	A sori couple of you it were,	You would make a sorry couple.
	For thou art lene, rowe and blac,	For you are haggard, rough, and dirty,
460	And sche is lovesum, withouten lac;	And she is lovely, without blemish.
	A lothlich thing it were, forthi,	It would be a loathsome thing
	To sen hir in thi compayni."	To see her in your company!"
	"O sir!" he seyd, "gentil king,	"Oh, sire," he said, "gracious king,
	Yete were it a wele fouler thing	It would be a much fouler thing
	To here a lesing of thi mouthe!	To hear a falsehood from your mouth!
	So, sir, as ye seyd nouthe,	For sire, as you said just now,
	What ich wold aski, have y schold,	I should ask for what I desire,
	And nedes thou most thi word hold."	And by necessity you must keep your word."[15]
	The king seyd, "Sethen it is so,	The king sighed, "Since it is so,
470	Take hir bi the hond and go;	Take her by the hand and go.
	Of hir ichil thatow be blithe."	I hope that you will be pleased with her."
	He kneled adoun and thonked him swithe.	He knelt down and thanked him quickly.
	His wiif he tok bi the hond,	He took his wife by the hand,
	And dede him swithe out of that lond,	And swiftly took himself out of that land,
	And went him out of that thede -	And left that country.
	Right as he come, the way he yede.	He returned the same way he came.
	So long he hath the way y-nome	He made his way
	To Winchester he is y-come,	Until they came to Winchester,
	That was his owhen cité;	Which was his own city.
480	Ac no man knewe that it was he.	But no man knew that it was him.
	No forther than the tounes ende	To avoid being recognized, he did not
	For knoweleche no durst he wende,	Dare go further than the edge of town,
	Bot with a begger, y-bilt ful narwe,	But took his lodging
	Ther he tok his herbarwe	In a beggar's home, built shabbily,
	To him and to his owhen wiif	For him and his own wife,
	As a minstrel of pover liif,	Posing as a minstrel with a poor living.
	And asked tidinges of that lond,	He asked for news of that land,
	And who the kingdom held in hond.	And about who held the kingdom in hand.
	The pover begger in his cote	The poor beggar in his cottage
490	Told him everich a grot:	Told him every detail,
	Hou her quen was stole owy,	How their queen was stolen away
	Ten yer gon, with fairy,	By fairies ten years earlier,
	And hou her king en exile yede,	And how their king went into self-exile,

[15] As TEAMS notes, a promise must be kept, especially by a king, as "fairyland abides by the customs of the ideal medieval court." The Rash Promise is common in folklore and even exists in scripture: in Mark 6:22-28 Herod makes a similar blank cheque to Herodias, who asks for John the Baptist's head. Herod grieves but consents. Orpheo's wiliness is especially 'Greek' here as he maneuvers the king into the bargain and then quickly leaves.

	But no man nist in wiche thede;	But no man knew in which country;
	And how the steward the lond gan hold,	And how the steward had managed the land,
	And other mani thinges him told.	And many other things.
	Amorwe, oyain nonetide,	The next morning, near noon,
	He maked his wiif ther abide;	Orfeo had his wife stay there.
	The beggers clothes he borwed anon	He borrowed the beggar's clothes
500	And heng his harp his rigge opon,	And hung his harp on his back,
	And went him into that cité	And went into the city
	That men might him bihold and se.	So that men might behold him and see.
	Erls and barouns bold,	Earls and bold barons, townsmen and
	Burjays and levedis him gun bihold.	Ladies, all began to notice him.
	"Lo!" thai seyd, "swiche a man!	"Look," they said, "at such a man!
	Hou long the here hongeth him opan!	See how long the hair hangs on him!
	Lo! Hou his berd hongeth to his kne!	Look how his beard comes to his knee!
	He is y-clongen also a tre!"	He is as gnarled as a tree!"
	And, as he yede in the strete,	And then, as he walked in the street,
510	With his steward he gan mete,	He met up with his steward,
	And loude he sett on him a crie:	And he cried out to him loudly,
	"Sir steward!" he seyd, "merci!	"Sir steward," he said, "have pity!
	Icham an harpour of hethenisse;	I am a harpist from heathen lands.
	Help me now in this destresse!"	Help me now in my distress!"
	The steward seyd, "Com with me, come;	The steward said, "Come with me, come.
	Of that ichave, thou schalt have some.	I will share with you from what I have.
	Everich gode harpour is welcom me to	Every good harpist is welcome here
	For mi lordes love, Sir Orfeo."	For the love of my lord, Sir Orfeo."[16]
	In the castel the steward sat atte mete,	The steward sat in the castle at dinner,
520	And mani lording was bi him sete;	And many lords were seated by him.
	Ther were trompours and tabourers,	There were trumpet players and drummers,
	Harpours fele, and crouders -	Lute players, and many harpists.
	Miche melody thai maked alle.	They all made a rich melody,
	And Orfeo sat stille in the halle	And Orfeo sat quietly in the hall
	And herkneth; when thai ben al stille,	And listened. When they were all still,
	He toke his harp and tempred schille;	He took his harp and tuned it firmly.
	The blissefulest notes he harped there	There he harped the most beautiful notes
	That ever ani man y-herd with ere -	That any man ever heard with his ears.
	Ich man liked wele his gle.	Each man was pleased with his music.
530	The steward biheld and gan y-se,	The steward watched and began to notice
	And knewe the harp als blive.	And recognized the harp at once.
	"Menstrel!" he seyd, "so mot thou thrive,	"Minstrel," he said, "as you live and die,
	Where hadestow this harp, and hou?	Where did you get this harp, and how?
	Y pray that thou me telle now."	I ask that you tell me now."
	"Lord," quath he, "in uncouthe thede	"My lord," he answered, "as I wandered
	Thurth a wildernes as y yede,	Through the wilderness in a strange land,
	Ther y founde in a dale	There I saw in a valley
	With lyouns a man totorn smale,	A man torn to tiny pieces by a lion,
	And wolves him frete with teth so scharp.	And gobbled by wolves with teeth so sharp!
540	Bi him y fond this ich harp;	Beside him I found this same harp.

[16] Rather than the usual "false steward" motif of romance, here the steward is loyal and upright. TEAMS notes the resemblance to the faithful servant of Luke 12:35-46. In the fragments of the analogous Scottish *King Orphius* the steward is the king's nephew. Felicity Riddy, "The Uses of the Past in *Sir Orfeo*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 6 (1976): 7.

	Wele ten yere it is y-go."	It was a good ten years ago."
	"O!" quath the steward, "now me is wo!	"Oh," exclaimed the steward, "now I am in
	That was mi lord, Sir Orfeo!	Misery! That was my lord, Sir Orfeo!
	Allas, wreche, what schal y do,	Alas, wretch, what shall I do
	That have swiche a lord y-lore?	Now that I have lost such a lord!
	A, way that ich was y-bore!	Oh, woe that I was ever born,
	That him was so hard grace y-yarked,	That such hard grace was fated for him
	And so vile deth y-marked!"	And such a vile death ordained!"
	Adoun he fel aswon to grounde;	He fell faint to the ground.
550	His barouns him tok up in that stounde	His barons lifted him up at that instant
	And telleth him how it geth -	And said it was the way of the world.
	"It is no bot of mannes deth!"	"There is no remedy for man's death!"
	King Orfeo knewe wele bi than	By this King Orfeo knew well
	His steward was a trewe man	That his steward was a true man
	And loved him as he aught to do,	Who loved him as he ought to do,
	And stont up, and seyt thus, "Lo,	And he stood up and said, "Look,
	Steward, herkne now this thing:	Steward, listen now to my words:
	Yif ich were Orfeo the king,	If I were Orfeo the king,
	And hadde y-suffred ful yore	And had suffered long ago
560	In wildernisse miche sore,	In the wilderness with great sorrow,
	And hadde ywon mi quen o-wy	And had won back my queen
	Out of the lond of fairy,	Out of the land of fairies,
	And hadde y-brought the levedi hende	And had brought the gracious lady
	Right here to the tounes ende,	Right here to the town's borders,
	And with a begger her in y-nome,	And had left her with a beggar,
	And were mi-self hider y-come	And had come here myself,
	Poverlich to the, thus stille,	In poverty to you, in that way still,
	For to asay thi gode wille,	In order to test your good will,
	And ich founde the thus trewe,	And I found you so faithful,
570	Thou no schust it never rewe.	You would never regret it.
	Sikerlich, for love or ay,	For certain, for love or fear,
	Thou schust be king after mi day;	You would be king after my day!
	And yif thou of mi deth hadest ben blithe,	But if you were pleased with my death,
	Thou schust have voided, also swithe."	You would as quickly be banished."
	Tho all tho that therin sete	When all those sitting there
	That it was King Orfeo underyete,	Realized that he was King Orfeo,
	And the steward him wele knewe -	And the steward recognized him in full,
	Over and over the bord he threwe,	He turned over the table boards[17]
	And fel adoun to his fet;	And fell down to his feet.
580	So dede everich lord that ther sete,	Every lord that sat there did the same,
	And all thai seyd at o criing:	And they all said in one voice,
	"Ye beth our lord, sir, and our king!"	"You are our lord, sire, and our king!"
	Glad thai were of his live;	They were glad of him being alive.
	To chaumber thai ladde him als belive	They brought him at once to a chamber
	And bathed him and schaved his berd,	And bathed him and shaved his beard,
	And tired him as a king apert;	And clothed him as a proper king.
	And sethen, with gret processioun,	And then, with great ceremony,
	Thai brought the quen into the toun	They brought the queen into town
	With al maner menstraci -	With all kinds of music.

[17] *Over and over the bord he threwe*: the poet likely wishes to emphasize that rather than walking around a long row of tables, the steward instantly throws aside the boards to rush across the stands to Orfeo.

590	Lord! ther was grete melody!	Lord, there was a great melody!
	For joie thai wepe with her eighe	Whoever saw them come back safe
	That hem so sounde y-comen seighe.	Wept with their eyes for joy.
	Now King Orfeo newe coround is,	Now King Orfeo was newly crowned
	And his quen, Dame Heurodis,	With his queen, Dame Herodis,
	And lived long afterward,	And they lived long afterward,
	And sethen was king the steward.	And later the steward was king.
	Harpours in Bretaine after than	After then the harpists in Brittany
	Herd hou this mervaile bigan,	Heard about this marvelous story,
	And made herof a lay of gode likeing,	And made a lay of great delight from it,
600	And nempned it after the king.	And named it after the king.
	That lay "Orfeo" is y-hote;	That lay is called *Sir Orfeo*.
	Gode is the lay, swete is the note.	The tale is good, and the notes are sweet.
	Thus com Sir Orfeo out of his care:	Thus Sir Orfeo came out of his troubles.
	God graunt ous alle wele to fare! Amen!	May God grant that we fare as well! Amen.
605	Explicit	The End

Sex and Consequences in *Sir Degare* and *Sir Orfeo*

Despite the harsh post-Reformation and modern belief that the medieval Catholic church could do no good, there were no doubt capable and well-intentioned administrators in holy offices and honest servants such as Chaucer's Parson. Although most of our written knowledge comes filtered through the lens of clerics, it was an age of general belief which permeated medieval values and culture. Throughout these chapters I have at times endeavored to show how such works as *Amis and Amiloun* or *Bevis of Hampton* symbolize, depict, or reflect religious themes. Yet other subject matters were available, and poets did not at least in practice have the strictures operant in the Muslim world. Directly anti-religious texts were not an option, though constructively critical depictions of the church such as *Piers Plowman* or *Gamelyn* were, and stories non-religious but still set in a Christian (or Christianized) milieu such as bawdy riddles and fabliaux also circulated with reasonable liberty.

