Emare | Emaré

Text Information

Author | Anonymous
Language | Middle English
Period | 14th-century
Genre | Verse narrative
Source | British Library MS Cotton Caligula Aii
URL | https://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/emare

Introduction and translation by Antonia Murath.

Introduction to the Text

Emaré is a 14th-century Middle English adaptation of a narrative type known as "maiden-without-hands" (AT 706), "Manekine-story," or "Constance-saga". It follows the misadventures of a female protagonist whom most versions characterize as royal, pious, educated, and beautiful. Refusing her father's incestuous advances, she flees or is exiled. In exile, the local ruler wishes to marry her; many versions emphasize her otherworldly beauty. A relative or courtier does not trust the beautiful stranger. When her husband is absent for the birth of their child, the mistrustful relative or courtier intercepts a letter (or series of letters) delivering the news and replaces them with slanderous content, resulting in a second exile. Ultimately, the family reunites, in most versions in Rome, where the protagonist's husband and father seek absolution for their sins and find the protagonist and her child (or children).

The oldest known versions of this narrative date to the 13th century (*Vitae Offarum Duorum*, insular Latin, 1250 or earlier; *Mai und Beaflor*, German, dated variously from 1220–80; *La Manekine*, French, dated variously from 1230–80), but it has been retold over centuries across languages, genre, and faith communities. Its origins and the connections between different versions cannot be established. In the (Latin) West, Maryvonne Hagby counts 41 distinct versions in medieval English, German, Latin and Romance languages (including Catalan, Spanish, French, and Italian), with manuscripts spanning from insular Britain across the European Continent to North Africa, as stand-alone romances, novellas, exempla, miracle tales, or plays, or as chronicle or romance subplots. The *Global Medieval Sourcebook* contains an Aragonese version of the story found in a 16th-century Aljamiado manuscript: http://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/damsel_carcayciona. *Emaré* adapts the tale as a short, tail-rhymed narrative which identifies itself as a Breton Lay (see l. 1030). It thus associates itself with a "Celtic" or Breton story matter, to which it establishes further links by way of Arthurian character names.

A prevalent stylistic feature of this text is its use of repetition. Another noteworthy feature is its long ekphrasis (description) of a wondrous cloth which the Sicilian King Tergaunte brings to the protagonist's father, the Emperor Artyus. While Artyus is blinded by the rich, gem-encrusted textile, the description makes visible the embroidery and provides a biography of the object. The narrator tells us that it was worked with rare materials by the Emir of Babylon's daughter as a love-token for the Sultan of Babylon's son. Four panels in the cloth depict romance couples: Amadas and Ydoine, Tristan and Yseut, Floire and Blancheflur, and the Babylonian lovers themselves. It comes to Tergaunte as a spoil of war. After Tergaunte's departure, the Emperor desires his daughter and has a wedding dress shaped from the cloth; he exiles her while she is still wearing the dress. Emaré and her son Segramour are frequently referred to as being "worthy beneath their clothing." Narrative attention is directed to her dazzling robe at all major plot points.

Scholarly discussion to date has often focused on the ekphrasis of the wondrous cloth, including its connection with genre, incest, the narrative's relation to the organizing principles of Cotton Caligula Aii (the miscellany in which it was transmitted), its poetics, and its negotiation of interfaith relations. However, the text is barely acknowledged outside of English Studies and is usually aligned with more famous versions, such as Chaucer's "Man of Law's Tale", Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, or *La Manekine*. Fruitful comparisons could be made with less acclaimed versions and, more generally, *Emaré* could be studied from the perspective of its position within a transcultural textual network transcending modern notions of separated national literatures.

Introduction to the Source

The 15th-century miscellany British Library Cotton Caligula Aii contains the only extant copy of the text. While tentatively dated to the second half of the 14th century, *Emaré* is likely based on a lost 13th-century French text which Edith Rickert, a previous editor of the text, has linked to the crusading milieu. The miscellany includes one epic and seven romance texts alongside devotional and didactic material. While the other romances are grouped together, *Emaré* is inserted in the middle of a series of devotional texts. Opening with a prayer to "Jhesu that is kyng in trone" (l. 1), *Emaré*'s prologue appears to continue the frequent invocations of Jesus found in the prayer which precedes it ("Jesus for your Blood"). According to Rickert, *Emaré* contains the longest introductory prayer of any Middle English romance. This is an indication of the narrative's links to religious modes of writing and to the manuscript's didactic and devotional contents.

About this Edition

This text is based on Ritson's 1885 edition. It reproduces Ritson's normalization of the MS's Thorn and Yogh to 'th' and 'gh' and his stanzaic typesetting. Changes to his text are italicized. It has been read carefully against Rickert's critical edition, Laskaya and Salisbury's more recent edition, and Denise C. White's diplomatic transcription, since Ritson does not reliably flag emendations. Gough's critical edition interferes with the manuscript's text much more aggressively than Rickert's and is thus considered only cursorily. Variance across editions concerns the extent of normalization, punctuation, and typesetting; and has been commented on where it affects meaning. It has not been possible to hold editorial variances against the manuscript itself.

Emaré, particularly the ekphrastic passage, is riddled with ambiguities, which are discussed in the notes. The punctuation of the translation punctuation differs from that of the edited Middle English text. I would like to thank Caitlin Flynn and Jan-Peer Hartmann for their advice on translation issues and Alina Karsten for her help in preparing the transcription.

Published Editions of the Text

French, Walter Hoyt, and Charles B. Hale. *Middle English Metrical Romances*. Russel and Russel, 1964. 2 vols. Vol. I, 423–55.

Gough, Alfred Bradly. *Emare: Edited by A.B. Gough*. Winter, 1901. Old and Middle English Texts, II.

Laskaya, Anne and Eve Salisbury. *Middle English Breton Lays*. Medieval Inst. Publ., Western Michigan Univ, 1995. Middle English Texts Series. Available online via http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare. Last accessed 22.12.2021.

Mahoux-Pauzin, Philippe. "Emaré." *Les lais bretons moyen-anglais*. Ed. Colette Stévanovitch and Anne Mathieu. Brepols, 2010. 241–302. Textes vernaculaires du moyen âge 9.

- *Translation into Modern French based on Laskaya and Salisbury's text.*

Mills, Maldwyn. *Six Middle English Romances*. Dent, 1973. 46–74.

Rickert, Edith. *The Romance of Emaré: Re-Edited from the Ms. / with Introd., Notes, and Glossary by Edith Rickert*. Early English Text Society, Extra Series. Oxford University Press, 1958.

Ritson, Joseph. *Ancient English Metrical Romances: Selected and Published by Joseph Ritson, and Revised by Edmund Goldsmid*. E & G Goldsmid, 1885. 3 vols. Vol. II, 183–215.

Further Reading

Burge, Amy, and Lydia Kertz. "Fabricated Muslim Identity, Female Agency, and Cultural Complicity: The Imperial Project of Emaré." *Medieval Feminist Forum: A Journal of Gender and Sexuality*. Vol. 56, No. 1 (2020). 38–69.

- *Informed by assemblage theory; the most recent article to discuss the cloth's connection to the narrative's interfaith relations and its bearers' complicity in empire-building.*

Hagby, Maryvonne. *'Die Königstochter von Frankreich' des Hans von Bühel: Fünf kontextualisierende Studien. Mit einer Bibliographie raisonée zum Manekine-Stoff*. Waxmann, 2023.

- *Hagby's 'Bibliographie Raisonnée' is the most extensive and accurate list of adaptations of the narrative tradition to date, providing manuscript and editorial information, further reading, summaries, and brief commentaries on themes of 41 versions from the Latin and Islamic West. (In German.)*

Laskaya, Anne. "The Rhetoric of Incest in the Middle English Emaré." *Violence Against Women in Medieval Texts*. Ed. Anna Roberts. University Press of Florida, 1998. 97–114.

- *Discusses the connections of the incest theme with Tergaunte's gift; Laskaya's characterization of cloth establishing a "web of love and violence" (p. 110) is referred to frequently in subsequent discussions.*

Scala, Elizabeth. "The Texture of Emaré." *Philological Quarterly*. Vol. 85, 3/4 (2006). 223–46.

- *First extensive poetological discussion; considers the cloth as a figuration of both the text and the manuscript miscellany as consciously composed artworks with links to generic traditions and material culture.*

Emare | Emaré

Jhesu, that ys kyng in trone,
As thou shoope bothe sonne and mone,
And all that shall dele and dyghte,
Now lene us grace such dedes to done,
In thy blys that we may wone,
Men calle hit heven lyghte;
And thy moder, Mary, hevyn qwene,
Bere our arunde so bytwene,
That semely ys of syght,
To thy sone that ys so fre,
In heven with hym that we may be,
That lord ys most of myght.

Jesus, who is king on the throne,
as You shaped both the sun and the moon
and all that will judge and govern,
bestow upon us grace to do such deeds
that we may dwell in Your exultation.
People call it the heavenly light.
And Your mother, Mary, heavenly Queen,
intercede on our behalf—
[Mary], who is beautiful to look at—
with Your Son, who is so noble,
so that we may be with Him in Heaven.
That Lord is the most powerful.

Menstrelles, that walken fer and wyde,
Her and ther in every a syde,
In mony a dyverse londe,
Sholde, at her begynnyng,
Speke of that ryhtwes kyng,
That made both see and sonde.
Whoso wyll a stounde dwelle,
Of mykyll myrght y may you telle,
And mornyng ther amonge,
Of a lady fayr and fre,
Her name was called Emare,
As i here synge in songe.

Entertainers who walk far and wide,
here and there, everywhere,
in many a different country,
should [first], when they start,
speak of that righteous King
who made both the sea and the sand.
Whoever would like to stop and linger:
I will tell you of much joy,
interspersed with sorrow,
of a fair and noble lady.
Her name was Emaré,
as I am singing here in song.

Her fadyr was an emperour,
Of castell, and of ryche towre,
Syr Artyus was hys nome;
He hadde bothe hallys and bowrys,
Frythes fayr, forestes with flowrys,
So gret a lord was none.
Weddedde he had a lady,
That was both fayr and semely,
Whyte as whalës bone,
Dame Erayne hette that emperes,
She was full of love and goodnesse,
So curtays lady was none.

Her father was an emperor
overseeing castles and splendid strongholds,
Sir Artyus was his name.
He had halls as well as bowers,
considerable hunting grounds, forests with flowers;
there was no lord as noble as him.
He had married a lady
who was both fair and beautiful,
white as whalebone:
Dame Erayne that empress was called.
She was full of love and virtue,
no lady was as courteous.