In interpreting *Sir Orfeo* Doob sees Orfeo as a sort of holy wild man and reads the poem as "shaped by the Christian pattern of Fall, Redemption, and Judgment,"[1] though not strictly as direct allegory. The story has non-Christian roots in Ovid and Virgil, perhaps filtered through translations of its summary in Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* (III.Metr. xii). Yet the poet takes the usual romance liberties in recasting Orpheus into a medieval realm, ending with a benediction. *Sir Degare* also has hagiographic hints in depicting Degare as a foundling raised by hermits, with possible

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[1] Penelope B.R. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 168.

origins in the *vita* of Pope Gregory the Great.[2] Both stories reside in Auchinleck alongside homiletic texts and *Degare* follows *The Paternoster* and *The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin*. But our conceptions of printed books as unified verbal units is modern, and manuscripts showed less concern for genre uniformity than printed books do.[3] The Auchinleck manuscript has also been explained as separate booklets which were later gathered. In their treatment of the main narrative event of the poems, the sexual assault or abduction of the heroines by fairies, *Sir Degare* and *Sir Orfeo* are non-religious texts in mode and theme. In both poems the ravishing does not suggest evil in the antagonist or sin in the heroine, and the concluding restoration is a secular one.

Claims that medieval romances were salacious often betray the romanticism of critics more than the texts. English romances seldom conform to the prescriptive definition of courtly love as adulterous, and sex usually reflects traditional morality in its (non) depiction. A wide stylistic divide separates most medieval romances from *Dame Sirith*. Yet *Degare* has the queasy subthemes of incest and rape, with *Orfeo*'s plot vehicle an equally ominous ravishing scene. Herodis explains the fairy king's physical confrontation in the language of sexual force—"wold ich, nold ich, he me nam" (154)—much like the fairy knight's words to the princess, "thou best mi lemman ar thou go / wether the liketh wel or wo" (107-8). While actual sexual assault was rare in romance,

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[2] George Patterson Faust, *Sir Degare: A Study of the Texts and Narrative Structure* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935), 45.

[3] Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 10.

"rape frequently overlaps with abduction."[4] Chaucer shunned incest as a theme and the Man of Laws refuses to discuss "swiche unkynde abhomynacions" (II.88).[5] Yet the Wife of Bath's "lusty bacheler" rapes a maiden and in return receives "a bath of blisse" (III.1253) with a beautiful bride.[6] Despite the fairy-tale scenario the reward for his crime seems outrageously undeserved.

In the *Wife of Bath's Tale* the offended community demands execution for the knight, who "sholde han lost his heed" (II.892), but the reader knows the extreme sentence will not be carried out and only appears for dramatic effect. In *Havelock*, under Athelwold anyone "wo so dide maydne shame" (84) has limbs cut off, but such severity was rare in fact and prosecution was difficult. Penalties in medieval Europe were situational depending on the extremity of the act, but in broad principle rape was "both a sexual crime and a crime against property and family interests,"[7] and thus a virgin's violation was considerably more serious than a married woman's. As unpleasant as such realities are to modern ears, "the punishment for rape tended to be less severe than for other crimes, such as stealing."[8] Medieval romance often seems less concerned with sexual assault than with men falsely accused of the crime by spurned women. Belisaunt threatens Amis (632-6) and the queen in *Sir Launfal* accuses the hero only to have the

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[4] Corinne Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 187.

[5] R.H. Nicholson, "*Sir Orfeo*: A 'Kynges Noote,'" *Review of English Studies* 36:142 (1985): 175.

[6] For arguments that Chaucer might have used the *Degare* rape in writing the Wife of Bath's tale see Laura Hibbard Loomis, "Chaucer and the Breton Lays of the Auchinleck," *Studies in Philology* 38:1 (1941): 30-1.

[7] Susan Crane, *Gender and Romance in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (Princeton: University Press, 1994), 124.

[8] Peter G. Beidler, "Rape and Prostitution," *Backgrounds to Chaucer*, *ORB*, accessed 4 December 2010 at http://the-orb.net/textbooks/anthology/beidler/rape.html

fairy Dame Tryamour avenge him by blowing on her "swych a breþ / þat never eft myȝt sche se" (*Launfal* 1007-8).[9]

We want to see the fairy king and fairy knight punished or at least damned by the narrator for their respective violations, but neither happens. The knight in *Degare* is a strangely well-mannered rapist who speaks kindly and reassuringly to the princess, announcing "damaisele, welcome mote thou be!" (98) before taking her maidenhead by force. He then "stands before her as if nothing has happened and speaks to her as a courtly gentleman might speak."[10] The scene ends with an affectionate dictum, "'lemman,' he seide, 'gent and fre / mid schilde I wot that thou schalt be'" (115-6) and a breezy "have god dai." The poet makes no moral comment on the event, and later when the son meets the father Degare even apologizes for fighting him: "the sone cride merci there / his owen fader of his misdede" (1067-8). Degare and the knight then return to the castle where the princess happily marries him. The king has no objections to the man who has given him a bastard grandson, in English law a state irremediable *post hoc* by marriage. No one in the poem has assigned any stain of sin or wrongdoing to the fairy knight for his actions.

Equally with the *Orfeo* poet, "nowhere in fact does he betray an attitude towards the fairies that is anything other than approving or awed"[11] despite the fairy king threatening to "totore thine limes al" ("rip off all your limbs," 171) to the queen, who

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[9] *Sir Launfal*, in Thomas J. Garbaty, ed., *Medieval English Literature* (Long Grove, Il: Waveland, 1984), 365-95.

[10] Cheryl Colopy, "*Sir Degare*: A Fairy Tale Oedipus," *Pacific Coast Philology* 17:1/2 (1982): 32.

[11] Felicity Riddy, "The Uses of the Past in *Sir Orfeo*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 6 (1976): 5.

claws her face with her nails in crazed terror before her forced abduction the next morning. The poet seems oblivious that Orfeo's tender promise that "whider thou gost, ichil with the" (129), in juxtaposition with the fairy king's ultimatum to "with ous go / and live with ous evermo" (167-8), makes the latter sound "like a prison sentence."[12] As with *Degare*'s knight, the fairy king has a curious mix of transcendent gentility and brutality. The queen's rapturous narration that the fairies rode "al on snowe-white stedes / as white as milke were her wedes / Y no seighe never yete bifore / so fair creatours" (145-8) is followed by the fairy king's thuggish threat, "and yif thou makest ous y-let / whar thou be, thou worst y-fet" ("and if you make difficulties for us, wherever you are, you will be found," 169-70). No one in either poem attaches normative Christian valuations of sin or evil to these criminal actions, and no scenes of petition or prayer follow for mercy or guidance.

The fairy otherworld which Orfeo infiltrates to find Herodis has been given traditional identifications with Hell or Purgatory, but neither fits. Orfeo beholds a grim spectacle of tormented deaths, but no one actively suffers in a manner suggesting punitive or restorative justice. The overwhelming emotion of the tableau is frozen stasis: "wonder fele ther lay bisides / right as thai slepe her undertides" (401-2). Davies finds a purgatorial reference here in that all "died suddenly and unshriven."[13] Yet the otherworld lacks any movement, unlike Dante's vision where souls run impotently from winds and fire or slowly ameliorate and journey in penitence with thankful grace. Despite her horse ride earlier Herodis still sleeps under the tree (407). The souls are not necessarily *souls*

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[12] Seth Lerer, "Artifice and Artistry in *Sir Orfeo*," *Speculum* 60:1 (1985): 97.

[13] Constance Davies, "Classical Threads in *Orfeo*," *Modern Language Review* 56:2 (1961): 165.

but apparently bodies, as they are "thought dede, and nare nought" (390). The spirits are shocked by Dante when he casts a shadow (*Purg*. III.88-90), but Orfeo brings Herodis back to Winchester alive and in fully physical form without losing her by making the mistake of looking back.

Though the frame of the story operates in a Christian world, the otherworld occupies a reality unconnected to it. The poet drew upon traditions of Orpheus' visit to Hades but also perhaps Gaelic folklore in which the *daoine maithe*, the "Good People," take away the bodies of those dying in violent or unnatural ways.[14] In many ways the fairy otherworld simply perfects Orfeo's harmonious court. Both Orfeo and the narrator are awed by the fairy palaces: "al the utmast wal / was clere and schine as cristal," (357-8) and "no man may telle, no thenche in thought / the riche werk that ther was wrought" (373-4). Yet Lerer notes that "romance often portrays the hero's encounter with palaces of illusory splendor,"[15] and like the emir's garden in *Floris and Blancheflor* the beautiful vistas deceptively mask their danger or moral torpidity. Despite its glittering charms the castle imprisons its occupants, and though the fairy king is no devil—he keeps his word and seems remarkably human in his surprise at Orfeo's audacity and his enthusiastic but rash promise[16]—the king also attempts a prevarication and only grudgingly awards

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[14] For more see Dorena Allen, "Orpheus and Orfeo: the Dead and the 'Taken,'" *Medium Aevum* 33 (1964): 102-11. Jirsa also notes Jacob Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* (Göttingen, 1835), 918-20, which discusses similar traditions. Curtis R.H. Jirsa, "In the Shadow of the Ympe-tre: Arboreal Folklore in Sir Orfeo," *English Studies* 89:2 (2008): 148. Such fairies stem from pagan traditions although some explanations claim they are fallen angels. In Irish folklore such a troublesome or mischievous fairy is a *púca* , giving English Shakespeare's Puck and *puckish*.

[15] Lerer, 93.

[16] Mary Hynes-Berry, "Cohesion in *King Horn* and *Sir Orfeo*," *Speculum* 50:4 (1975): 669.

Herodis to Orfeo, who hurries "swithe out of that lond" (474) before the king has time or opportunity to change his mind.

Yet *Degare* and *Orfeo* do not see Christian sin in the fairy knight and king's rape-abduction, nor do they attach religious meaning to the heroines' experience of the actions. The narratives intimate neither a retributive or restorative purpose for the trials faced by the protagonists. Colopy sees *Degare* as a highly Oedipal piece where the princess launders her desire for her father through his representative in the fairy knight,[17] but such a reading also finds no moral dimension in the sexual assault. Colopy posits that the princess ambivalently craves and avoids her father by hiding in the forest, yet the narrative plainly has the ladies needing to "don here nedes" (54), to go to the bathroom. The princess' rape seems to lack any moral justification as punishment. The occasion of her journey, to hear a mass for her mother and "poure men fede, and naked clothe" (44), hardly suggests sin or lasciviousness on her part.

Falk sees an identification between *Orfeo* and Edward II, and suggests that the maids who see Herodis and "durst hir nought awake" (73) and then rush away to embarrass the king with her madness[18] reflect English antipathy towards the incompetent Edward and scheming Isabella. But the argument reads a spiteful tone into *durst*, "dared," unsupported by the poem, where Herodis also "durst nought" (140) accompany the fairy king and Orfeo "no durst" (482) enter Winchester without a disguise, and poorly fits the mood and events of the poem. The real Edward and Isabella waged war over England,

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[17] Colopy, 33.

[18] Oren Falk, "The Son of Orfeo: Kingship and Compromise in a Middle English Romance," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30:2 (2000): 249-51.

whereas when Orfeo and Herodis return to the townspeople, "for joie thai wepe with her eighe" (591). Critics have puzzled over why Herodis deserves her fate with recourse to the usual misogynist identification that she shares an Eve-like sensuality and idleness in her orchard nap which precipitates her fall.[19] The charge seems a mean-spirited stretch, and the narrator imputes no such blame to her actions. Moreover, she returns to wedded joy at the poem's close.

Medieval lore might better explain Herodis' fortune. In numerous romances falling asleep under trees at *undertide* brings fairies, and Jirsa notes that in medieval lore the shadows of some trees such as the yew, walnut, and juniper were considered noxious or dangerous.[20] Scholars from Pliny to Bartholomaeus Anglicus warn of headaches or other ailments, and as late as the fourteenth century John Trevisa writes of the yew that "þe schadowe þerof is grevous and slee hem þat slepiþ þerunder."[21] The ladies protecting the princess in *Degare* similarly fall asleep under a chestnut tree (74) as if enchanted, leaving her vulnerable. English gardens were highly sculpted affairs meant to exclude the chaos of the forest, and the artifice of the grafted (*ympe*) tree was particularly attractive to aristocratic sentiments.[22] Yet the *ympe-tree* also contains two species unnaturally blended, just as the fairy and real world ominously intersect for Herodis.[23]

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[19] Doob, 174.

[20] Jirsa, 143-6.

[21] 17.161; "De taxo," M. C. Seymour, et al., ed., *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum: A Critical Text*. Vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), quoted in Jirsa, 145.

[22] Lerer, 95-6.

[23] Alice E. Lasater, ''Under the Ympe-tre or: Where the Action is in *Sir Orfeo*,'' *Southern Quarterly* 12 (1974): 355. Lasater argues that the *ympe* is a grafted apple tree. The word also etymologically links to *imp*, a mischievous demon.

Christian theology mitigates against the idea of unexplainable randomness, but it formed an important part of Germanic *wyrd*. When the dragon attacks his kingdom, Beowulf believes in anguish that "he wealdende / ofer ealde riht ecean dryhtne / bitre gebulge" ("he had violated the old law, and had severely offended the Ruler, the eternal Lord," 2329-31).[24] But the terror of *Beowulf* lies in the existential unpredictability of its world, for the dragon or other monsters have no apparent cause to exist. Fate brings them and men must show fortitude regardless of risk. Similarly in *Orfeo*, albeit at a less epic level, the abduction simply happens and allows Orfeo to demonstrate nobility by repairing the breach of harmony in his kingdom wrought by the troublesome fairies. The arbitrary and random nature of the fairy king's attack intensifies both its drama and Orfeo's surmounting of fate.

Medieval theologians explained human misfortune through a complex mesh, interpreting it as God's retributive or correcting punishment or as a Job-like testing such as Amiloun undergoes. The *Ancren Riwle* (c. 1200) sermonizes that "alse þe goldsmið clenseð þet gold iðe fure, al so deð God þe soule iðe fure of fondunge" ("as the goldsmith cleans the gold in the fire, so does God purify the soul in the fire of trials").[25] The princess in *Degare* laments her secret pregnancy but otherwise endures no apparent adversity after a maid discreetly removes the newborn Degare. When the hermit adopts him out to his sister, Degare "wende wel that the gode man / had ben his fader that him wan / and the wif his moder also / and the hermite his unkel" (279-82). As an older boy Degare receives security and a clerical education before taking on the trappings of a

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[24] Lines from Howell D. Chickering, Jr., ed. and trans., *Beowulf* (Toronto: Anchor Books, 1977).

[25] James Morton, trans., *The Ancren Riwle* (London: Camden Society, 1853), 236.

knight. Degare has a deservedly tearful reunion with his mother, but the poem does not pretend that Degare's upbringing has been tragic or a transformative spiritual experience. For a noble boy to be fostered by a maternal uncle would not have been in any way unusual in a medieval court.

Orfeo's self-exile presents a more difficult problem. Narratively, Herodis' vanishing poses no existential crisis for the kingdom as does *Beowulf*'s dragon; if heirs are an issue Orfeo can remarry. Doob asserts that the wild man in exile was associated with divine punishment but "if the acts of penance are viewed as voluntary… the wild man is holy."[26] Yet neither Orfeo nor Herodis has especially sinned or requires expiation. Orfeo instead explains his departure in mourning terms: "for now ichave mi quen y-lore / the fairest levedi that ever was bore / never eft y nil no woman se" (209-11). Critics have suggested that Orfeo has a rather effeminate nature for a king as he is lost without his wife and uses music and not arms to regain her.[27] Yet the *scheltroms* have proven useless where Orfeo's eloquence and musicianship do not. Gros-Louis also argues that Orfeo does not actually seek his wife but chooses self-exile to honor her memory. He makes provisions for his kingdom and leaves civilization, and "not once, in all these years, does he look for Heurodis"[28] until meeting her by chance. Yet whatever his goals regarding Herodis, Orfeo's motivation is love rather than a desire for spiritual aims.

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[26] Doob, 159.

[27] Joanne Charbonneau and Désirée Cromwell, "Gender and Identity in the Popular Romance," in *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance*, ed. Raluca L. Radulescue, and Cory James Rushton, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009), 105.

[28] R.R. Gros Louis, "The Significance of Sir Orfeo's Self-Exile," *Review of English Studies* 18:71 (1967): 246.

Both *Degare* and *Orfeo* feature unorthodox endings somewhat different from the usual exile-and-return narratives. *Degare* ends with reconciliation and a double wedding, validating the aristocratic values of a knight who is "both curteys and fre" (1106). Colopy calls the poem "the story of an Oedipus with a happy ending who marries his mother, fights with his father and wins the princess in the end."[29] These psychological undercurrents may operate in *Degare* as they may in *Floris and Blancheflor* as well. Yet both readings are essentially secular. Though the narrator gives a benediction, none of the characters has learned anything resembling saintly virtue. *Orfeo* similarly ends with Herodis having no lines at all. Orfeo returns to his kingdom with a deeper and richer appreciation of the limits of his power and of the qualities he finds in his steward.[30] Oren reads a dark note at the close as Orfeo and Herodis apparently leave no heir,[31] but the celebratory mood clearly shows otherwise. Orfeo rejoins his wife and reassumes his kingdom and the two actions dovetail in harmony. He is "newe coround" (593), and with his wife he "lived long afterward" (595). Narratively the ceremony "stands in for the marriage which so commonly ends lais"[32] and romances generally.

Degare receives land, a wife, and family reconciliation at the poem's denouement. Orfeo enjoys the fruits of a newly repaired and restored kingdom and marriage along with a faithful steward. In their endings both poems conform to standard romantic conventions of narrative structure, but neither story has them buried in monastic houses with monks to

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[29] Colopy, 32.

[30] Gros Louis, 251.

[31] Oren, 248.

[32] Nicholson, 170.

pray for them, and their benedictions are especially automatic. *Degare* has a rather odd structure in making the chief heroine the hero's mother but the poem resolves the issue concisely. *Orfeo* has a richer personality, imbued with the exotic Celtic flavors of music, fairies, and otherworldly adventures. The poem's qualities as a "swete" (602) tale of music and eloquence organically circle back to refer to the teller's own *swete* skill in creating the lay. Although its identity as a *lai* places it in question as a genre, in one aspect *Sir Orfeo* is the most romantic, in the modern sense, of all these ten romances—a poem about a man who already has a kingdom and gives it up for the wife he loves, and receives both as a reward.

CHAPTER 10

Sir Thopas

The Tale of Sir Thopas appears among the eighty-two extant manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*, most or all postdating Chaucer. Editors have generally used the Ellesmere manuscript (c. 1400), now held in the Huntington Library. As a source text I use Larry D. Benson, ed., *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). There are innumerable versions and popular translations but few approach Benson's as the standard edition of Chaucer.

	The Prologue to the Tale of Sir Thopas	The Prologue to the *Tale of Sir Topaz*
689	Whan seyd was al this miracle, every man As sobre was that wonder was to se, Til that oure Hooste japen tho bigan, And thanne at erst he looked upon me, And seyde thus: "What man artow?" quod he; "Thou lookest as thou woldest fynde an hare, For evere upon the ground I se thee stare.	When this miraculous tale was all finished,[1] It was a sight to see everyone so serious, Until our Host[2] began to joke around, And then at last he stared at me And spoke. "What kind of man are you?" he said. "You look like you are trying to catch a rabbit, For I always see you staring at the ground.
	"Approche neer, and looke up murily. Now war yow, sires, and lat this man have place!	Come near, and look up with merriness! Now make way, sirs, and let this man have space!
700	He in the waast is shape as wel as I; This were a popet in an arm t'enbrace For any womman, small and fair of face. He semeth elvyssh by his contenaunce, For unto no wight dooth he daliaunce.	He is shaped in the waist as well as I am. This would be a doll, with a small and pretty face, For any woman to embrace in her arms! He seems elvish by his behavior, For he has no conversation with anyone.
	"Sey now somwhat, syn oother folk han sayd; Telle us a tale of myrthe, and that anon." "Hooste," quod I, "ne beth nat yvele apayd, For oother tale certes kan I noon, But of a rym I lerned longe agoon."	Now say something, since the others have spoken. Tell us a tale of fun, and do it right away!" "Host," I said, "Do not feel badly rewarded. For sure, I know no other tale Except for a rhyme I learned long ago."

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[1] The pilgrims have just heard the Prioress' tale, a pious and sentimental story about a Christian boy whose throat is cut by the Jews and whose body is found when he miraculously sings out hymns. The sissyish depiction of the "litel child" with "his litel book" may be Chaucer the pilgrim's link to the effeminate Sir Thopas, who is also described as *Childe*, a young knight-in-training.

[2] Harry Bailly, the owner of the Tabard Inn, where the pilgrims begin their travel. The Host has a coarse and blunt humor and by this point in the *Canterbury Tales* has been drinking heavily.

710	"Ye, that is good," quod he; "now shul we heere Som deyntee thyng, me thynketh by his cheere."	"Yes, that is fine," he said. "Now we will hear Some dainty thing, I think, by his expression."
	The Tale of Sir Thopas	The Tale of Sir Topaz
	The First Fit	Chapter 1
712	Listeth, lordes, in good entent, And I wol telle verrayment Of myrthe and of solas, Al of a knyght was fair and gent In bataille and in tourneyment; His name was sire Thopas.	Listen, lords, in good faith, And I will tell you, truly, Something amusing and entertaining, All about a knight who was fair and elegant In battle and in tournament. His name was Sir Topaz.
	Yborn he was in fer contree, In Flaundres, al biyonde the see, At Poperyng, in the place. His fader was a man ful free, And lord he was of that contree, As it was Goddes grace.	He was born in a faraway country, In Flanders, far beyond the sea, In Poperinge, in that place.[3] His father was a very noble man And he was lord of that country, As it was God's grace.
	Sire Thopas wax a doghty swayn; Whit was his face as payndemayn, His lippes rede as rose; His rode is lyk scarlet in grayn, And I yow telle in good certayn He hadde a semely nose.	Sir Topaz grew to be a rugged youth. His face was as fair as fine white bread,[4] His lips were as red as a rose. His complexion was like dyed scarlet, And I tell you with good certainty, He had a decorous nose.
	His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun, That to his girdel raughte adoun; His shoon of cordewane. Of Brugges were his hosen broun, His robe was of syklatoun, That coste many a jane.	His hair—his beard—was like saffron, Which ran down to his waist. His shoes were of Spanish leather;[5] His brown hose were from Bruges. His robe was silk woven with gold, Which cost a pretty penny.
	He koude hunte at wilde deer, And ride an haukyng for river With grey goshauk on honde; Therto he was a good archeer; Of wrastlyng was ther noon his peer Ther any ram shal stonde.	He could hunt for wild deer, And ride with hawks for waterfowl With a grey eagle on his hand. Moreover, he was a good archer. In wrestling there was no one his equal Where any ram would be contested.[6]

[3] Poperinge is a Belgian town slightly west of Ypres, famous for linen. The gag is that, rather than being an exotic, faraway locale, the town is nearby and mundane: "Grendel returned to the accursed mere, just outside Winnipeg on Route 4." Some critics disagree, arguing the poem mocks the Flemish generally, but this is the only Flemish reference besides the Bruges hose (733).