Syr Artyus was the best manne
In the worlde that lyvede thanne,
  Both hardy and therto wyght,
He was curtays in all thyng,
Bothe to olde and to yynge,
  And well kowth dele and dyght.
He hadde but on chyld in hys lyve,
Begeten on hys weddedde wyfe,
  And that was fayr and bryght;
For sothe, as y may telle the,
They called that chyld Emare,
  That semely was of syght.

When she was of her moder born,
She was the fayrest creature borne,
  That yn the lond was thoo,
The emperes, that fayr ladye,
Fro her lord gan she dye,
  Or hyt kowthe speke or goo.
The chyld, that was fayr and gent,
To a lady was hyt sente,
  That men called Abro,
She thawghth hit curtesye and thewe,
Golde and sylke for to sewe,
  Amonge maydenes moo.

Abro tawghte thys mayden small,
Nortour that men usedenn in sale,
  Whyle she was in her bowre;
She was curtays in all thynge,
Bothe to old and to yynge,
  And whythe as lylye flowre;
Of her hondes she was slye,
All he loved that her sye,
  Wyth menske and mychel honour.
At the meydene leve we,
And at the lady fayr and fre;

Of all men that were alive then
Sir Artyus was the most excellent.
[He was] both valiant and brave.
He was courteous in every respect,
both to the old and to the young,
and he was able to judge and govern well.
He had but one child in his life,
conceived with his wedded wife,
and [the child] was fair and radiant.
Truthfully, I can tell you,
they called that child Emaré
who was beautiful to look at.

When she was delivered from her mother,
she was the fairest creature born
[and alive] in that country.
Then the empress, that fair lady,
was parted from her lord by death
before she [Emaré] could walk or talk.
The child, who was beautiful and noble,
was sent to a lady
who was called Abro.
She taught her courtly manners and good conduct,
how to embroider with golden and silken threads,
alongside other young girls.

Abro taught this small maiden
the correct manners to be used in the dining hall,
while she was staying in her quarters.
She was courteous in every respect,
both to the old and to the young,
and [she was] as white as a lily-flower.
She was skillful with her hands.
All who saw her loved her
with honor and much respect.
Here we shall leave the maiden
and the fair and noble lady,

And speke we of the emperour.

The emperour of gentyll blode,
Was a curteys lorde and a gode,
In all maner of thynge,
Aftur when his wyf was dede,
And ledde his lyf yn weddewede,
And myche loved playnge.
Sone aftur yn a whyle,
The ryche kynge of Cesyle
To the emperour gann wende,
A ryche present wyth hym he browght,
A cloth that was wordylye wroght,
He wellcomed hym as the hende.

Syr Tergaunte, that nobyll knyght hyghte.
He presented the emperour ryght,
And sette hym on hys kne,
Wyth that cloth rychyly dyght,
Full of stones ther hit was pyght,
As thykke as hit myght be,
Off topaze and rubyes,
And other stones of myche prys,
That semely wer to se,
Of crapowtes and nakette,
As thykke ar they sette,
For sothe as y say the.

The cloth was displayed sone,
The emperoer lokede therupone,
And myght hyt not se,
For glysteryng of the ryche ston
Redy syght had he non,
And sayde, How may thys be?
The emperour sayde on hygh,
Sertes, thys ys a fayry,
Or ellys a vanytè.
The kyng of Cysyle answered than,

and speak of the emperor.

The high-born emperor
was a courteous and just lord
in every respect.
Later, when his wife had died,
and he led his life as a widower,
he much liked to keep himself amused.
Some time later,
the powerful king of Sicily
made his way to the emperor.
He brought a costly gift with him,
a fabric that was made skillfully.
He [the emperor] received him in a courtly manner.

Sir Tergaunte was the name of that noble knight.
He offered a gift to the emperor in a courtly manner,
having bent down on his knee:
a cloth that was richly ornamented.
It was bejeweled over and over with stones,
as densely as possible,
with topazes and rubies
and other stones of great worth
that were beautiful to look at,
with toadstones and nakettes.
They are set so thickly,
truthfully, as I am telling you.

The fabric was displayed quickly.
The emperor gazed upon it
and was not able to identify anything on it
—because of the glistening of the precious stones—
he did not have ready sight of it,
and [he] said, "How is this possible?"
The emperor hastily said,
"Certainly, this is fairywork,
Or else an illusion!"
Then the King of Sicily answered,

So ryche a jwell ys ther non
  In all Crystyante.

The amerayle dowghter of hethennes
Made this cloth withouten lees,
  And wrowghte hit all with pride,
And purtreyed hyt with gret honour,
Wyth ryche golde and asowr,
  And stones on ylke a syde;
And, as the story telles in honde,
The stones that yn this cloth stonde
  Sowghte they wer full wyde,
Seven wynter hit was yn makynge,
Or hit was browght to endynge,
  In herte ys not to hyde.

In that on korner made was
Idoyne and Amadas,
  With love that was so trewe,
For they loveden hem wit honour,
Portrayed they wer with trewe-love flour,
  Of stones bryght of hewe,
Wyth carbunkull and safere,
Kassydonys and onyx so clere,
  Sette in golde newe,
Deamondes and rubyes,
And other stones of mychyll pryse,
  And menstrellys with her gle.

In that other corner was dyght,
Trystram and Isowde so bryght,
  That semely wer to se,
And for they loved hem ryght,
As full of stones ar they dyght,
  As thykke as they may be,
Of topase and of rubyes,
And other stones of myche pryse,
  That semely wer to se,

"There is no [other] jewel as precious
in all of Christendom."

The daughter of the Muslim emir
made this cloth, certainly,
and wrought it entirely and honorably
and fashioned it with great virtues,
with precious gold and azure,
and [with] stones on every side.
And, as the story at hand tells,
the stones that are positioned in this cloth
were sought from very far away.
It was in the making for seven years
before it was completed,
that is the truth of it.

In that one corner
Ydoine and Amadas were made
with love that was so steadfast;
because they loved each other honorably
they were portrayed with the true-love-flower
[made] of stones of radiant hues:
with carbuncle and sapphire,
chalcedony and onyx, gleaming so,
set in new gold;
diamonds and rubies
and other stones of great worth
and entertainers with their song.

In that other corner were assembled
Tristan and Iseult, so radiant—
they were beautiful to look at;
and because they loved each other sincerely,
they are composed of so many stones,
[set] as thickly as possible,
[composed] of topazes and rubies,
and other stones of great worth,
that were beautiful to look at.

Wyth crapawtes and nakette,
Thykke of stones ar they sette,
  For sothe as y say the.

In the thrydde korner, with gret honour,
Was Florys and dam Blawncheflour,
  As love was hem betwene,
For they loved wyth honour,
Purtrayed they wer with trewe-love-flower,
  Wyth stones bryght and shene.
Ther wer knyghtes and senatowres,
Emerawdes of gret vertues,
  To wyte withouten wene,
Deamondes and koralle,
Perydotes and crystall,
  And gode garnettes bytwene.

In the fowrthe korner was oon
Of Babylone the sowdan sonne,
  The amerayles dowghtyr hym by,
For his sake the cloth was wrowght,
She loved hym in hert and thowght,
  As testymoyeth this storye.
The fayr mayden her byforn
Was portrayed an unykorn,
  With hys horn so hye,
Flowres and bryddes on ylke a syde,
With stones that wer sowght wyde,
  Stuffed wyth ymagerye.

When the cloth to ende was wrowght,
To the sowdan sone hit was browght,
  That semely was of syghte:
"My fadyr was a nobyll man,
Of the sowdan he hit wan,
  Wyth maystrye and wyth myghth;
For gret love he yaf hyt me,
I brynge hit the in specyaltè,

With toadstone and nakettes
they [Tristan and Iseult] are set thickly with stones,
truthfully, as I am telling you.

In the third corner, with great splendor,
was Floris and Dame Blanchefleur,
because love was between them.
As they loved honorably
they were depicted with the true-love-flower,
with stones that were bright and luminous.
There were knights and senators,
emeralds of great virtues,
truthfully, no doubt,
diamonds and coral,
chrysolites and crystal,
and good garnets in between.

In the fourth corner was
the Sultan of Babylon's son,
the emir's daughter by his side.
For his sake the cloth had been made.
She loved him in her heart and mind,
as this story testifies.
In front of the fair maiden
a unicorn was depicted
with his horn held up so high,
flowers and birds on each side,
with stones that were sought from far away,
endowed with [figural] decorations.

When the making of the cloth was finished,
it was brought to the sultan's son,
so beautiful to look at.
"My father was a noble man;
he gained [the cloth] from the sultan
with violence and force.
Because of his love, he gave it to me.
I bring it to you on account ofspecial affection;

Thys cloth ys rychely dyght."
He yaf hit the emperour,
He receyved hit with gret honour,
And thonkede hym fayr and ryght.

The kyng of Cesyle dwelled ther
As long as his wyll wer,
Wyth the emperour for to play,
And when he wolde wende,
He toke his leve at the hende,
And wente forth on hys way.
Now remeveth this nobyll kyng,
The emperour after his dowghter hadde longyng,
To speke with that may,
Messengeres forth he sent,
Aftyr the mayde fayre and gent,
That was bryght as someres day.

Messengeres dyghte hem in hye,
With myche myrthe and melodye,
Forth gon they fare,
Both by stretes and by stye,
After that fayr lady,
Was godely unther gare.
Her norysse, that hyghte Abro,
With her she goth forth also,
And wer sette in a chare,
To the emperour gan the go,
He come ayeyn hem a myle or two,
A fayr metyng was there.

The mayden, whyte as lylye flour.
Lyghte ayeyn her fadyr, the emperour,
Two knyghtes gan her lede.
Her fadyr, that was of gret renowne,
That of golde wered the crowne,
Lyghte of hys stede;
When they wer bothe on her fete,

this cloth is put together magnificently."
He gave it to the emperor.
He received it with great honor
and thanked him eloquently and appropriately.

The King of Sicily stayed there
as long as he wished
to amuse himself with the emperor;
and when he wanted to return home,
he took his leave immediately,
and went on his way.
Now this noble king had departed.
The emperor had a longing for his daughter,
[he desired] to speak with that maiden.
He sent messengers
to the beautiful and noble maiden
who was as radiant as a summer's day.

Messengers hurriedly prepared themselves.
With much merriment and music,
they went forth,
by street and by path,
to that fair lady,
[who] was virtuous underneath her garments.
Her nurse, who was called Abro,
also went with her,
and they were seated in a carriage.
Then they went to the emperor,
who went a mile or two in their direction to meet them.
A pleasant meeting was held there.