[4] Pandemain is a fine, delicate white bread, hardly fitting for a rugged knight. Compare this to the earthy Wife of Bath, who calls herself 'barley bread.'

[5] *Cordovan* is expensive burgundy-colored leather from Cordoba, Spain.

[6] *Ther any ram shal stoned*: A ram was the traditional prize in wrestling matches, which were enormously popular in the medieval English countryside. Some critics feel that wrestling and archery were undignified

	Ful many a mayde, bright in bour, They moorne for hym paramour, Whan hem were bet to slepe; But he was chaast and no lechour, And sweete as is the brembul flour That bereth the rede hepe.	Many a maiden, beautiful in her bower, Yearned for him passionately When it was better for her to sleep. But he was chaste and no libertine, And was as sweet as the blackberry bush That bears the red fruit.
	And so bifel upon a day, For sothe, as I yow telle may, Sire Thopas wolde out ride. He worth upon his steede gray, And in his hand a launcegay, A long swerd by his side.	And so it happened one day, In truth, as I may tell you, Sir Topaz wished to go out riding. He mounted his grey steed, With a light spear in his hand And a long sword by his side.
	He priketh thurgh a fair forest, Therinne is many a wilde best, Ye, bothe bukke and hare; And as he priketh north and est, I telle it yow, hym hadde almest Bitid a sory care.	He spurred through a fair forest Where there were many wild beasts inside, Yes, both deer and rabbits! And as he rode north and east, I will tell you, he almost Happened into grievous trouble.
	Ther spryngen herbes grete and smale, The lycorys and the cetewale, And many a clowe-gylofre; And notemuge to putte in ale, Wheither it be moyste or stale, Or for to leye in cofre.	There were herbs springing, great and small, The licorice and the ginger spice, And many a clove flower; And nutmeg to put in ale, Whether it is fresh or stale, Or to lay in a coffer chest.[7]
	The briddes synge, it is no nay, The sparhauk and the papejay, That joye it was to heere; The thrustelcok made eek hir lay, The wodedowve upon the spray She sang ful loude and cleere.	The birds sang, it could not be denied— The sparrow-hawk and the parrot, Which was a joy to hear. The thrush also made her song; The wood-pigeon upon her branch Sang very loudly and clear.
	Sire Thopas fil in love-longynge, Al whan he herde the thrustel synge, And pryked as he were wood. His faire steede in his prikynge So swatte that men myghte him wrynge; His sydes were al blood.	Sir Topaz fell into lovesickness When he heard the thrush sing, And spurred as if he were mad.[8] His fair steed, from his spurring, Sweated so that men could wring him! His sides were all bloody.

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pursuits for knights in this period, adding to the joke of Thopas' faux-elegance. Chaucer's boorish, drunken Miller also enjoys wrestling: "At wrastlynge he wolde have alwey the ram" (*CT* I.547).

[7] Nutmeg is placed in a chest, possibly to add a pleasant scent to clothes. J.A. Burrow, in Larry D. Benson, ed., *The Riverside Chaucer* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, third ed., 1987), 214.

[8] *Pryked*: By constantly re-using the verb, Chaucer may intend a gentle joke on the limited vocabulary of romances like *Guy of Warwick*, which uses some form of *prick* 40 times. He probably does not mean the modern sexual double entendre, first recorded in 1450 (MED). See note 31 in the essay on *Sir Thopas*.

	Sire Thopas eek so wery was	Sir Topaz was so tired as well
	For prikyng on the softe gras,	From riding on the soft grass—
780	So fiers was his corage,	So fierce was his courage!—
	That doun he leyde him in that plas	That he laid himself down in that spot
	To make his steede som solas,	To give his steed some rest
	And yaf hym good forage.	And gave him good foraging.
	"O Seinte Marie, benedicite!	"Oh, Sainted Mary, bless me!
	What eyleth this love at me	What does love have against me
	To bynde me so soore?	To bind me so sorely?
	Me dremed al this nyght, pardee,	I dreamed all this night, by God,
	An elf-queene shal my lemman be	That an elf-queen would be my lover
	And slepe under my goore.	And would sleep under my coat.
790	"An elf-queene wol I love, ywis,	I will love an elf-queen, for sure!
	For in this world no womman is	For in all this world there is no woman
	Worthy to be my make	Worthy to be my mate
	In towne;	In the town.[9]
	Alle othere wommen I forsake,	All other women I leave behind
	And to an elf-queene I me take	And I will search for an elf-queen for me
	By dale and eek by downe!"	By hill and by valley as well!"
	Into his sadel he clamb anon,	He climbed into his saddle at once
	And priketh over stile and stoon	And rode over fence and stone
	An elf-queene for t' espye,	To spy out an elf-queen,
800	Til he so longe hath riden and goon	Until he had ridden and traveled so far
	That he foond, in a pryve woon,	That he found, in a secluded place,
	The contree of Fairye	The country of Fairyland,
	So wilde;	So wild.
	For in that contree was ther noon	For in that country there was no one
	That to him durste ride or goon,	Who dared to ride to or confront him,
	Neither wyf ne childe;	Neither woman or child;
	Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,	Until there appeared a great giant.
	His name was sire Olifaunt,	His name was Sir Elephant,
	A perilous man of dede.	A perilous man of deeds.
810	He seyde, "Child, by Termagaunt,	He said, "Child, by Termagaunt,[10]
	But if thou prike out of myn haunt,	Unless you spur out of my territory,
	Anon I sle thy steede	I will kill your horse at once
	With mace.	With my mace!
	Heere is the queene of Fayerye,	The queen of Fairyland is here,
	With harpe and pipe and symphonye,	With harp and pipe and fiddle,[11]

[9] Chaucer imitates the tail-rhyme romances such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, with its formulaic and regular two-syllable lines ('bobs').

[10] *Termagaunt*: Termagant is a deity incorrectly claimed to be worshipped by Muslims in medieval romance, both English and French. Muslims are typically depicted as pagans who worship both Mohammad and various heathen gods such as Apollo. The origins of *Termagant* are unclear and he is usually invoked in romance simply as an idiomatic oath. See also the translation of *Bevis of Hampton*, line 500.

	Dwellynge in this place."	Dwelling in this place."
	The child seyde, "Also moote I thee,	The child said, "As I live and breathe,[12]
	Tomorwe wol I meete with thee,	Tomorrow I will meet with you
	Whan I have myn armoure;	When I have my armor.
820	And yet I hope, *par ma fay*,	And then I expect, by my faith,
	That thou shalt with this launcegay	That you will pay for it very painfully
	Abyen it ful sowre.	With this parade-spear!
	Thy mawe	I will pierce
	Shal I percen, if I may,	Your mouth, if I can,
	Er it be fully pryme of day,	Before it is mid-morning,
	For heere thow shalt be slawe."	For you will be slain here!"
	Sire Thopas drow abak ful faste;	Sir Topaz pulled back quickly;
	This geant at hym stones caste	The giant flung stones at him
	Out of a fel staf-slynge.	Out of a formidable wooden sling.
830	But faire escapeth child Thopas,	But Child Topaz nobly ran away,
	And al it was thurgh Goddes gras,	And it was all through God's grace,
	And thurgh his fair berynge.	And through his fair bearing.
	The Second Fit	Part 2[13]
	Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale	Yet listen, gentlemen, to my tale;
	Murier than the nightyngale,	It is merrier than the nightingale.
	For now I wol yow rowne	For now I will reveal to you
	How sir Thopas, with sydes smale,	How Sir Topaz, with his slender waist,
	Prikyng over hill and dale,	Spurring over hill and valley,
	Is comen agayn to towne.	Came back to town.
	His myrie men comanded he	He commanded his merry men
840	To make hym bothe game and glee,	To make song and entertainment for him,
	For nedes moste he fighte	For he needed to fight
	With a geaunt with hevedes three,	With a giant who had three heads,[14]
	For paramour and jolitee	For love and for the delight
	Of oon that shoon ful brighte.	Of one who shone very brightly.
	"Do come," he seyde, "my mynstrales,	"Summon," he said, "my minstrels,
	And geestours for to tellen tales,	And storytellers to tell tales,
	Anon in myn armynge,	Later as I am arming—

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[11] *Symphonye*: Not the modern symphony but "probably a hurdy-gurdy, a sort of mechanized fiddle," according to Benson (920, note to line 815). Like a blues harmonica now, by Chaucer's time it is more a street instrument than courtly accompaniment for a fairy-queen.

[12] *Child* refers to the feudal rank of young knight-in-training in lines 830 and 898 but here may simply mean "little boy." The term's ambiguity in the poem might be humorously intentional.

[13] The tale has textual divisions in the MSS, but are only called *fits* by modern editors. Burrow notes that the chapter divisions, like the plot, seem to peter out as each is half the size of its previous one: Fit 1 is 18 stanzas, Fit 2 is 9, and Fit 3 is 4½. John A. Burrow, "*Sir Thopas*: An Agony in Three Fits," *Review of English Studies* 22:85 (1971): 57.

[14] *Hevedes three*: For comic effect, Sir Thopas is evidently excusing his cowardice by exaggerating the giant, who is never indicated as having three heads.

	Of romances that been roiales,	Of romances that are royal,
	Of popes and of cardinales,	Of popes and of cardinals,
850	And eek of love-likynge."	And of love-longing as well."
	They fette hym first the sweete wyn,	They brought him first the sweet wine,
	And mede eek in a mazelyn,	And mead as well in a maple bowl,
	And roial spicerye	And royal delicacies,
	Of gyngebreed that was ful fyn,	And gingerbread that was very fine,
	And lycorys, and eek comyn,	And licorice, and cumin as well,
	With sugre that is trye.	With sugar that was proven in trial.
	He dide next his white leere	He put next to his white flesh
	Of cloth of lake fyn and cleere,	Clothes of linen, fine and unspotted,
	A breech and eek a sherte;	A pair of pants and also a shirt;
860	And next his sherte an aketoun,	And, next to his shirt, a quilted jacket,
	And over that an haubergeoun	And over that a coat of mail
	For percynge of his herte;	To ward off piercing of his heart.
	And over that a fyn hawberk,	And over all that fine plate armor
	Was al ywroght of Jewes werk,	Which was all crafted with Jews' work;[15]
	Ful strong it was of plate;	It was of strong iron plate.
	And over that his cote-armour	And over all that went his overcoat,
	As whit as is a lilye flour,	As white as a lily flower,
	In which he wol debate.	In which he would face challenge.
	His sheeld was al of gold so reed,	His shield was all of gold, so red,
870	And therinne was a bores heed,	And on it was a boar's head,
	A charbocle bisyde;	With a carbuncle stone beside.
	And there he swoor on ale and breed	And there he swore on bread and ale
	How that the geaunt shal be deed,	That the giant would be dead,
	Bityde what bityde!	Come what may!
	His jambeux were of quyrboilly,	His leg guards were of hard leather,
	His swerdes shethe of yvory,	His sword's sheath of ivory,
	His helm of latoun bright;	And his helmet was shining brass.
	His sadel was of rewel boon,	His saddle was of polished bone;
	His brydel as the sonne shoon,	His bridle shone like the sun
880	Or as the moone light.	Or like the moonlight.
	His spere was of fyn ciprees,	His spear was of fine cypress,[16]
	That bodeth werre, and nothyng pees,	Which foretold war, and nothing peaceful,
	The heed ful sharpe ygrounde;	And the point was sharply ground.
	His steede was al dappull gray,	His steed was all spotted grey;
	It gooth an ambil in the way	It went ambling on the way,

[15] *Jewes werk*: a puzzling reference as *Jew* and *jewelry* have no etymological connection, although the medieval Jews did work and trade jewelry. Burrow lists some speculations, noting that "A fine Saracen hauberk in one French chanson de geste is said to have been forged by 'Ysac de Barceloigne,' presumably a Spanish Jew" (*Riverside Chaucer*, note to 864, page 921).