The maiden, white as a lily-flower,
alighted facing her father, the emperor;
two knights led her.
Her father, who was of great fame,
who wore the golden crown,
alighted from his steed.
When they were both on their feet,

He klypped her ond kyssed her swete,
And bothe on fote they yede,
They wer glad and made good chere,
To the palys they yede in fere.
In romans as we rede.

Then the lordes that wer grete,
They wesh and seten doun to mete,
And folk hem served swyde,
The mayden, that was of sembelant swete,
Byfore her owene fadur sete,
The fayrest wommon on lyfe.
That all his hert and all his thowghth,
Her to love was yn browght,
He byhelde her ofte sythe,
So he was anamored hys thowghter tyll,
With her he thowghth to worche his wyll,
And wedde her to hys wyfe.

And when the mete-whyle was doun,
Into hys chamber he wente soun,
And called his counseyle nere,
He bad they shulde sone go and come,
And gete leve of the pope of Rome,
To wedde that mayden clere.
Messengeres forth they wente,
They durst not breke his commandement,
And erles with hem yn sere,
They wente to the courte of Rome,
And browghte the popus bullus sone,
To wedde hys dowghter dere.

Then was the emperour gladde and blythe,
And lette shape a robe swythe,
Of that cloth of golde,
And when hit was don her upon,
She semed non erthely wommon,
That marked was of molde.

he embraced her and sweetly kissed her,
and they both walked on foot.
They were joyous and made good cheer
and walked to the palace together,
as we read in romance.

Then the lords, who were distinguished,
washed [their hands] and sat down to eat,
and people served them swiftly.
The young woman, who was of a delightful shape,
sat down in front of her own father.
[She was] the most beautiful woman alive.
[So] all his heart and all his mind
was fixated on loving her.
He gazed at her often.
He was so enamored by his daughter
that he schemed how to have his way
and wed her as his wife.

And when dinner was over
he soon went into his chamber
and called his council in.
He bade them to go and return quickly,
and get leave from the Pope of Rome
to wed that beautiful maiden.
The messengers went forth.
They did not dare to break his command;
and earls went with them, too.
They went to the court in Rome
and soon brought (back) the Pope's dispensation
[for Artyus] to wed his dear daughter.

Then the emperor was joyous and happy,
and swiftly had a robe shaped
from the gold cloth.
And when it was put upon her
she did not seem like an earthly woman
who was created by God.

Then seyde the emperour so fre,
Dowghtyr, y woll wedde the,
  Thow art so fresh to beholde.
Then sayde that wordy unther wede,
Nay, syr, god of heven hit forbede,
  That ever do so we shulde!

Yyf hit so betydde that ye me wedde,
And we shulde play togedere in bedde,
  Bothe we were forlorne;
The worde shulde sprynge fer and wyde
In all the worlde on every syde,
  The worde shulde be borne.
Ye ben a lorde of gret pryce,
Lorde, lette never suche sorow aryce,
  Take god you beforne;
That my fader shulde wedde me,
God forbede that i hyt so se,
  That wered the crowne of thorne!

The emperour was ryght wrothe,
And swore many a gret othe,
  That deed shulde she be;
He lette make a nobull boot,
And dede her theryn god wote,
  In the robe of nobull ble.
She moste have with her no spendyng,
Nother mete ne drynke,
  Bot shote her yn to the se;
 Now the lady dwelled thore,
Wythowte anker or ore,
   And that was gret pytè.

Ther come a wynd, y untherstonde,
And blewe the boot fro the londe,
  Of her they lost the syght,
The emperour hym bethowght,
That he hadde all myswrowht,

Then the very noble emperor said,
"Daughter, I want to wed you,
you are so bright to behold."
Then that worthy one underneath the clothing said,
"No, Sir, God of Heaven forbids
that we should ever do so!

"If it so happened that you married me
and we were to amuse ourselves in bed
we would both be lost!
The word would spread far and wide;
the news would be carried
into every corner of the world.
You are a lord of outstanding praise,
[so] Lord, never let such sorrow arise:
pay heed to God!
That my father should wed me,
God forbid that I should witness that,
(God) who was adorned with a crown of thorns!"

The emperor was consumed with rage,
and swore many a great oath
that she must die.
He had a magnificent boat made
and put her inside, God knows,
in that robe of magnificent brightness.
She was not permitted to have any spendable wealth with her,
nor food, nor drink,
and he cast her into the sea.
Now the lady remained there for a long time
without anker or [steering] oar
and that was a great misery!

There came a wind, I understand,
and [it] blew her boat away from the shore.
They lost sight of her.
The emperor thought to himself
that he had done a great wrong

And was a sory knyghte.
And as he stode yn studyÿnge,
He fell down in sowenynge,
To the yrthe was he dyght ;
Gret lordes stode therby,
And toke yn the emperour hastyly,
And comforted hym fayr and ryght.

When he of sownyng kovered was,
Sore he wepte and sayde, Alas,
For my dowhter dere!
Alas, that y was made man,
Wrecched kaytyf that i hit am! ǂ
The teres ronne by his lere.
I wrawght ayeyn goddes lay,
To her that was so trewe of fay:
Alas, why ner she here!
The teres lasshed out of his yyen,
The grete lordes that hyt syyen,
Wepte and made yll chere.

Ther was nother olde ny yynge,
That kowthe stynte of wepynge,
For that comely unther kelle,
Into shypys faste gan they thrynge,
For to seke that mayden yynge,
That was so fayr of flesh and fell;
They her sowght over all yn the see,
And myghte not fynde that lady fre,
Ayeyn they come full snell.
At the emperour now leve we,
And of the lady yn the see,
I shall begynne to tell.

The ladye fleted forth alone,
To god of heven she made her mone,
And to hys modyr also;
She was dryven with wynde and rayn,

and he was a sorry knight.
And as he stood in contemplation,
he fell down into a swoon,
he fell down onto the ground.
Great lords stood nearby
and hastily helped up the emperor
and comforted him kindly and well.

When he had regained consciousness
he wept sorely and said, "Alas,
for my dear daughter!
Alas, that I was born,
miserable wretch that I am!"
The tears ran down his face.
"I acted against God's law
towards her, who was so true of faith,
alas, why is she not here!"
The tears flooded out of his eyes;
the high-ranked lords who witnessed this
wept and displayed their grief.

Nobody, neither old nor young
could abstain from weeping
for that beautiful one under the cloak.
They quickly rushed onto ships
in order to seek the young maiden
who was so fair of flesh and skin.
They searched for her all over the sea
and could not find that noble lady.
Quickly they came back.
We now leave the emperor,
and I shall begin to speak
of the lady at sea.

The lady drifted forth alone;
to God in Heaven she made her complaint
and also to His mother.
She was propelled by the wind and the rain

With strong stormes her agayn,
Of the water so blo.
As y have herd menstrelles syng yn sawe,
Hows ny lond myghth she non knawe,
Aferd she was to go,
She was so dryven fro wawe to wawe,
She hyd her hede and laye full lawe,
For watyr she was full woo.

Now this lady dwelled thore
A good seven nyghth and more,
As hit was goddys wylle,
With carefull herte, and sykyng sore,
Such sorow was here yarked yore,
And ever lay she styll.
She was dryven ynto a lond,
Thorow the grace of goddes sond,
That all thyng may fulfylle,
She was on the see so harde bestadde,
For hunger and thurste almost madde,
Woo worth wederus yll!

She was dryven into a lond,
That hyghth Galys, y untherstond,
That was a fayr cuntre,
The kynges steward dwelled ther bysyde,
In a kastell of mykyll pryde,
Syr Kadore hyght he.
Every day wolde he go,
And take with hym a sqwyer or two,
And play hym by the see;
On a tyme he toke the eyr,
With two knyghtes gode and fayr,
The wedur was lythe of le.

A boot he fond by the brym,
And a glysteryng thyng theryn,
Therof they had ferly,

and opposed by the dark water's
fierce storms.
As I have heard storytellers sing and tell
she could neither see settlements nor land;
she was afraid to move.
She was tossed from wave to wave.
She hid her head and lay low.
The water tormented her.

Now this lady remained there
for a good seven nights and longer
—as it was God's will—
with a heavy heart and sighing loudly;
this misfortune was her destiny
and she always lay still.
She was driven to a land
through the grace of God's mercy
which encompasses all things.
She had been harassed so severely at sea
that she was almost crazed from hunger and thirst.
Cursed be ill weather!

She was driven into a land
that was called "Galys," as I understand,
which was a pleasant country.
The king's steward dwelled there beside [the sea]
in a castle of great worth;
he was called Sir Kadore.
Every day he would go
and take a squire or two with him
and they would amuse themselves on the beach.
On one of these occasions he went outside for a walk
with two good and fair knights;
the weather was pleasant and calm.

He found a boat by the sea
and a glistening thing inside it
which made them marvel.

They went forth on the sond,
To the boot i untherstond,
  And fond theryn that lady.
She hadde so longe meteles be,
That hym thowht dele to se,
  She was in poynt to dye.
They askede her what was her name,
She chaunged hit ther anone,
  And sayde she hette Egare.

Syr Kadore hadde gret pytè,
He toke up the lady of the see,
  And hom gan he lede;
She hadde so longe meteles be,
She was wax lene as a tre,
  That wordy unther wede.
Into hys castell when she came,
Into a chawmbyr they her namm,
  And fayr they gann her fede,
Wyth all delycyus mete and drynke,
That they myghth hem on thynke,
  That was yn all that stede.

When that lady, fayr of face,
With mete and drynke kevered was,
  And had colour agayne,
She tawghte hem to sewe and marke
All maner of sylkyn werke,
  Of her they wer full fayne.
She was curteys yn all thyng,
Bothe to olde and to yynge,
  I say yow for certeyne;
She kowthe werke all maner thyng,
That fell to emperour or to kyng,
  Erle, barown, or swayne.

Syr Kadore lette make a feste,
That was fayr and honeste,

They went across the sand
to the boat, as I understand,
and found that lady inside.
She had been without food for so long
that it grieved them greatly to see
[that] she was on the point of dying.
They asked her what her name was:
she changed it there on the spot
and said she was called Egaré.

Sir Kadore felt great compassion:
he picked up the lady of the sea
and led her home.
She had been without food for so long
that she had grown as lean as a tree,
that worthy one underneath the dress.
When she came into his castle,
they took her into a chamber
and fed her well
with all the delicious food and drink
they could think of
that was in the castle.

When that fair-faced lady
was restored with food and drink
and had regained her [healthy] complexion,
she taught them how to sew and embroider
all kinds of silk work;
they were very pleased with her.
She was courteous in every respect,
both to the old and the young,
I tell you, truthfully.
She was able to fashion all sorts of things
that would befit an emperor or a king,
earl, baron, or retainer.

Sir Kadore arranged for a feast
that was proper and appropriate

Wyth hys lorde the kynge,
Ther was myche menstralsè,
Trompus, tabors, and sawtrè,
Bothe harpe and fydyllyng.
The lady, that was gentyll and small,
In kurtull alone served yn hall,
Byfore that nobull kyng,
The cloth upon her shone so bryghth,
When she was theryn ydyghth,
She semed non erdly thyng.

The kyng loked her upon,
So fayr a lady he sygh nevur non,
His herte she hadde yn wolde,
He was so anamered of that syghth,
Of the mete non he myghth,
But faste gan her beholde ;
She was so fayr and gent,
The kynges love on her was lent,
In tale as hyt ys tolde;
And when the mete-whyle was doun,
In to the chamber he wente soun,
And called his barouns bolde.

Fyrst he called syr Kadore,
And other knyghtes that ther wore,
Hastely come hym tyll,
Dukes and erles, wyse of lore,
Hastely come the kyng before,
And askede what was his wyll.
Then spakke the ryche yn ray,
To syr Kadore gan he say,
Wordes fayr and stylle:
Syr, whenns ys that lovely may,
That yn the halle served this day?
Tell me yyf hyt be thy wyll.

Then sayde syr Kadore, Y untherstonde,

for his lord, the king.
There was much entertainment,
trumpets, tambourines, and zithers,
harps, as well as fiddle-playing.
The lady who was noble and [yet] lowly,
served in the hall in just her frock
before that noble king.
The cloth upon her shone so intensely
when she was in dressed in it
that she did not seem to be an earthly thing.

The king gazed at her.
He had never seen such a beautiful lady before.
She held his heart in her grasp.
He was so enamored of that sight
that he was unable to eat
but quickly fixed his gaze upon her.
She was so beautiful and noble
that the king's love was bestowed on her
as it is told in the tale.
And when the dinner was over
he went quickly into his chamber
and confidently called his barons.

First he called Sir Kadore,
and other knights that were present,
to come to him quickly.
Well-educated dukes and earls
hastily came before the king
and asked him what he required.
Then the powerful sovereign spoke.
He started uttering
affectionate and secret words to Sir Kadore:
"Sir, where is that lovely maiden from,
who was serving in the hall today?
Tell me if you may."

Then Sir Kadore said, as I understand,

Hyt ys an erles thowghter of ferre londe,
That semely ys to sene,
I sente after her, certeynlye,
To teche my chylderen curtesye,
In chambur wyth hem to bene.
She ys the konnyngest wommon,
I trowe that be yn Crystendom,
Of werk that y have sene.
Then sayde that ryche raye,
I wyll have that fayr may,
And wedde her to my quene.

"She is an earl's daughter from a faraway land
who is beautiful to look at.
Truthfully I sent for her
to nurture my children,
and to keep them company in their chamber.
She is the most erudite woman,
for sure, in all of Christendom,
[judging by] the works I have seen."
Then the powerful sovereign said,
"I will possess that fair maiden
and wed her as my queen."

The nobull kyng, verament,
After hys modyr he sent,
To wyte what she wolde say.
They browght forth hastely
That fayr mayde Egarye,
She was bryghth as someres day,
The cloth on her shon so bryght,
When she was theryn dyght,
And her self a gentell may.
The olde qwene sayde anon,
I sawe never wommon
Halvendell so gay!

The noble king, truthfully,
sent for his mother
to find out what she would say.
They hastily brought forth
that fair young woman Egaré;
she was as bright as a summer's day.
The fabric on her gleamed so brightly
when she was dressed in it,
and [she was] herself a noble maiden.
The old queen immediately said,
"I have never seen a woman
even half as magnificent!"

The olde quene spakke wordes unhende,
And sayde, Sone, thys ys a fende,
In this wordy wede,
As thou lovest my blessynge,
Make thou never this weddynge,
Cryst hit de forbede!
Then spakke the ryche ray,
Modyr, y wyll have this may,
And forth gan her lede.
The olde quene, for certayne,
Turnede with ire hom agayne,
And wolde not be at that dede.

The old queen spoke unkind words
and said, "Son, this is a fiend
in this costly dress!
Since you have asked for my blessing,
do not ever go through with this wedding.
Christ forbids you to do it!"
Then the powerful sovereign said,
"Mother, I will possess this maiden!"
And he led her away.
The old queen, truthfully,
furiously went back home
and would not attend the wedding.

The kyng wedded that lady bryght,
Grete purvyance ther was dyghth,
  In that semely sale,
Grete lordes wer served aryght,
Duke, erle, baron and knyghth,
 Both of grete and smale.
Myche folke for sothe ther was,
And thereto an huge prese,
  As hit ys tolde in tale,
Ther was all maner thyng,
That fell to a kyngus weddyng,
  And mony a ryche menstrall.

When the mangery was done,
Grete lordes departed sone,
  That semely were to see,
The kynge be laste with the qwene,
Moch love was hem betwene,
  And also game and gle;
She was curteys and swete,
Such a lady herde y never of yete ;
  They loved both with herte fre.
The lady that was both meke and mylde,
Conceyved and wente with chylde,
  As god wolde hit sholde be.

The kyng of France, yn that tyme,
Was besette with many a Sarezyne,
  And cumbered all in tene;
And sente after the kyng of Galys,
And other lordys of myche prys,
  That semely were to sene.
The kyng of Galys, in that tyde,
Gedered men on every syde,
  In armour bryght and shene;
Then sayde the kyng to Syr Kadore,
And other lordes that ther wore,
  Take good hede to my qwene.

The king wed that radiant lady,
and great hospitality was arranged for there
in that beautiful hall.
Distinguished lords were served according to courtly protocol:
dukes, earls, barons, and knights
of high and low rank.
Many common folk, truthfully, were there
and a large crowd it was,
as is told in the tale.
There was all manner of things
befitting a royal wedding,
and many a famous entertainer.

When the eating was done,
the great lords,
who were beautiful to look at, soon departed.
The king departed with the queen.
Much love was between them,
and also joy and happiness.
She was well-mannered and delightful
—I have never heard of such a lady before—
and they loved each other from their noble hearts.
The lady who was both humble and compassionate
conceived and soon was pregnant
as God willed it to be.

At that time, the King of France
was assailed by many "Saracens"
and [thus] encumbered with distress;
he sent for the King of *Galys*
and other lords of great worth
who were beautiful to look at.
The King of *Galys*, at that time,
gathered men around him
in radiant and bright armor.
Then the king said to Sir Kadore
and other lords that were present,
"Take good care of my queen."

The kyng of Fraunce spared none,
But sent for hem everychone,
  Both kyng, knyghth and clerke;
The stiward, * bylaft at home,
To kepe the qwene whyte as fome,
  He com not at that werke.
She wente with chylde, yn place,
As longe as goddes wyll was,
  That semely unther serke;
Thyll ther was of her body
A fayre chyld borne, and a godele,
  Hadde a dowbyll kynges marke.

They hit crystened wyth grete honour,
And called hym Segramour,
  Frely was that fode;
Then the steward syr Kadore,
A nobull letter made he thore,
  And wrowghte hit all with gode.
He wrowghte hit yn hyghynge,
And sente hit to his lorde the kynge,
  That gentyll was of blode;
The messenger forth gan wende,
And with the kynges moder gan lende,
  And yn to the castell he yode.

He was resseyved rychely,
And she hym askede hastyly,
  How the qwene hadde spedde;
"Madame, ther ys of her yborne
A fayr man chylde, y tell you beforne,
  And she lyth in her bedde."
She yaf hym, for that tydynge,
A robe and fowrty shylynge,
  And rychely hym cladde:
She made hym dronken of ale and wyne;
And when she sawe that hit was tyme,

The King of France spared nobody,
but sent for all of them:
kings, knights, and clergy.
The steward who was left at home
to look after the queen [who was as] white as foam
did not join that mission.
She was pregnant […],
for as long as it was God's will,
that beautiful one under her shift,
until from her body
a beautiful and handsome child was delivered
[who] had a double king's mark.

They christened him with great honor,
and called him Segramour;
that baby was of noble lineage.
Then the steward, Sir Kadore,
wrote a noble letter right away
and crafted it well.
He crafted it in haste,
and sent it to his lord, the king,
who was of noble lineage.
The messenger then went on his way.
He came by the king's mother['s place]
and went into the castle.

He was received splendidly
and she eagerly asked him
how the queen had been faring.
"My Lady, she has given birth to
a beautiful male child, I am telling you truthfully,
and she is lying in [child]bed."
For this news, she gave him
a robe and forty shillings
and had him richly clothed.
She got him drunk on ale and wine
and when she saw that it was time,

Tho chambur she wold hym lede.

And when he ł was on slepe browght,
The qwene that was of wykked thowght,
Tho chambur gan she wende ;
Hys letter she toke hym fro,
In a fyre she brente hit do,
Of werkes she was unhende.
Another letter she made with evyll,
And sayde the qwene had born a devyll,
Durst no mon come her hende.
Thre heddes hadde he there
A lyon, a dragon, and a beere,
A fowll feltred fende.

On the morn, when hit was day,
The messenger wente on his way,
Bothe by stye and strete,
In trwe story as y say,
Tyll he come ther as the kynge laye,
And speke wordes swete.
He toke the kyng the lettur yn honde,
And he hit redde, y untherstonde,
The teres down gan he lete.
And as he stode yn redyng,
Downe he fell yn sowenyng,
For sorow his herte gan blede.

Grete lordes that stonde hym by,
Toke up the kyng hastely,
In herte he was full woo;
Sore he grette and sayde, Alas !
That y ever man born was,
That hit ever so shullde be;
Alas! that y was made a kynge,
And sygh wedded the fayrest thyng
That on erthe myght go;
That evur Jhesu hymself wolde sende,

she led him to his bedroom.

And when he had fallen asleep,
the queen, who had an evil mind,
went to the chamber.
She took his letter from him
and then burnt it in a fire;
her machinations were unkind.
Maliciously, she made another letter
and said that the queen had given birth to a devil
[and that] nobody dared to come close to her.
[That her son] had three heads:
a lion's, a dragon's, and a bear's,
and was a foul, hairy fiend.

In the morning, when it was day,
the messenger went on his way,
both on the roads and the paths,
truthfully, as the story goes,
until he came to where the king was encamped,
and he spoke sweet words.
He delivered the letter to the king;
and as he read it, I understand,
[the king] let the tears stream down his face.
And as he stood reading,
he fell down, swooning;
his heart was bleeding from sorrow.