[16] Cypress is a softwood and unsuitable for making spears. It hardly "bodeth werre." For more on Thopas' weapons, see Joanne A. Charbonneau, "*Sir Thopas*," in *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 693-4.

	Ful softely and rounde In londe. Loo, lordes myne, heere is a fit! If ye wol any moore of it, To telle it wol I fonde.	Very softly and easily On the land. Now, my lords, here is the next part! If you want any more of it, I will try to tell it.
	The Third Fit	Part 3
	Now holde youre mouth, *par charitee*, Bothe knyght and lady free, And herkneth to my spelle; Of bataille and of chivalry, And of ladyes love-drury Anon I wol yow telle.	Now hold your tongue, for charity's sake, Both knights and gracious ladies, And listen to my story Of battle and of chivalry And of ladies' love-longing. I will tell it to you right away.
	Men speken of romances of prys, Of Horn child and of Ypotys, Of Beves and sir Gy,	Men talk about famous romances, Of Child Horn and of Ypotis, Of Bevis and of Sir Guy,
900	Of sir Lybeux and Pleyndamour— But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour Of roial chivalry!	Of Sir Lybeaux and Plendamour.[17] But Sir Topaz, he bears the flower Of royal chivalry!
	His goode steede al he bistrood, And forth upon his wey he glood As sparcle out of the bronde; Upon his creest he bar a tour, And therinne stiked a lilie flour— God shilde his cors fro shonde!	He mounted his trusted steed And he went forth on his way, glowing Like a spark out of the burning log. On his helmet's crest he bore a spike And on it he stuck a lily flower; God shield his body from harm!
	And for he was a knyght auntrous,	And because he was a wandering knight,
910	He nolde slepen in noon hous, But liggen in his hoode; His brighte helm was his wonger, And by hym baiteth his dextrer Of herbes fyne and goode.	He would not sleep in anyone's house, But lay in his hood. His shining helmet was his pillow, And by him his war-steed grazed On herbs, fine and good.
	Hymself drank water of the well, As dide the knyght sire Percyvell So worly under wede, Til on a day —	He himself drank water from the well, As did the knight Sir Percival,[18] So noble in his attire! Until one day—
	Heere the Hoost stynteth Chaucer of his Tale of Thopas.	Here the Host interrupted Chaucer in his *Tale of Topaz.*

[17] *Plendamour*: No story or MS has been found by this name, though Skeat found a minor character named Pleyn de Amours in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* (IX.7). Laura A. Hibbard Loomis, "*Sir Thopas*," in *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, ed. W.F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster (New York: Humanities Press, 1958), 487.

[18] Possibly a reference to *Sir Percival of Galles*. The only MS known is the Thornton (Lincoln Cathedral MS 91) from about 1440. See Mary Flowers Braswell, ed., *Sir Perceval of Galles and Ywain and Gawain* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/percint.htm.

	"Namoore of this, for Goddes dignitee,"	"No more of this, for God's sake!"
920	Quod oure Hooste, "for thou makest me	Bellowed our Host. "For you make me
	So wery of thy verray lewednesse	So worn-out from your outright foolishness
	That, also wisly God my soule blesse,	That, as surely as God blesses my soul,
	Myne eres aken of thy drasty speche.	My ears are aching from your ridiculous story.
	Now swich a rym the devel I biteche!	Now such a rhyme I give to the devil.
	This may wel be rym dogerel," quod he.	This may well be hack rhyming!" he said.
	"Why so?" quod I, "why wiltow lette me	"Why so?" I protested. "Why do you stop me
	Moore of my tale than another man,	From telling more of my tale like the other men,
	Syn that it is the beste rym I kan?"	Since it is the best story I know?"
	"By God," quod he, "for pleynly, at a word,	"By God!" he said, "Because plainly, in short,
930	Thy drasty rymyng is nat worth a toord!	Your rotten rhyming is not worth a crap!
	Thou doost noght elles but despendest tyme.	You do nothing more than waste time.
	Sire, at o word, thou shalt no lenger ryme.	Sir, in one word, you will no longer rhyme.
	Lat se wher thou kanst tellen aught in geeste,	Let's see if you can say something in other verse,
	Or telle in prose somwhat, at the leeste,	Or speak something in prose, at least,
	In which ther be som murthe or som doctrine."	Which has some amusement or lesson in it!"
	"Gladly," quod I, "by Goddes sweete pyne!	"Gladly," I said, "By Christ's sweet pains!
	I wol yow telle a litel thing in prose	I will tell you a little story in prose[19]
	That oghte liken yow, as I suppose,	That ought to satisfy you, I think,
	Or elles, certes, ye been to daungerous.	Or else, for sure, you are too hard to please.
940	It is a moral tale virtuous,	It is a moral tale of virtue,
	Al be it told somtyme in sondry wyse	Although it is sometimes told in various ways
942	Of sondry folk, as I shal yow devyse…	By different people, as I will explain to you."
	. . . . .	. . . . .

[19] Chaucer may be making another joke on "litel" here, as he segues from *Sir Thopas* into *The Tale of Melibee*, a ponderous, weighty morality tale which is anything but little at 1888 lines.

English Romances and Festive Parody in *The Tale of Sir Thopas*

"The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there,"[1] when applied to medieval England, is both a benign and harmful statement. Recognizing the basic dissimilarities of the period does warn against 'false friends,' against assuming Chaucer means the same thing a twenty-first century writer does in calling someone *gentle*, but it can also serve the agendas of classicists and modernists who wish to emphasize the irretrievably peculiar and perverse alterity of the medieval age. Burrow expresses discomfort with the spacial analogy of considering the past a different *place*,[2] as such a binary totalizes and simplifies. A Catholic graduate student at Notre Dame may be disconnected from the rhythms of daily street life in Chaucer's London but may see the era's religious traditions clearly.

Mitchell and Robinson begin a discussion of daily life in Anglo-Saxon England by reminding us that its people "were human beings like yourself, subject to weariness and pain, and prey to the same emotions as you are."[3] Yet the customs and assumptions which reflected these human needs have shifted. My father attended school but also received a farm boy's education, and so where I simply see birds, trees, and clouds, he sees robins, aspens, and fair weather. Going back further generations, the experiences and practices of my ancestors would seem both familiar and increasingly alien. The difficult task for understanding the medieval period involves recognizing such cultural and

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[1] John A. Burrow, "'Alterity' and Middle English Literature," *Review of English Studies* 50:200 (1999): 483. Burrow quotes L.P. Hartley from his novel *The Go-Between* (1953).

[2] Burrow, "Alterity," 484.

[3] Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson, ed., *A Guide to Old English*, fifth ed. (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), 127.

psychological differences, not in order to indulge in the current fetish of English departments to use *other* as a verb incessantly but to understand their significances. Incidents of bowing and kneeling in medieval romance seem not only foreign now but are judged as sentimental and affected clichés of chivalry typical of the "extreme exaggerations"[4] of the genre. Yet when such customs are understood as normal displays of greeting or respect predating handshakes,[5] the acts and the literature they appear in are cast in a new light.

Similar problems apply in taxonomizing what effect Chaucer intends in *Sir Thopas*. Satire, a "full dish," is not specifically medieval but comes from the Roman world with its connotations of dinnertime recreation. *Parody* as a term is first used in English by Ben Jonson, and with its related synonyms *burlesque* and *lampoon*, it enters the French lexicon of literary criticism in the seventeenth century and becomes as systematized as any other genre of poetry.[6] Parody certainly operates in *Thopas* regardless of labels, and Chaucer's pilgrims like to "laughe and pleye" (*CT* VI.967) as much as any other culture. Few critics have disputed the basic idea that the poem is meant to be humorous. Nevertheless, while Chaucer may have had French exemplars, he "could not have written *Sir Thopas* as a 'parody,' 'burlesque,' or 'travesty' if these words and the generic categories which these words tend to create did not exist."[7] These

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[4] Laura A. Hibbard Loomis, "Sir Thopas," in *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, ed. Bryan, W.F. and Germaine Dempster (New York: Humanities Press, 1958), 491.

[5] Burrow, "Alterity," 488. Burrow believes the gesture of shaking hands to be unknown in medieval England, finding its first OED usage in Coverdale's Bible of 1535 (489).

[6] Joseph A. Dane, "Genre and Authority: The Eighteenth-Century Creation of Chaucerian Burlesque," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 48:4 (1985): 348.

[7] Dane, 347.

identifications lack both consensus and critical analysis, and thus I would like to examine Chaucer's possible parodic intentions in *Thopas* and their relationship to medieval English romance.

A variety of readings have attempted to explain the point of *Sir Thopas*, some more credible than others. Much early criticism asserted that *Thopas* satirizes contemporary political targets. The Flemish were a perennial xenophobic target for their claimed low morals, and Manly asserted that Chaucer mocks the Flemish bourgeoisie for their aristocratic pretentions.[8] Some scholars have adduced historical personages as the object of satire. Winstanley claimed that Sir Thopas is Philip van Artevelde, son of a Flemish burgher,[9] and Richard II's purported effeminacy has also been suggested as a model. Textual credence for the Flemish argument seems slim, as Sir Thopas is born in Popering but there are no other explicit Flemish references. Chaucer was normally careful about antagonizing the powerful and was unlikely to mock the king's masculinity, although he does have the "foppish clerk"[10] Absolom, whose blonde hair is long and parted like Richard's.

Other interpretations are more oblique, such as the reading following Terry Jones' work on the *Knight's Tale* that Chaucer satirizes knights generally in *Thopas*. Jones'

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[8] John Matthews Manly, "*Sir Thopas*: A Satire," *Essays and Studies* 13 (1928): 60, quoted in Joanne A. Charbonneau, "Sir Thopas," in *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 650.

[9] William Witherle Lawrence, "Satire in Sir Thopas," *PMLA* 50:1 (1935): 81. Lawrence references Lilian Winstanley on the van Artevelde theory. See also John A. Burrow, "Chaucer's *Sir Thopas* and *La Prise de Nuevile*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 14 (1984): 52.

[10] John M. Bowers, "Chaste Marriage: Fashion and Texts at the Court of Richard II," *Pacific Coast Philology* 30:1 (1995): 21.

views have been widely challenged.[11] Moreover, many of Chaucer's friends and possible readers were knights who might not have enjoyed the barb, though Jones does believe that the refined knights in Chaucer's circle would have been able to distinguish themselves from the soldier-of-fortune knight.[12] Haskell suggests that the poem is an extended joke where Thopas is metaphorically and literally a wooden puppet, as his saffron hair (VII.730) is compared to a dye, he rides "as he were wood" (774), and *Popering* sounds like *puppet*.[13] Cohen posits that Sir Thopas is a harmless, sexually neutered avatar expiating Chaucer's guilt over raping Cecily Champagne.[14] Like many psychoanalytical readings, evidence sometimes seems a superfluous detail.