Noble lords that stood beside him
hastily helped the king up;
in his heart, he was filled with sorrow.
He wept bitterly and said, "Alas,
that I was ever born!
That it should ever be like this.
Alas, that I was made a king
and then wedded the fairest thing
that may walk on earth.
That Jesus himself would ever send

Such a fowle lothly fende,
To come bytwene us too!

When he sawe hit myght no better be,
Another letter then made he,
And seled hit with his sele ;
He commanded yn al thynge,
To kepe well that lady yynge,
Tyll she hadde her hele;
Bothe gode men and ylle,
To serve her at her wylle,
Bothe yn wo and wele:
He toke this letter of his honde,
And rode thorow the same londe,
By the kynges modur castell.

And then he dwelled ther all nyght,
He was resseyved and rychely dyght,
And wyst of no treson,
He made hym well at ese and fyne,
Bothe of brede, ale, and wyne,
And that berafte hym his reson.
When he was on slepe browht,
The false qwene his letter sowghte,
In to the fyre she kaste hit downe;
Another letter she lette make,
That men sholde the lady take,
And lede her out of towne.

And putte her ynto the see,
In that robe of ryche ble,
The lytyll chylde her wyth;
And lette her have no spendyng,
For no mete ny for drynke,
But lede her out of that kyth. ŧ
Upon payn of chylde and wyfe
And also upon your owene lyfe
Lette her have no gryth;

such a foul, loathly fiend,
to come between the two of us."

When he saw it could not be helped,
he made another letter,
and sealed it with his seal.
He commanded that above all,
the young lady was to be kept safe
until she had recovered [from the birth];
everybody, righteous or evil,
was to serve her as she commanded
for better or worse.
[The messenger] took the letter from his hands,
and rode back along the same route
via the king's mother's castle.

And then he stayed there all night;
he was received well and outfitted richly
and he was not aware of any treason.
He made himself comfortable, perfectly at ease,
with bread, ale, and wine,
and that robbed him of his senses.
When he fell asleep
the false queen looked for his letter,
she cast it into the fire
and made another letter,
[saying] that men should seize the lady
and lead her out of town

and cast her into the sea
in that robe of radiant hues,
along with her little child,
and let her have no allowance
for food or drink
but drive her out of that country.
"Show her no mercy,
or you will be punished by death
along with your own children and your wife!"

The messenger knew no gyle,
But rode hom mony a myle,
  By forest and by fryth.

And when the messenger come home,
The steward toke the letter sone,
  And bygan to rede ;
Sore he syght and sayde, alas !
Sertes this ys a fowle case,
  And a defull dede.
And as he stode yn redyng,
He fell downe yn swounynge,
  For sorow his hert gan blede;
Ther was nother olde ny yynge,
That myghte forbere of wepynge,
  For that worthy unther wede.

The lady herde gret dele yn halle,
On the steward gan she calle,
  And sayde, What may this be
Yyf any thyng be amys,
Tell me what that hit ys,
  And lette not for me.
Then sayde the steward verament,
Lo her a letter my lorde hath sente,
  And therfore woos ys me:
She toke the letter and bygan to rede,
Then fonde she wryten all the dede,
  How she moste ynto the see.

Be stylle, syr, sayde the qwene,
Lette syche morynge bene,
  For me have thou no kare;
Loke thou be not shente,
But do my lordes commaundement,
  God forbede thou spare;
For he weddede so porely,
On me a sympull lady,

The messenger was completely unaware [of this]
and he rode home for many a mile
through forests and estates.

And when the messenger came home
the steward quickly took the letter
and started to read.
He sighed heavily and said, "Alas,
certainly this is a foul case,
and a doleful deed!"
And as he stood reading,
he fell down swooning;
his heart was bleeding from sorrow.
There was nobody, neither old nor young,
who would not weep
for that worthy one underneath her dress.

The lady heard the great clamour in the hall.
She called the steward
and said, "What can this be about?
If anything is amiss,
tell me what it is
and conceal nothing from me."
Then the steward said, truthfully,
"Lo, my lord has sent a letter,
and that is why I am distressed!"
She took the letter and began to read.
There she found the entire command written down:
how she must [be thrown] into the sea.

"Be quiet, Sir," said the queen,
"Refrain from such mourning
for my sake.
Make sure that you will not be disgraced
but do my lord's bidding.
God forbid you spare [me].
Because he made such a poor marriage,
with me, a plain lady,

He ys ashamed sore;
Grete well my lord fro me,
So gentyll of blode yn Cristyante,
Gete he never more.

Then was ther sorow and myche woo,
When the lady to shype shulde go,
They wepte and wronge her honde; ł
The lady that was meke and mylde,
In her arme she bar her chylde
And toke leve of the londe.
When she wente ynto the see,
In that robe of ryche ble,
Men sowened on the sonde;
Sore they wepte, and sayde, Alas!
Certes this ys a wykked kase,
Wo worth dedes wronge!

The lady and the lytyll chylde,
Fleted forth on the water wylde,
With full harde happes;
Her surkote that was large and wyde,
Therwith her vysage she gan hyde,
With the hynther lappes.
She was aferde of the see,
And layde her gruf upon a tre,
The chylde to her pappes;
The wawes that were grete and strong,
On the bote faste they thronge, ł
With mony unsemely rappes.

And when the chyld gan to wepe,
With sory hert she songe hit aslepe,
And put the pappe yn his mowth,
And sayde, Myghth y ones gete lond,
Of the water that ys so stronge,
By northe or by sowthe!
Wele owth y to warye the see,

he is profoundly ashamed.
Send my greetings to my lord.
Nevermore will he obtain
[one] of such noble lineage in all Christendom."

Then there was misery and much sorrow
when the lady had to go to the ship.
They wept and wrought their hands.
The lady who was humble and compassionate
bore the child in her arms
and took leave of the land.
When she went into the sea
in the robe of radiant hues,
people swooned on the beach.
They wept bitterly and said, "Alas,
this is certainly a cruel case.
Cursed be malicious deeds!"

The lady and the little child
drifted away on the raging water
in a stroke of bad luck.
Her surcoat was large and wide:
she sheltered her face
in its outer folds;
she was afraid of the sea,
and lay face downward on a plank
with the child at her breast.
The waves were huge and forceful;
they violently flogged the boat
with many harsh thuds.

And when the child began to weep
she sang it to sleep with a heavy heart
and put her nipple into his mouth
and said, "If only I could get to land
from this sea which is so fierce,
whether in the North or South!
I ought to curse you, Sea,

I have myche shame yn the,
And ever she lay and growht;
Then she made her prayer,
To Jhesu and his moder dere,
In all that she kowthe.

Now this lady dwelled thore
A full sevene nyght and more,
As hit was goddys wylle ;
With karefull herte and sykyng sore,
Such sorow was her yarked yore,
And she lay full stylle.
She was dryven toward Rome,
Thorow the grace of god yn trone,
That all thyng may fulfylle:
On the see she was so harde bestadde
For hunger and thurste allmoste madde,
Wo worth chawnses ylle!

A marchaunte dwelled yn that cytè,
A ryche mon of golde and fee,
Jurdan was hys name;
Eevery day wolde he,
Go to playe hym by the see,
The eyer for to tane.
He wente forth yn that tyde,
Walkynge by the see sythe,
Alle hym selfe alone:
A bote he fonde by the brymme,
And a fayr lady therynne,
That was ryght wo-bygone.

The cloth on her shon so bryth
He was aferde of that syght,
For glysteryng of that wede;
And yn his herte he thowghth ryght,
That she was non erdyly wyght;
He sawe never non shuch yn leede.

you are causing me such disgrace!"
And she lay there the whole time and grieved,
then she prayed
to Jesus and His dear Mother
in all the ways that she knew.

Now this lady remained there
for a full seven nights and longer,
as was God's will.
With a frightened heart and sighing heavily,
she had been destined for such misfortune long ago,
and she lay very still.
She was driven towards Rome
through the grace of God on His throne
who pervades all things.
While at sea she was harassed so badly
[that she was] almost crazed from hunger and thirst.
Cursed be ill chance!

A merchant lived in that city,
a rich man who owned gold and bonds;
Jurdan was his name.
Every day he would
go and amuse himself on the beach
and go outside for a walk.
While he was out,
walking by the seaside
by himself, all alone,
he found a boat by the shore,
and a beautiful lady inside
who was very wretched.

The fabric on her gleamed so radiantly
that he was terrified by the sight
because of the glistening that came from the dress.
And in his heart he was convinced
that she was not an earthly being.
Never had he seen such folk.

He sayde, What hette ye, fayr ladye?
Lord, she sayde, y hette Egarye,
  That lye here yn drede:
Up he toke that fayre ladye,
And the yonge chylde her by,
  And hom he gan hem lede.

  When he come to his byggynge,
He welcomed fayr that lady yynge,
  That was fayr and bryght;
And badde his wyf yn all thynge,
Mete and drynke for to brynge
  To the lady ryght.
What that she wyll crave,
And her mowth wyll hit have,
  Loke hit be redy dyght:
She hath so longe meteles be,
That me thynketh great pytè,
  Conforte her yyf thou myght.

Now the lady dwelles ther,
With alle mete that gode were
  She hedde at her wylle:
She was curteys yn all thyng,
Bothe to olde and to yynge,
  Her loved bothe gode and ylle.
The chylde bygan for to thryfe,
He wax the fayrest chyld on lyfe
  Whyte as flour on hylle;
And she sewed* sylke werk yn bour,
And tawghte her sone nortowre,
  But evyr she mornede stylle.

When the chylde was seven yer olde,
He was bothe wyse and bolde,
  And wele made of flesh and bone;
He was worthy unther wede,
And ryght well kowthe prike a stede,

He said, "What are you called, fair lady?"
"Lord," she said, "I am called Egaré,
who lies here in terror."
He helped the beautiful lady up
and the young child that was with her
and he led them home.

When he came to his residence,
he appropriately received that young lady
who was beautiful and radiant,
and he asked his wife
to bring all kinds of food and drink
to that lady right away.
"Whatever she craves
and her mouth wants to have,
see that it is readily prepared for her.
She has been without food for so long
that I think it is a great pity.
Comfort her if you can."

Now the lady lived there.
She had all good foods
at her beck and call.
She was courteous in every respect
to both the old and the young.
Both the righteous and the evil adored her.
The child began to thrive.
He grew into the fairest child alive,
white as a flower on the hill.
And she sewed silkwork in her bower
and taught her son good manners,
but she always mourned quietly.

When the child was seven years old,
he was both discerning and courageous,
and well formed in flesh and bone.
He was worthy under his clothing.
And he knew very well how to handle a steed.

So curtays a chylde was none.
All men lovede Segramowre,
Bothe yn halle and yn bowre,
Whersoevur he gan gone.
Leve we at the lady clere of vyce,
And speke of the kyng of Galys,
Fro the sege when he come home.

There was no other child as courteous.
Everbody loved Segramour,
in the hall and in the bower,
wherever he went.
Now we shall leave our tale of the lady who is unspoiled by vice
and speak instead of the King of "Galys"
when he comes home from the siege.

Now the sege broken ys,
The kyng come home to Galys,
With mykyll myrthe and pride;
Dukes and erles of ryche asyce,
Barones and knyghtes of mykyll pryse,
Come rydynge be hys syde.
Syr Kodore his steward thanne,
Ayeyn hym rode with mony a man,
As faste as he myght ryde;
He tolde the kyng aventowres.
Of his halles and his bowres,
And of his londys wyde.

Now that the siege is over,
the king comes home to "Galys"
with great joy and pride.
Dukes and earls of prosperous estates,
barons and knights who were of great worth
come riding by his side.
Sir Kadore, who had been his steward,
rode towards him with many a man
as fast as he could.
He told the king the fortunes
of his halls and his bowers
and of his wide lands.

The kyng sayde, By goddys name,
Syr Kadore, thou art to blame
For thy fyrst tellynge;
Thou sholdest fyrst have tolde me
Of my lady Egare,
I love most of all thyng,
Then was the stewardes herte wo,
And sayde, Lorde, why sayst thou so?
Art not thou a trewe kynge?
Lo her the letter ye sente me,
Yowr owene self the sothe may se,
I have don your byddynge.

The king said, "For God's sake,
Sir Kadore, you are to blame
for what you have told me first!
You should have told me first
of my lady Egaré
whom I love above all things!"
Then the steward's heart sank
and [he] said, "Lord, why do you say so?
Are you not a steadfast king?
Look here at the letter you sent me.
You may see it for yourself:
I have done your bidding."

The kyng toke the letter to rede,
And when he sawe that ylke dede,
He wax all pale and wanne;
Sore he grette and sayde, Alas!

The king took the letter to read it
and when he saw the aforementioned document [the letter]
he went very pale and wan.
He cried out deeply and said, "Alas,

That ever born y was,
  Or ever was made manne!
Syr Kadore, so mot y the,
Thys letter come never fro me,
  I telle the her anone.
Bothe they wepte and yaf hem ylle;
Alas ! he sayde, saf goddys wylle,
  And both they* sowened than.

Grete lordes stode by,
And toke up the kyng hastyly,
  Of hem was grete pytè;
And when they both kevered were,
The kyng toke hym the letter ther,
  Of the heddys thre.
A lord, he sayde, be goddes grace,
I sawe never this letter in place,
  Alas! how may this be?
After the messenger ther they sente,
The kyng askede what way he wente;
  "Lord, ł be your moder fre."

Alas! then sayde the kynge,
Whether my moder was so unhende,
  To make thys treson;
By my krowne she shall be brent,
Withowten any other jugement,
  That thenketh me best reson.
Grete lordes toke hem betwene,
That they wolde exyle the qwene,
  And berefe her hyr renowne;
Thus they exiled the false qwene,
And byrafte her hyr lyflothe clene,
  Castell, towre, and towne.

When she was fled over the see fome,
The nobull kyng dwelled at hom,
  With full hevy chere;

that I was ever born,
or was ever made a man!
Sir Kadore, by my life,
this letter never originated with me,
I am telling you here and now."
They both wept and berated themselves.
"Alas!" they said, "May God's will be done!"
And then they both swooned.

Distinguished lords stood nearby
and they hastily helped up the king;
he was a wretched sight.
And when they had both recovered
the king examined the letter
about the three heads:
"Oh Lord," he said, "by God's grace,
I have never seen this letter before!
Alas, how can this be?"
They sent for the messenger.
The king asked which way he had gone:
"Lord, past your noble mother's."

"Alas!" the king then said.
"Could my mother be so discourteous
as to commit this treason?
By my crown, she shall be burned
without a trial.
That seems to me the most just course of action!"
Between them, the distinguished lords decided
that they would exile the queen
and deprive her of her rank.
Thus they exiled the malicious queen
and stripped her of all her privileges,
castles, towers, and towns.

When she was cast out upon the sea foam,
the noble king remained at home
in a miserable state.

With karefull hert and drury mone,
Sykynges made he many on,
  For Egarye the clere:
And when he sawe chylderen play,
He wepte and sayde, Well awey !
  For my sone so dere.
Such lyf he lyved mony a day,
That no mon hym stynte may,
  Fully seven yere.

With a heavy heart and a mournful mind
he sighed a lot
for the beautiful Egaré.
And when he saw children playing,
he wept and said, "Oh, woe, woe,
for my son who is so dear to me!"
That was his life for many days,
[and] nobody could put an end to [his suffering]
for a full seven years—

Tyll a thowght yn hys herte come,
How his lady whyte as fome,
  Was drowned for his sake:
"Thorow the grace of gode yn trone,
I woll to the pope of Rome,
  My penans for to take."
He lette ordeyne shypus fele,
And fylled hem full of wordes wele,
  Hys men mery with to make;
Dolys he lette dyghth and dele,
For to wynnen hym sowles hele,
  To the shyp he toke the gate.

until [one day] a thought came into his heart:
how his lady who was white as foam
had been drowned for his sake.
"Through the grace of God on His throne,
I want to see the Pope in Rome,
to receive my penance!"
He had many ships prepared
and loaded them with worldly wealth
with which to make his men merry.
He had alms distributed
in order to gain salvation for his soul,
[then] he made his way to the ship.

Shypmen, that wer so mykyll of price,
Dyght her takull on ryche acyse,
  That was fayr and fre;
They drowgh up sayl, and leyd out ore,
The wynde stode as her lust wore
  The wether was lythe on le.
They sayled over the salt fome,
Thorow the grace of god in trone,
  That most ys of powstè;
To the cyté when they come,
At the burgeys hous his yn he nome,
  Ther as woned Emarye.

Sailors who were very skilled
prepared the rigging,
which was beautiful and precious, in a splendid manner.
They hoisted the sails and positioned the rudder;
the wind was as they had desired,
the weather was pleasant and calm.
They sailed over the salty foam,
by the grace of God on His throne
who is most powerful of all.
When they came to that city,
[the king] took his lodgings at the burgher's house
where Emaré lived.

Emare called her sone,
Hastely to here come,

Emaré called her son
to come to her quickly

Wythoute ony lettynge;
And sayde, My dere sone so fre,
Do a lytull aftur me,
And thou shalt have my blessynge.
To-morowe thou shall serve yn halle,
In a kurtyll of ryche palle,
Byfore this nobull kyng :
Loke sone so curtays thou be,
That no mon fynde chalange to the,
In no manere thynge.

When the kyng ys served of spycerye,
Knele thou downe hastylye,
And take iys hond yn thyn ;
And when thou hast so done,
Take the kuppe of golde sone,
And serve hym of the wyne :
And what that he speketh to the,
Cum anon and tell me,
On goddes blessyng and myne.
The chylde wente ynto the hall,
Amonge the lordes grete and small,
That lufsume were unther lyne.

Then the lordes that wer grete,
Wysh and wente to her mete,
Menstrelles* browght yn the kowrs.
The chylde hem served so curteysly,
All hym loved that hym sy,
And spake hym gret honowres.
Then sayde all that loked hym upon,
So curteys a chyld sawe they never non,
In halle ny yn bowres.
The kynge sayde to hym yn game,
Swete sone, what ys thy name?
Lord, he seyd, y hyghth Segramowres.

Then that nobull kyng

without any delay
and said, "My dear noble son,
do as I tell you,
and you shall have my blessing.
Tomorrow you shall serve in the hall
in a gown of splendid silk
in front of this noble king.
Look, son, you are so well-mannered
that no one could find your match
in any manner of things!

"When the king is served dessert,
kneel down hastily
and take his hand in yours.
And when you have done so,
quickly take the golden chalice
and serve him wine.
And then come quickly
and tell me what he says to you,
by God's and my grace!"
The child went into the hall,
among the greater and lesser nobles,
who was lovely underneath the linen.

Then the lords, who were distinguished,
washed [their hands] and proceeded to eat;
servants brought in the courses.
The child served them so gracefully
that everyone who saw him loved him
and gave him much praise.
Then all who looked at him said
that they had never seen such a courteous child,
either in halls or in bowers.
The king said to him, in jest,
"Sweet son, what is your name?"
"Lord," he said, "I am called Segramour."

Then that noble king

Toke up a grete sykynge,
For hys sone hyght so,
Certys, withowten lesynge,
The teres out of his yën gan wryng,
In herte he was full woo.
Neverthelese he lette be,
And loked on the chylde so fre,
And mykell he lovede hym thoo.
The kyng sayde to the burgeys anone,
Swete syr, ys this thy sone ?
The burgeys sayde, Yoo.

started to sigh heavily,
because his son was also called that.
The truth is—I am not lying—
the tears were filling his eyes;
in his heart he was very sorrowful.
Nevertheless, he did not inquire further,
but looked upon the child who was so noble
and felt much love for him in that instant.
The king then said to the burgher:
"Sweet Sir, is this your son?"
The burgher said: "Yes."

Then the lordes, that were grete,
Whesshen ayeyn aftyr mete,
And then come spycerye,
The chyld, that was of ehere swete,
On his kne downe he sete,
And served hym curteyslye.
The kynge called the burgeys hym tyll
And sayde, Syr, yf hit be thy wyll,
Yyf me this lytyll body;
I shall hym make lorde of town and towr,
Of hye halles and of bowre.
I love hym speeyally.

Then the distinguished lords
cleaned [their hands] after the meal
and in came the sweet course.
The child, who was of a pleasant disposition,
knelt down on his knee
and served [the king] courteously.
The king called the burgher to tell him,
saying: "Sir, if you are willing,
give me this little body!
I shall make him a lord over towns and fortresses,
over high halls and bowers.
I feel a particular affection for him."

When he had served the kyng at wylle,
Fayr he wente his modyr tyll,
And tellys her how hyt ys.
"Soone, when he shall to chambur wende,
Take his hond at the grete ende,
For he ys thy fadur, y wysse,
And byd hym come speke with Emare,
That changed her name to Egare,
In the lond of Galys."
The chylde wente ayeyn to halle,
Amonge the grete lordes alle,
And served on ryche asyse.

When he had served the king for a while
[the child] went to his mother
to tell her how things stood.
"Son, when he turns to go to his chamber,
take his hand [...]
because he is your father, no doubt;
and bid him to come and speak with Emaré
who changed her name to Egaré
in the land of 'Galys.'"
The child went again to the hall
among all the distinguished lords
and served them splendidly.