Nevertheless, any of these readings could indicate valid background influences. Mitchell and Robinson politely comment on theories of interpretation regarding "The Wife's Lament" that "the only available curb to ever more ingenious speculations" is common sense.[15] The difficulty in applying such advice to Chaucer is determining common sense while lacking the circumstances of *Thopas*' composition. Early critics concerned themselves with *Troilus and Criseyde* and not Chaucer's humor. At best, by the Restoration a sort of patronizing indulgence of his coarse wit prevailed, the sentiment that would move Matthew Arnold to praise him but accuse him of lacking "high

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[11] Pearsall in particular feels that Chaucer views his Knight sympathetically, arguing that "it is an anachronistic modernism that makes of Chaucer's Knight a ruthless and cold-blooded mercenary killer." Derek Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1992), 44.

[12] Terry Jones, *Chaucer's Knight: The Portrait of a Medieval Mercenary* (London: Methuen, 1980), 11.

[13] Ann S. Haskell, "Sir Thopas: The Puppet's Puppet," *Chaucer Review* 9:3 (1975): 253-261.

[14] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Diminishing Masculinity in Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas*," in *Masculinities in Chaucer*, ed. Peter G. Beidler (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1998), 153.

[15] Mitchell and Robinson, 249.

seriousness."[16] Chaucer's near-contemporaries saw *Thopas* as silly, but not as a "meta-romance" satirizing a specific literary form.[17] French aristocrat Jean of Angoulême called it a *valde absurdum*, "an absurd quarrel."[18] Skelton writes in 1523, "But hyde the, sir Thopas, Nowe into the castell of Bas, And lurke there, like an as." Olivia's clown in *Twelfth Night* impersonates "Sir Topas the curate" (IV.iv.2), and another poet in 1611 refers to *Thopas* as "Chaucers jest."[19] Academics do not apply the term *burlesque* to the poem until the 1760s, and Sir Walter Scott is the first to call the poem a parody in his *Essay on Romance* in 1824.[20]

Dane goes further to assert that eighteenth century critics did not so much develop the idea that *Sir Thopas* is a satire on medieval English romance as create it. Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1774) locates the focus of Chaucer's parody in *Thopas* in "discerning improprieties in books."[21] Chaucer's intentions were "to ridicule the frivolous descriptions and other tedious impertinences"[22] of the popular romances, and editors through Skeat generally assented to such an interpretation. Twentieth-century scholarship came to appreciate Chaucer's humor but generally continued Warton's

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[16] Matthew Arnold, "The Study of Poetry" (1880), in *Criticism: The Major Statements*, ed. Charles Kaplan (New York: St. Martin's, 1986), 370.

[17] Dane, 355.

[18] Paul Strohm, "Jean of Angoulême: A Fifteenth-Century Reader of Chaucer," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 72 (1971): 69-76.

[19] Dane, 355.

[20] Hurd, 349.

[21] Thomas Warton, *History of English Poetry* (1774), quoted in Dane, 345.

[22] Warton quotes Richard Hurd, in a letter written in 1765. Quoted in Dane, 353.

argument that Chaucer parodies "the endless Middle English tail rhyme romances"[23] and mocks their "plot[s], characters, jog-trot rhythm, and verbal clichés."[24] The emphasis switches entirely from Sir Thopas as a comic character to Chaucer's satirical technique through his calculated sabotage of his own failed romance as an "explicit assessment of the genre."[25] Pearsall calls the poem "brilliantly bad."[26] Presumably, *Bevis* and *Guy* are cited to serve as representative examples of the romances' hack writing.

Nevertheless, some recent scholarship has reappraised Chaucer's tone. C.S. Lewis was prescient in 1936 in looking alarmingly at the tendency to assume parodic intent in an increasing number of tales and segments. *The Squire's Tale* had long been read by some as ironic, but within the same century works as seemingly devout as *Melibee* and *The Knight's Tale* would be given acerbic interpretations. Lewis fretted that "many of us now read into Chaucer all manner of ironies, slynesses, and archnesses, which are not there," [27] much as Larry Benson has written in frustration about the tittering of critics who see every incidence of *queynte* as a sexual joke.[28] Chaucer likely intends some *myrthe* in the project, as ultimately a *Canterbury Tale* is ME slang for a lie.[29]

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[23] Thomas J. Garbaty, "Chaucer and Comedy," in *Chaucer's Humor: Critical Essays*, ed. Jean E. Jost (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994), 93.

[24] Albert C. Baugh, *Chaucer's Major Poetry* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 347, quoted in Dane, 346.

[25] Robert M. Jordan, "Chaucerian Romance?" *Yale French Studies* 51 (1974): 226.

[26] Pearsall, *Life*, 195.

[27] C.S. Lewis, "Chaucer," in *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: University Press, 1936): 157-97.

[28] Larry D. Benson, "The 'Queynte' Punnings of Chaucer's Critics," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 1 (1984): 23-47.

[29] John Gardner, *The Poetry of Chaucer* (1978), quoted in John Michael Crafton, "Paradoxicum Semiotica," in Jost, 163.

Nevertheless, he does not have "the waspish mind of Pope,"[30] and to view *The Canterbury Tales* as a cynical, nihilist joke offers the same lure the conspiracy theory does—it cannot be disproven—but it seems alien to what is known about Chaucer and his community. His biographical details and writings do not suggest the misanthropic bitterness of a Juvenal.

As some of the Victorian condescension toward humor and works lacking epic *gravitas* has faded, more recent studies have recaptured some of the fun of *Sir Thopas*. Jost sees in the poem "a birthday-party setting, jovial and childlike."[31] More sympathetic readings of oral and folkloric narrative have appeared, and there has been a stronger critical sentiment that Chaucer does not satirize English romances as a group but only bad ones. Both Manly and Loomis were careful to make the distinction that Chaucer is "not necessarily parodying romance as a thing in itself"[32] or even specific texts, but creating a generalized comic depiction of the defects and extremes he saw in the format. Evidently Chaucer did not see all romantic tag-formulas as trite clichés, as otherwise questions rise about his own use of the "diction, formulaic conventions, and even compositional methods"[33] of romance in his ostensibly serious texts. There Chaucer appropriates phrases such as "sighed sore" (*Bevis* 1312, *Guy* 943, four times in the *Romaunt*, six times in *Troilus*) and "it befel upon a cas" (*Bevis* 1283, *CT* I.1074, *LGW* 1907) .[34] Variations of

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[30] Garbaty, "Chaucer and Comedy," 81.

[31] Jost, introduction to *Chaucer's Humor*, xxv.

[32] Loomis, "Sir Thopas," 492.

[33] Charbonneau, 651.

[34] Edward R. Haymes, "Chaucer and the English Romance Tradition," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 37:4 (1972): 38. Haymes believes it unlikely that Chaucer coincidentally translates these poetic formulas from French

the formula "leof ne looth" ("friend or foe") appear in *CT* I.1837 and *BD* 8, but the expression goes back as far as *Beowulf*—"ne leof ne lað" (511).[35]

The conclusion that Chaucer intends at least a gentle Horatian laugh on certain romances does seem unavoidable. Magoun identifies numerous narrative parallels between *Thopas* and *Lybeaus*,[36] but the parodic element shines most clearly in the many borrowings from *Guy of Warwick*, which are often narrative but are occasionally directly textual, as Strong cites:

Guy	*Thopas*
In this warld is man non	For in that contree was ther noon
That ogaines him durst gon,	That to him dorste ryde or goon
Herl, baroun, no knight (1771-3)	Neither wyf ne childe (804-6)[37]

The correspondence is close, but in the latter is made ridiculous by Sir Thopas being an object of fear only to women and children. Equally, Chaucer sees *Guy*'s repetition of equine terms such as *pricking*, used forty times in the text, and repeats it *ad nauseum* in *Thopas*, eight times in 84 lines.[38] Chaucer the pilgrim similarly beats down the adjective *fair* to joke at what Chaucer the poet perhaps sees as an impoverished romance lexicon, even employing it as Thopas runs away (830). Nevertheless, the parody seems scattershot, as Chaucer also borrows images and text from such un-romantic sources as biblical

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sources as many are alliterative. See also Albert C. Baugh, "Improvisation in the Middle English Romance," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 103:3 (1959): 418-454.

[35] Haymes, 38-9.

[36] Francis P. Magoun, Jr., "The Source of Chaucer's Rime of Sir Thopas," *PMLA* 42:4 (1927).

[37] Caroline Strong, "Sir Thopas and Sir Guy II" *Modern Language Notes* 23:4 (1908): 108.

[38] Strong, "Sir Guy II," 103. Whether Chaucer intends the modern double entendre on *prick* is unclear but improbable. Its first usage with a sexual meaning is recorded in 1450 (MED), and likely no one was laughing at the devotional *Prick of Conscience* (1340). See also Benson, "Queynte," who notes that when the clerk John in the *Reeve's Tale* "pricketh harde and depe" (4231) the word has a humorous sexual nuance only in context and not based on a recognized secondary meaning (26).

scripture. The giant slinging rocks comes straight from the David and Goliath narrative in I Samuel 17, although "staf-slynge" (829) is first recorded in *Richard Coeur de Lion* (5226), also in Auchinleck.[39]

Yet still the only two critical choices are whether Chaucer pokes fun at English romance as a whole or merely the worst literary failings of substandard texts within the genre. Both arguments position works such as *Guy* and *Bevis* as negative examples against which the poem is a reaction, insisting that *Thopas* is knowingly and humorously bad because the English romances it parodies (or perhaps just *Guy* and *Bevis*) are also wretched. I would instead like to argue an opposite thesis: that Chaucer does not cite the worst romances but the best, in order to heighten the humorous effect when they are compared to the amusing failure of *Sir Thopas* as a romance. Thus the comic focus in the poem is on the knightly ineptness of Thopas and, by extension, Chaucer the pilgrim's incompetence as a storyteller, and not on the romances cited, which serves to throw into greater and funnier contrast the difference between successful romances and the poverty of Chaucer's attempt.

One of the chief impediments to this interpretation lies in the modern insistence that parody as a rule must be negative and to the object's disadvantage. One avenue which may prove fruitful is Mikhail Bakhtin's studies of carnival folk humor.[40] In *Rabelais and His World* (1965), Bakhtin asserts that public displays of comedy, from

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[39] Laura A. Hibbard Loomis, "Sir Thopas and David and Goliath," *Modern Language Notes* 51:5 (1936): 312.

[40] For a longer discussion of Chaucer and Bakhtin, see S.H. Rigby, *Chaucer in Context* (Manchester: University Press, 1996), 18-77, in Gillian Rudd, *The Complete Critical Guide to Geoffrey Chaucer* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 169.

clowns and jugglers to oral and textual parodies of ceremonies and establishment values, are little documented but were a vital part of ecclesiastical and civic festivals in medieval Europe. Bakhtin sees an institution stretching from the Roman Saturnalias to modern holdovers such as Mardi Gras.[41] While Punch and Judy do not appear in England until the Restoration, they continued a similar tradition of slapstick imbued with social commentary. Hanna similarly lists Maypole plays, Christmas mummings, and Corpus Christi pageants as celebrations in Chaucer's London,[42] events which may have had informal and ephemeral components unrecorded by contemporary historians but permeated drama and secular literature.