When they wer well at ese afyne,
Bothe of brede, ale, and wyne,
  They rose up more and myn;
When the kyng shulde to chambur wende,
He toke his hond at the grete ende,
  And fayre he helpe hym yn ;
And sayde, Syr, if your wyll be,
Take me your honde, and go with me,
  For y am of yowr kynne.
Ye shull come speke with Emare,
That changed her nome to Egare,
  That berys the whyte chynne.

The kyng yn herte was full woo,
When he herd mynge tho
  Of her that was his qwene;
And sayde, Sone, why sayest thou so?
Wherto umbraydest thou me of my wo?
  That may never bene.
Nevertheles with hym he wente,
Ayeyn hem come the lady gent,
  In the robe bryght and shene,
He toke her yn his armes two,
For joy they sowened both to,
  Such love was hem bytwene.

A joyfull metyng was ther thore,
Of that lady goodly unther-gore,
  Frely in armes to folde;
Lorde! gladde was syr Kadore,
And other lordes that ther wore,
  Semely to beholde.
Of the lady that * was put yn the see,
Thorow grace of god in trinite,
  Thar was kevered of cares colde.
Leve we at the lady whyte as flour,
And speke we of her fadur the emperour,
  That fyrste the tale of ytolde,

When they were finally satisfied
with bread, ale, and wine,
they rose up, more or less.
When the king was to go to his chamber,
[Segramour] took his hand [...]
and helped him inside;
he said: "Sir, if you may,
take me by your hand and go with me,
because I am of your kin!
You shall come speak with Emaré
who changed her name to Egaré
and who bears a white chin.

In his heart, the king was miserable
when he heard the [child's] speech
about the one who had been his queen
and [he] said, "Son, why do you say so?
Why do you reproach me with my misery?
That may never be!"
Nevertheless, he went with him.
The noble lady came towards them
in the bright and glistening robe.
[The king] took her into his two arms;
they both swooned from joy,
such was the love between them.

That was a joyful meeting there, [the king] freely folding that lady,
so virtuous under her garment,
into his arms.
Lord! Sir Kadore was glad,
as were the other lords who were present there
—beautiful to behold—
to see that the lady who had been put to sea,
through the grace of God in Trinity,
had been restored from cold care.
We shall now leave the lady who was as white as a flower,
and speak of her father, the emperor,
of whom this tale first told.

The emperour her fadyr then
Was ł woxen an olde man,
  And thowght on hys synne;
Of hys thowghtyr Emare,
That was putte ynto the see,
  That was so bryght of skynne.
He thowght that he wolde go,
For his penance to the pope tho,
  And heven for to wynne ;
Messengeres he sente forth sone,
And they come to the kowrt of Rome,
  To take her lordes inne.

Emare prayde her lorde the kyng,
Syr, abyde that lordys komyng,
  That ys so fayr and fre;
And, swete syr, yn all thyng,
Aqweynte you with that lordyng,
  Hit ys worshyp to the.
The kyng of Galys seyde than,
So grete a lord ys ther nan*
  In all crystyantè.
"Now, swete syr, whatever betyde,
Ayayn that grete lord ye ryde,
  And all thy knyghtys with the."

Emare thawghte her sone yynge,
Ayeyn the emperour komynge,
  How that he sholde done:
Swete sone, yn all thyng,
Be redy with my lord the kyng,
  And be my swete sone.
When the emperour kysseth thy fadyr so fre,
Loke yyf he wyll kysse the,
  Abowe the to hym sone;
Add bydde hym come speke with Emare,
That was putte ynto the see,

By then, her father the emperor
had become an old man,
and [he] thought of his sin,
[and] of his daughter Emaré,
who had been put to sea,
and who had had such luminous skin.
He thought that he would go
to the Pope to receive his penance there,
and gain [entry to] Heaven.
He soon sent messengers ahead
and they came to the Roman court
to take lodgings for their lord.

Emaré implored her lord, the king,
"Sir, wait for that lord who is coming,
who is so handsome and noble,
and, sweet Sir, above all,
acquaint yourself with that lord;
it is an honor for you."
The King of *Galys* then said,
"There is no lord so great
in all Christendom."
"Now, sweet Sir, whatever happens,
ride towards that lord,
and all your knights with you."

Emaré, anticipating the emperor's arrival,
instructed her young son
on how it should be done:
"Sweet son, above all,
be ready with my lord, the king,
and be my sweet son!
When the emperor kisses your noble father,
see if he will return the kiss,
then bow down before him
and ask him to come speak with Emaré
who was put to sea.

Hymself yaf the dome.

Now kometh the emperour of pryse,
Ayeyn hym rode the kyng of Galys,
With full mykull pryde ;
The chyld was worthy unther-wede,
A satte upon a nobyll stede,
By his fadyr syde :
And, when he mette the emperour,
He valed his hode with gret honour,
And kyssed hym yn that tyde ;
And other lordys of gret valowre,
They also kessed Segramowre ;
In herte ys not to hyde.

The emperours hert anamered gretlye
Of the chylde that rode hym by,
With so lovely chere.
Segramowre he sayde his stede,
Hys owene fadyr toke good hede,
And other lordys that ther were.
The chylde spake to the emperour,
And sayde, Lord, for thyn honour,
My worde that thou wyll here;
Ye shull come speke with Emare,
That changede her name to Egare.
That was thy thowghthur dere.

The emperour wax all pale,
And sayde, Sone, why umbraydest me of bale,
And thou may se no bote?
"Syr, and ye wyll go with me,
I shall the brynge with that lady fre,
That ys lovesom on to loke."
Nevertheless, with hym he wente,
Ayeyn hym come that lady gent,
Walkynge on her fote;
And the emperour alyghte tho.

He himself gave the command."

Now the worthy emperor arrived;
the King of "Galys" rode to meet him
with much honor.
The child was worthy under his dress
and sat upon a noble steed
by his father's side;
and when he met the emperor
he lowered his hood with great honor,
and kissed him that time,
and other lords of great courage
also kissed Segramour,
that is the truth of it.

The Emperor's heart was greatly enamored
by the child who rode by his side
with such a lovely disposition.
Segramour reined in his steed,
his own father listened carefully,
and so did the other lords who were present.
The child spoke to the emperor
and said, "Lord, for the sake of your honor
mark my words:
you shall come and speak with Emaré
who changed her name to Egaré
who was your dear daughter."

The emperor grew very pale
and said, "Son, why do you reproach me with grief
when you cannot see any remedy?"
"Sir, if you come with me now
I shall bring forth that noble lady
who is lovely to look at."
Nevertheless, he [the emperor] went with him.
The noble lady came towards him,
walking on foot.
And the emperor dismounted

And toke her yn his armes two,
And clypte and kyssed her fote.

Ther was a joyfull metynge
Of the emperour and of the kynge,
And also of Emare;
And so ther was of syr Segramour,
That aftyr was emperour,
A full gode man was he.
A grette feste ther was holde,
Of erles and barones bolde,
As testymonyeth thys story.
Thys ys on of Brytayne layes,
That was used by olde dayes,
Men callys playn the garye.
Jhesu, that settes yn thy trone,
So graunte us with the to wone
In thy perpetuall glorye ! Amen

Explicit Emare.

and took her into his two arms;
he embraced her and kissed her sweetly.

That was a joyful meeting
of the emperor and the king,
and also of Emaré,
and Sir Segramour was also there,
who later became emperor—
he was a very good man.
They held a great feast
with valiant earls and barons,
as the story tells.
This is one of the Breton lays
that has been told since the olden days.
Men call it *Playn d'Egarye*.
Jesus on Your throne,
grant us to live with You
in perpetual glory! Amen.

Here ends *Emaré*.

Critical Notes

Line 7 The Middle English grammar shifts between addressing Mary in the second person (imperative, *bere* in l. 8, 10) and talking about her in the third person (I. 9).

Line 8 Literally: "Bear our message/prayer in between." Mary and the Saints are intercessors between a human and God. It is easier to appeal to the saints or to Mary than to God directly.

Line 9 Variations of this line ("That semely ys of sight") are reiterated throughout the poem and in most cases "that" (who or what is beautiful to look at) has multiple referents. Here, an alternative referent is *arunde*: "Mary, heavenly queen, bear our message in between [heaven and earth] so that it is of gracious appearance." As this grammatical ambiguity might be precisely the point, some instances of this line will retain their ambiguity in translation.

Line 13 Middle English *minstral* is a term for professional entertainers, self-employed or working as court functionaries, who would perform as storytellers, musicians, singers, actors, jugglers, and occasionally as servants.

Line 85 All editions but Rickert omit *hyȝte* and all editions end the line with a comma. White's diplomatic transcription reads "Syr Tergaunte þt nobyll knyȝt hyȝte", p. 327. Rickert puts *hyȝte* in brackets and adds, "The omission of *hyȝte* improves the metre; but although the *yȝ* is blotted, the word is not unmistakingly crossed out by the scribe. Kölbing, however, considers it erased (Eng. Stud., xv, 248)", p. 3 note 5. Laskaya and Salisbury omit *hyghte* in the main text, but add in their apparatus, note 85: "The MS includes the word hyght at the end of the line. The word is blotted and, since it disrupts the meter, Kö[lbing] and G[ough] considered it erased. Ru[mble], M[ills], and F[rench] & H[ale] all leave the word out; R[ickert] leaves it in." https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#85. I agree with Rickert's interpretation of the text, as blots are common throughout the manuscript and as *hyȝten* takes on the grammatical function of a predicate. The next line has a full SPO structure; introducing Tergaunte in a full rather than elliptic sentence makes sense from a grammatical point of view, even if it irregularizes the metre.

Line 86 Two senses of *ryghte*, adv., would fit in this context: "Suitably for the purpose, well, thoroughly, properly; […]," i.e., as one should present gifts to an emperor, bending the knee, etc.; "sincerely," i.e., like the emir's daughter in l. 110, with no false intentions. See https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED37511/track?counter=4&search_id=11749846.

Line 89 Rickert notes that *was dye* (crossed out) precedes *pyght* in the MS; this is neither rendered in White's transcription nor commented on by Laskaya and Salisbury.