A key attribute of Bakhtin's conception of folk humor is the sense of recreational and regenerative laughter. In contrast to Restoration and Victorian satire, "which was actually not laughter but rhetoric… No wonder it was compared to a whip or scourge,"[43] carnival humor was playful, often involving games where social rank was leveled or reversed, another inheritance from the Roman Saturnalias. A second is its inclusiveness. Like the angry partisan satire of American talk-show radio which derides the opposition, a Pope or Juvenal isolates and places himself above the object of scorn, whereas folk comedy also laughs at its author:

> This is one of the essential differences of the people's festive laughter from the pure satire of modern times. The satirist whose laughter is negative places himself above the object of his mockery, he is opposed to it… The people's ambivalent

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[41] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Indiana University Press, 1984), 7-8.

[42] Ralph Hanna, *London Literature 1300-1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 34-5.

[43] Bakhtin, 51.

> laughter, on the other hand, expresses the point of view of the whole world; he who is laughing also belongs to it.[44]

A third convention is that, while festive humor mocked state and ecclesiastical authority, it ironically "sanctioned the existing pattern of things and reinforced it,"[45] in effect reaffirming the dominant establishment by forming a tolerated inverse. Such bread-and-circus public expressions may have served as a useful safety valve for the grievances of the marginalized. The tradition also extended into clerical ranks. Bakhtin asserts that folk humor underlies "the entire recreational literature of the Middle Ages"[46] and he attributes considerable patience on the part of church and secular authorities, who indulged witty parodies of such artifacts as hymns and wills, council decrees, and debates, all "created and preserved under the auspices of the 'Paschal laughter,' or of the 'Christmas laughter.'"[47] Bakhtin sees a line of humorous texts from ancient parodies of Latin grammar to Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly* (1509) and such comic, earthy genres as the French fabliaux. Yet as an officially tolerated discourse it could be highly sophisticated and learned.

Bakhtin's portrait of folk humor does suggest a certain amount of Marxist wish-fulfillment for the medieval era in Europe. His "carnival cult"[48] has been dismissed as a utopian simplification of the period. Comic wags who progressed from nonspecific tomfoolery into pointed criticism of individuals, or who shaded from theological

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[44] Bakhtin, 12.

[45] Bakhtin, 9.

[46] Bakhtin, 13.

[47] Bakhtin, 14.

[48] Jennifer Wise, "Marginalizing Drama; Bakhtin's Theory of Genre," *Essays in Theatre* 8:1 (1989): 18.

playfulness into open heresy, might have seen their enterprise brought to a quick end. Rabelais himself would see his writings banned by church and state authorities. Jesters, the supposed epitome of festival comedy and foolishness, are depicted in literature with extraordinary liberties to buffoon even royalty, as does Lear's Fool who mockingly tells the king, "I am better / than thou art now: I am a fool, thou art nothing" (I.iv.715-6). Yet these are fictional characters, and Carlyon argues that the romantically subversive image of the jester "speaking truth to power" is an ahistorical fantasy: "Try to imagine Stalin, or Hitler honoring someone who attacked him with jokes."[49] The period did see Olivia's "allowed fool[s]" (I.v.94) in royal courts, but even Feste is careful to direct his sharpest barbs at those who are *not* in favor, such as Malvolio.[50]

Yet this tradition of festive foolishness may have influenced English works as diverse as animal debate poems such as *The Owl and the Nightingale* (c. 1200) with its petty and comic quarreling and the *Tournament of Tottenham* (1400-30) with its slapstick humor and wedding finale. In Germany, Brand suffered no prosecution for his anticlerical satire *Ship of Fools* (1494). Even in the miracle and mystery plays of England, serious biblical narratives coexist with such stock comic types as Noah's henpecking wife who wants to leave the ark to put away the forks and knives (*Noah and His Wife*, 110) or *The Second Shepherd's Play* where a shepherd and his wife attempt to hide a stolen sheep in their crib for dinner, in a blasphemous parody of the Nativity, before viewing the newborn Christ child. No doubt the clergy intended some sugar with the homiletic

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[49] David Carlyon, "The Trickster as Academic Comfort Food," *Journal of American & Comparative Cultures* 25:1/2 (2002): 14-15.

[50] Carlyon, 15.

medicine, but such scenes of alternating piety and lampoon were staged on church lofts and porches during festival occasions such as Corpus Christi Day, [51] lending to their carnival moments.

If Chaucer can be seen as part of this literary tradition of festive humor, the import of *Thopas* is more easily recognized as laughing at Sir Thopas as a comic type. Chaucer's main joke is Thopas' foppish effeminacy, a fertile and ancient trope. The description of this "incredible shrinking knight"[52] is hopelessly metrosexual with a face of *payndemayn*, dainty white bread, and lips like roses, everything that a "doughty swain" (*CT* VII.724-6) should not be. He rides out lightly armed, as "perhaps a full suit of armor would hide his good looks,"[53] and he must climb into his saddle (797) rather than mounting his steed. The woods forebode with wild beasts, "bothe bukke and hare" ("both deer and rabbits!" 756). Danger finally looms in the form of Olifaunt, who merely menaces Thopas' horse (812), threatening him with "the inconvenience of having to walk home."[54] Thopas' valiant response is to ask the giant if he can come back the next morning and then to flee, and that evening his preparation for battle consists mostly of music and "sweets for the sweet,"[55] gingerbread and licorice treats, rather than sober armament. On the field itself he has a warhorse which "gooth an ambil in the way / ful

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[51] Thomas J. Garbaty, *Medieval English Literature* (Long Grove, Il: Waveland, 1984), 861.

[52] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Diminishing Masculinity in Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas*," in *Masculinities in Chaucer*, ed. Peter G. Beidler (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1998), 144.

[53] Craig A. Berry, "Borrowed Armor/Free Grace: The Quest for Authority in *The Faerie Queene 1* and Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas*," *Studies in Philology* 91:2 (1994): 156.

[54] Cohen, 146.

[55] Alan T. Gaylord, "Chaucer's Dainty 'Dogerel': The 'Elvyssh' Prosody of *Sir Thopas*," in Jost, 279.

softely and rounde" (885-6). The joke barbs romances but chiefly plays on Thopas' ridiculous unfitness as a knight.

Part of the comic element is Thopas' implicit sexual inadequacy. Naming a knight after a pale gemstone certainly lacks the virile connotation of a *Hrothulf* or *Wulfgar*, but subtler meanings may also apply to Thopas' appellation. Loomis posits that Chaucer borrows the name *Thopas* from a French poem by Watriquet de Couvin, who praises the Constable of France as "la jemme et la topase,"[56] but most critics agree that the name simply reflects medieval traditions identifying the topaz with chastity.[57] Thopas himself, like the "litel clergeon" whose tale precedes his, is as sexless as the popes and cardinals he asks for tales about (849), the last people who ought to be in romances. Seemingly unable to confront the maids who "moorne for hym paramour" (742), Thopas' desire surfaces in his frothing steed which must be 'pricked,' but the scene ends with the horse exhausted and an erotic dream of an elf-queen who never appears.[58] Despite the over-elaborate details of his arming, Thopas seems to have nothing on (or in) his pants. There is a sheath (876) but no spurs or sword,[59] merely a *launegay*, a flaccid costume lance. His spear is made of cypress, a softwood which hardly "bodeth were" (882).

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[56] Watriquet de Couvin, "Dit du Connestable de France," quoted in Loomis, "*Sir Thopas*," 493.

[57] Woodburn O. Ross, "A Possible Significance of the Name Thopas," *Modern Language Notes* 45:3 (1930): 172-174. Not everyone agrees. For a discussion of alternative theories of the meaning of Thopas, see Charbonneau, 655. Charbonneau also notes that *Richard Couer de Lion* and *Il Filocolo* have characters named Topaz, but both are women (655).

[58] Berry, 155-6.

[59] In comparison, even the Wife of Bath wears sharp spurs (*CT* I.473). See also Irving Linn, "The Arming of Sir Thopas," *Modern Language Notes* 51:5 (1936): 310. Linn notes that "in degrading an unworthy knight the symbolic action consisted in depriving him of sword and spurs" (310).

The role of the giant is additionally important. Giants often psychologically embody sexual menace, and in Monmouth's *Historia* the giant both symbolizes sexual assault and literally rapes the heroine.[60] The giant may also represent the hero's own moral temptations, and Cohen asserts that "the hero defeats the monster and decapitates him and then publicly displays the severed head in a ritual that announces to the world that he has conquered his own dark impulses."[61] Here Thopas seemingly has no impulses at all, and any sexual drama is punctured by Olifaunt's easy comment that the elf-queen is not in prison in peril of ravishment but relaxing comfortably:[62] "heere is the queene of Fayerye / with harpe and pipe and symphonye" (814-5). To make matters worse, Thopas still impotently fails to master the giant's shrunken threat.

Structurally, the arc of the joke lays in the audience's expectations of romance conventions which are repeatedly and comically disappointed. The stock structures of romance, such as the adventure quest, the love interest, the threatening monster, are all present and promising but collapse in laughter: "it is the non-functional display of rituals which generates the parodic humor, not simply the rituals themselves."[63] Thopas sleeps outside, a risky self-exposure to peril in both *Sir Orfeo* and *Launfal*, and expresses a yearning for adventure and action, but even danger ignores him. He wishes to appear

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[60] Cohen, 150. For a fuller discussion of the sexual menace and gender implications of giants, see Cohen's introduction to his book *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University Press, 1997).

[61] Cohen, "The Giant of Self-Figuration: Diminishing Masculinity in Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas*," in *Giants*, 103. Cohen's chapter is an extension of the Beidler version.

[62] Cohen, 149.

[63] John Finlayson, "Definitions of Middle English Romance I," *Chaucer Review* 15:1 (1980): 47.

aristocratic, but wears clothing priced in janes, an insignificant Genoese coin,[64] and he swears on bread and ale (872), humble fare lacking any elevated significance. His attempts to win love and *lof* through heroic deeds of courage take place without any community of family, ladies, or warriors to witness them, "stranding him on an empty stage where his rushing about looks absurdly autonomous."[65] Nevertheless, *Sir Thopas* does not mock romances any more than the *Nun's Priest's Tale* mocks epics or medieval rhetoric. Rather, the poem amusingly violates the expectations of a poetic register. Chaucer dramatically builds the heroic tenor by saying that Thopas "koude hunte at wilde deer / and ride an haukyng for river" (736-7) and then collapses it with "therto he was a good archeer" (739), a pedestrian skill fit only for yeomen. The reader is led to expect wild beasts and gets rabbits.

In the same manner, Bevis, Guy, and Lybeaux are held up as ideals against whom Thopas looks ridiculously inadequate. Chaucer makes the comparison additionally risible by claiming that Thopas "bereth the flour / of roial chivalry!" (901-2) rather than those other heroes. The obvious incredibility of the praise makes both Thopas and the storyteller look foolish and produces laughter. Throughout the poem, Chaucer overlays an additional comic dimension in that the audience sees Chaucer the narrator's "drasty rymyng" while being aware that the pilgrim-narrator also represents the master-poet writing the tale. The reader or auditor again expects something different and instead, to humorous effect, hears a story so intolerable to the other pilgrims that it is "marked as a

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[64] Haskell, 255.

[65] Susan Crane, *Gender and Romance in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (Princeton: University Press, 1994), 29.

public failure, put down and shut off by that Master of High Seriousness, Harry Bailly,"[66] who tells his own creator, "Sire, at o word, thou shalt no lenger ryme" (932).

Such an identification depends on the problematic assumption that the narrator is Chaucer.[67] The Ellesmere manuscript places a portrait of Chaucer beside the ending of *Sir Thopas* (f. 153v), but this is a later artistic interpretation. The Man of Laws states that he has no tale that "Chaucer, thogh he kan but lewedly / on metres and on rymyng craftily" (*CT* II.47-8) has not already said. He adds that Chaucer has already told more tales of lovers than Ovid, breaking the fourth wall by referring to Chaucer the poet, but this is not necessarily Chaucer the pilgrim. Pearsall quotes Henry Miller, who once dispelled any mystery by saying about a critic, "If he means the narrator, then it's me," arguing that the performative Chaucer is concurrent with and fluidly shades into the man,[68] rendering such concerns misplaced. If the gap between Chaucer and his fictional representation is minimal or nonconsequential, *Thopas* also participates in the second aspect of Bakhtin's folk humor, its self-inclusiveness. In the carnival atmosphere of general laughter everyone, including Chaucer, is part of the spectacle. As a subtle dig, Chaucer the poet even intensifies the Host's condescension toward himself in the Prologue to the poem by sarcastically using the rarified stanza form of rime royal.[69]

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[66] Gaylord, "Dogerel," 271.

[67] Strohm reminds us that Chaucer's addressed audience, let alone Chaucer's representation of himself as narrator, are "ways of orienting discourse" and are constructed, fictional entities which may or may not correspond to real ones. Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Harvard University Press, 1989), 62.

[68] Henry Miller, quoted by Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (University of Chicago Press, 1961), 367, in Pearsall, *Life*, 87.

[69] Martin Stevens, "The Royal Stanza in Early English Literature," *PMLA*, 94 (1979): 73, quoted in Judith Tschann, "The Layout of *Sir Thopas* in the Ellesmere, Hengwrt, Cambridge Dd.4.24, and Cambridge Gg.4.27 Manuscripts," *Chaucer Review* 20:1 (1985): 7.

Chaucer's self-deprecating portraits of himself serve multiple purposes. His physical depiction of himself as diminutive but "in the waast is shape as wel as I" (700) performs the comic type of the roly-poly short man. Such a portrayal also builds sympathy with an audience, just as Saint Paul, by tradition an unappealing man, calls his appearance "unimpressive" (2Cor. 10:10). Chaucer's protestations that he is a *lewed* man may be *pro forma* statements but additionally serve as poetic insurance, in that he can forestall audience criticism by positioning himself as a mere reporter and not responsible for flawed or morally dubious content. This limited omniscience where Chaucer can always back away by adding "I gesse" is a fictional guise not only humorous but consistent with Chaucer's real-life inclination to avoid provoking his more secure betters. But most significantly, there is a playful sense of absurdity in making Chaucer a put-upon victim, for wherever he goes he is

> treated with impatience by the Black Knight, lectured to by an Egle, yanked out of bed and shoved hither and yon by the Noble Roman Africanus, condemned to talk about endlessly faithful women by the God of Love, and finally told to shut up by the Host of the Tabard Inn.[70]

Yet the *Canterbury Tales* is different as Chaucer the narrator is not a detached dreamer-observer but shares in the communal humor of the pilgrim entourage, being bumped and verbally jostled as much as the others.

However, matters are still more complicated. Like Chinese boxes, Chaucer's seeming jokes-within-jokes can be fascinating and frustrating. Above the level of the humor of Thopas' foppish impotence and Chaucer the narrator-poet's self-deprecation is

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[70] Garbaty, "Chaucer and Comedy," in Garbaty, 95.

his relationship to Harry Bailly. The storytelling in *Thopas* has been described as "a masterful display of incompetence,"[71] in effect Chaucer's parody on himself as a poet too inept to tell a satisfactory story. Kimpel asserts that *Thopas* loses force if the narrator is "deliberately rather than unintentionally funny,"[72] yet the joke is perhaps not ruined but doubled if Chaucer actually teases the Host by giving him exactly what he asks for, "a tale of myrthe" (706) with no substance. Tschann notes that Chaucer the pilgrim follows *Thopas* with *Melibee*, a story of a dutiful and virtuous wife totally unlike Harry's harridan Goodelief, a needling which he can only impotently grouse about,[73] as Chaucer has only followed orders in giving a prose story of no mirth, all sentence. Nevertheless, these are not vindictive flytings directed at Harry any more than Chaucer intends to savage the Prioress with a tale of her sissyish *litel clergeon* as an effeminate knight. No other lines suggest that he intends more than a gentle jest on the Host. Harry may be impolite, but he tends to be most rough and ready among those he feels most comfortable with as equals.[74]

If the comic element is not Chaucer the narrator's incompetence as a storyteller but rather his knowing and humorous reply to Harry's demand for "som deyntee thyng" (711) to follow the somber mood after the Prioress' tale, the dynamics of *Sir Thopas* change. The humorous effect no longer derives solely from the narrator's bungling obliviousness to Thopas' and his story's vapid banality, but also in Chaucer's subtle joke

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[71] Tschann, 7.

[72] Ben Kimpel, "The Narrator of the Canterbury Tales," *ELH* 20:2 (1953): 84.

[73] Lawrence, 90.

[74] Pearsall, *Life*, 247. Pearsall points out that Bailly is a tavern-owner but was also a member of parliament. Thus he perhaps is entitled to be more familiar with Chaucer the pilgrim (247).

on the Host. The poem's exposition returns full circle to the assertion that Chaucer tells a deliberately wretched tale. Yet the target is changed, as the intent is not a parody of romances but a mockery of Harry's glib request. The joke is driven home by Harry missing the point and responding angrily to the content and form of the tale rather than its intent. Chaucer the pilgrim thus joins in the holiday bantering of the others by exchanging another humorous requital. In effect Chaucer has his cake and eats it too, comically giving himself a self-deprecating portrait of a harassed *popet*, who can also banter back with a tale that turns out to be no ham-fisted pastiche, but the product of a skilled poet in firm control.

A final dimension of *Sir Thopas* which may serve to support this argument is the disconnect between its content and its metrical construction. Much of the earlier criticism of Thopas has assumed that the two were stylistically coterminous, that the muddle of rhyme schemes, lacking "any discernible principle of arrangement,"[75] is in keeping with the inanity of the narrative. Even the new *Sources and Analogues* (2005) of the *Canterbury Tales* simply assumes "paralyzingly bad meter."[76] A closer examination shows a more knowing and sophisticated touch. Chaucer draws attention to the stanza form by jumping from rime royal in the Prologue, the only link in *CT* not in rhymed couplets, to various couplet and tail-rhyme forms in the tale.[77]

That Chaucer wants the audience to pay attention to the meter also seems clear from the unique arrangement of line groupings on early manuscripts of the poem such as

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[75] John Matthews Manly, "The Stanza-Forms of *Sir Thopas*," *Modern Philology* 8:1 (1910): 144.

[76] Charbonneau, 712.

[77] Gaylord, "Dogerel," 272.

Ellesmere, where couplets are linked by brackets.[78] Chaucer displays some "careful mischief,"[79] varying the stanza form and employing bobs and filler lines for added comic effect: one line has Thopas vowing "how that the geaunt shal be deed / bityde what bityde!" (873-4), building drama and then crashing it down with an empty cliché.[80] The poetic art, often surprisingly elegant, comically contrasts Thopas' banality and the tale's inertia. Words suggesting immediacy and enjambed lines—"he dide next his white leere / of cloth of lake fyn and cleere" (857-8)— humorously give "the illusion of action where none is present."[81]

The meaning of Chaucer's poetic control here is to heighten the contrast between the elegiac tone of the poetry and the comically trivial story and protagonist. Harry not only misses the joke played on him but additionally fails to distinguish the two, complaining not about story but versification, the "rym dogerel."[82] Description and narrative reality are poetically and comically mismatched. The narrator's insistence that Thopas' clothes, armor, underwear, and gingerbread are universally *fyn*, and that his appearance, steed, and retreat from the giant all display "fair berynge" (832), is an implausibility only resolved in laughter.[83] The humor attains added poignancy from the

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[78] For more detail, see Tschann, "Layout." Tschann notes that this special bracketing layout is used in Ellesmere, Hengwrt, and Cambridge Dd.4.24 and Gg.4.27.

[79] Alan T. Gaylord, "The Moment of *Sir Thopas*: Towards a New Look at Chaucer's Language," *Chaucer Review* 16:4 (1982): 318.

[80] Gaylord, "Dogerel," 280.

[81] Walter Scheps, "Sir Thopas: The Bourgeois Knight, the Minstrel and the Critics," *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 11 (1966): 37, quoted in Jost, introduction, xxv.

[82] Gaylord, "Dogerel," 273.

[83] Monty Python references come naturally to Chaucer, but the tale of Sir Robin in *Monty Python & the Holy Grail* (1975) comes closest to the same humorous effect of endlessly repeating counterfactual praise: "Brave Sir Robin ran away / Bravely ran away, away / When danger reared its ugly head / He bravely

sense that Chaucer the pilgrim intends the disparity, perhaps partly to goad the Host and partly to emphasize Thopas the character's comic failure to achieve anything fitting the poetic register. To return to the citations of *Guy*, *Bevis*, *Lybeaux*, and other romances, the narrator consciously creates a heroic, dramatic stage for added contrast against his humorously insipid hero. These English romances are not negative examples of a parodied genre but idealized ones casting the carnival frivolity of *Thopas*' mood into heightened relief.

To summarize, while Chaucer defies simplification in his objectives and motives, he likely used the Auchinleck manuscript as broad source materials for *The Tale of Sir Thopas*. While he may have intended a carnival burlesque of the English romance genre and was "no doubt aware of its insufficiencies as well as its virtues,"[84] he wrote within a culture which enjoyed and would continue to read romances, or at least for an audience familiar with its markings. The references to romance texts in *Thopas*—*Child Horn*, *Ypotis*, *Bevis*, *Guy*, *Lybeaux*, *Plendamour*, and *Perceval*—are not there for mocking parody or to serve as representatively bad examples of the genre. Rather, they are perhaps the best English romances Chaucer knows, and they humorously juxtapose against the comic failure of *Sir Thopas* to match such standards, in a deliberately vacuous narrative perhaps meant to requite the Host's request for "Som deyntee thyng" (711) to follow the Prioress' heavy tone.

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turned his tail and fled / Yes, brave Sir Robin turned about / And gallantly he chickened out / Bravely taking to his feet / He beat a very brave retreat / Bravest of the brave, Sir Robin!" "Brave Sir Robin," *YouTube*, accessed 2 October 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZwuTo7zKM8. Terry Jones states he actually was researching Chaucer during the film's production. "An Interview With Terry Jones," *IGN*, accessed 2 October 2010, http://movies.ign.com/articles/474/474005p5.html.

[84] Pearsall, *Life*, 75.

How nice it would be if Chaucer had a Bosworth in Adam Pinkhurst, someone who committed to posterity all the daily minutiae of his life—or if Chaucer had a blog.[85] While scholars would certainly appreciate knowing more about the life behind Chaucer's poetics, such details would not fully illuminate us on his audience's context or on how it would have interpreted *Sir Thopas* during the first seconds of hearing or reading the text. Lengthy academic arguments have a way of diluting humor, and for new students of Middle English romance *Thopas* risks becoming "a joke explained to death."[86] Chaucer's friends, living in that foreign past, perhaps recognized instantly and with delight what now requires longer explication.

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[85] Brantley L. Bryant does just such a thing with his parody website "Geoffrey Chaucer hath a Blog," 2 Oct. 2010, http://houseoffame.blogspot.com. In a running spat with John Gower, Chaucer gossips, "that wankere Gowere… kan be a drama queene in thre languages."

[86] Cory James Rushton, "Modern and Academic Reception of the Popular Romance," in Raluca L. Radulescue, and Cory James Rushton, ed. *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009), 166.

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