Line 94 *nakette:* the MED's only quotations for *nakette* as agate are from *Emaré*. See https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED29047/track?counter=1&search_id=11382432. Laskaya and Salisbury consider "agate," as explained in note 94: "*Nakette* is 'agate,' with the *n* from the definite article allided to the initial vowel." See https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#94. Gough agrees (p. 35). Rickert, however, proposes „perhaps (n)achate" (p. 35, note 4/95) but adds, "[t]he text shows a tendency to write *e* for *a*, as: *cledde*, *wesh*, *wes*; but 'Destruction of Troy' has *achatas*, *Wars of Alexander*, *acats*. Or, the word may be some derivative (perhaps corrupted) from *nacre* = mother-of-pearl. There is also a rare stone *echite*, but this is more remote phonetically. Cf. also Godefroi under *nace* = cloth of gold." Line 244 refers to the robe shaped from Tergaunte's gift as "cloth of golde." Historical variations of "pearl" appear closer to *nakettes* than *nacre*: the OED lists occurences of "post-classical *naccara*, *nacara* mother-of-pearl" in 1295 and 1347, and points to the Italian loan word *naqqāra* from Arabic for kettledrum, which in turn likely relates back to "the technical language of pearlers in the Gulf region." See https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/124778?redirectedFrom=nacre&. Compare with the *Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* vol. 19 col. 137b–138a, which provides a similar etymology for Old French *(a)nacaire*, It. *(g)naccera*, Cat. *nacra*, Sp. *nàcara*. The term entered the lexicon in the time of the crusades. https://lecteur-few.atilf.fr/lire/190/137.

Lines 98–101 "The emperor could not establish visual power over the cloth and was unable to hold his gaze and penetrate the cloth with it." This is due to the stones. Stones, in medieval scientific discourse, were believed to possess powers (which may be reflected in the repeated use of *myche prise* to qualify the stones and is referenced directly by the virtues of emeralds, l. 152). Encyclopedias or stone books, called lapidaries, would present virtues which manifest in color, hue, and radiance, and in medicinal, talismanic, and spiritual uses. Laskaya and Salisbury, notes 91, 94, 127–130, 139, 152–156 provide some of the cloth's individual stones' virtues as accounted for in select lapidaries. More important for the meaning of ll. 99–101 is that a frequent lithic power across various gemstones is their capacity to reflect or even to emit endogenic light. By reflecting the emperor's gaze back and dazzling

him with blinding light, the stones "refuse" to be discerned and prevent him from reading the lithic mosaic text of lovers recounted in the following lines. Thus, they in turn establish power over the emperor. Grammatically, l. 100, "For glysteryng of the ryche ston," could either explain the preceding or the subsequent line: "The emperor was not able to discern anything on the cloth because of the light emitted/reflected by the stones" or "Because of the light emitted/reflected by the stones, he could not establish visual access." In any case, *Emaré* emphasizes the emperor's temporary blindness and attributes it to the stones.

Line 108 As medieval manuscripts do not use punctuation, it is unclear whether the following description of the cloth is in the voice of an omniscient narrator or in the voice of Tergaunte, who has brought the gift. Laskaya and Salisbury and Rickert indicate that Tergaunte ends his speech here (l. 108) and speaks again in ll. 172–177, which would leave the description to the heterodiegetic narrator. French and Hale extend his speech to l. 113. Perkins cautions against "the absolute boundary that modern punctuation creates here, and the point of view that it creates." See "Ekphrasis and Narrative in Emaré and Sir Eglamour of Artois." *Medieval Romance, Medieval Contexts*, edited by Rhiannon Purdie, Brewer, 2011. Studies in Medieval Romance, pp. 47–68 (p. 58).

Line 109 *hethenes* means "non-Christian people". From the subsequent ranks (emir, sultan), the place-name Babylon, which could refer to present-day Cairo, and the fact that Muslim-held territories produced, along with Byzantium, the most coveted fabrics and silks to a higher technical and material standard than available in the Latin West, the meaning "Muslim" can be inferred. Sicily in turn remained multi-ethnic and multi-religious for centuries after the Muslim (Byzantine) conquest in the ninth century and the Norman (Latin Christian) conquest in the twelfth century. Note that the poem uses two different terms, *hethen* for the princess but *Saracen* for an enemy that is a religious Other (l. 481, note 71).

Line 110 *wythouten lees*, as a fixed phrase and rhyme tag, asserts truth. In a more literal sense, the emir's daughter's intentions may have been honest, i.e. *wythouten lees*. See https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED34602/track?counter=3&search_id=11382432.

Line 111 *wyth pryde* is ambiguous: both negative and positive senses of pride—honorable, vainglorious—would fit. By way of such ambiguous descriptors, the cloth becomes multivalent, which reflects in the multivalency of Emaré later on, who, when she wears the fabric, is perceived by different characters as a fairy or demon, as a noble woman, and as an object or a treasure trove. See https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED34602/ track?counter=3&search_id=11382432.

Line 123 The referent of this line is unclear: it could either be Amadas and Ydoine (i.e. as a faithful couple), or the mode of embroidering (i.e. being one of faithful love).

Line 125 *Line 125* Rickert, p. 36, note 5/125, identifies this flower with the "Herb Paris (Paris Quadrifolia), similar to trillium" whose leaves are set "to resemble a true-love knot"; she cites its use in *Sir Degravent* (ll. 1032, 1039, 1484), *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne* (ll. 354, 510), *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (l. 612), and *The Tale of Ralph Collier* (l. 473); she assumes the actual herb was worked into the cloth as a magical charm. Medieval silk embroidery, however, would often include scattered vegetal or figural ornaments.

Line 142 *nakettes*, see note for l. 94.

Line 149 See note for l. 151.

Line 151 Rickert, p. 36, note 5/151, remarks: "Possibly here as in l. 131 the pattern suddenly intrudes upon the materials; but the names of stones are expected. If the poem was at any time taken down from hearing, the line might have been corrupted by 'Ther wer onyx and centaureus,' which would rhyme correctly with *vertues*. My authority for *centaureus* is Heinrich von Neustadt (quoted by Smith, *Shakespeare's* Pericles *and* Apollonius of Tyre, Philadelphia, 1898, pp. 75–76); the nearest that Pannier [*Les Lapidaires Français*, Paris, 1882, index] gives is *ceraunus*. The plant, *centaurus*, was well known." Laskaya and Salisbury also note that "knyghtus and senatowres […] seem out of place in a list of gems." https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#151. Gough concurs, p. 35.

Line 158 Based on dreams and visions in Books 2 and 7 of Daniel, medieval Christian historiography developed the theory of four kingdoms, or ages, to follow each other before the end of days: the first kingdom would be the Babylonian Empire, the second the Persian Empire, the third the Greek Empire (Alexander the Great), the final earthly kingdom the Roman Empire. Rulership, knowledge, and literature would be "translated" from one empire to the next (*translatio imperii*). Babylon could simultaneously refer to the historical empire and to contemporary Cairo. In the context of the "translated" cloth, both associations come together.

Line 172 See note for l. 108 on speech marks.

Line 174 Ritson omits the MS's *wyth*; it is included by Rickert and Laskaya and Salisbury.

Line 187 Ritson, without commentary, changes to *Remeneth*.

Line 216 Romances are a narrative genre. Frequent subject matters are Arthurian tales (such as *Tristan and Iseut*) or stories of the repeated union and separation of lovers (such as *Floire and Blanchefleur* and *Amadas and Ydoine*). *romans*, as it spelled in l. 216, can also simply mean "French" and thus implicate a French source. Many romances were in fact copied or adapted from French into English.

Line 234 As marriage was considered a sacrament, any commitments outside of clerical law would have to be sanctioned by a clerical authority, which is represented here by the Pope. Historically, noble families might appeal to the Pope if a marriage was not in line with clerical regulations regarding consanguinity, either to go ahead with a planned alliance or to dissolve an existing one. After the Fourth Lateran council of 1215, which relaxed regulations, any relations within the fourth degree were considered consanguinuous. Certain spiritual relations were also prohibited, such as adoptive and baptismal relations (godparents), as well as immediate relatives of deceased partners—as partners were believed to become one flesh by the sacrament of marriage (*una caro* doctrine). This would greatly limit the choice of eligible partners for feudal families who sought to enhance their power through marriage alliances, but it also gave leeway to rid themselves of partners who had become undesirable. A famous example of the application and contestation of incest laws is Henry VIII's (failed) attempt to receive a papal bull allowing him to dissolve his marriage to Catherine of Aragon on the grounds of incest, as she had previously been wedded to his brother. There are no historical cases of father-daughter marriages sanctioned by any Pope, but nuclear family incest, especially a daughter's flight from her incestuous father, is a recurring theme in medieval literature, as is the unsavory role of the Pope in the "maiden without hands" tradition.

Line 246 Literally "who was made of clay." Adam, the first human, was believed to have been created by God from dust.

Line 272 Ritson adds "[givying]" to the line, explaining: "It is very singular that these lines should nearly occur again in V. 593: 'And lette her have no spending, / *For no mete, ny for drynke*.' Thus in the original; but as the word *drynke* by no means answers in rhyme to *spendyng*; and either line is too short for the metre […] the editor has taken the liberty to insert, after *drynke*, in the first passage, (giving), and to alter it, in the other, to *drynkynge* […]" (p. 194). No other edition follows this conjecture.

Line 275 The protagonist's exposure in a rudderless vessel is a defining motif of the "maiden without hands" tradition.

Line 287 Ritson replaces the MS's *toke yn* with *toke up*, p. 194.

Line 288 Ritson reads "consorted", Laskaya and Salisbury "comforted", Rickert "conforted", White transcribes "cōforted."

Line 293 Ritson suggests emending to "that I am!", p. 194.

Line 310 The MS inserts "now" in the margin with a caret: "At þe emþor ^ leve we ^now." Compare White, p. 329 (f. 72vb).

Line 331 This line, in the MS, is followed by "That hyght Galys y unþrstond." Compare White, p. 329 (f. 72vb). This crossed out line is repeated in l. 338.

Line 338 Galys is identified by some as Wales. See, most recently, Corinne Saunders, "Ch. 11: The Romance Genre," in *A Companion to British literature*, ed. by Heesok Chang, Samantha Zacher, and Robert DeMaria, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014, pp. 161–79, (p. 167). Others have identified it as Galicia in Spain, most recently Amy Burge and Lydia Kertz. 'Fabricated Muslim Identity, Female Agency, and Cultural Complicity: The Imperial Project of *Emaré*', *Medieval Feminist Forum: A Journal of Gender and Sexuality*, 56.1 (2020), pp. 38–69 (p. 29). There are no conclusive arguments for either. The majority of adaptations of the story-type of *Emaré* provide a Mediterranean setting; at the same time, *Emaré*'s association with the Breton lays and certain names such as Artyus, Segramour, or Erayne, make an Arthurian setting and thus Wales likely. To prevent forcing a certain interpretation of the poem upon readers, I leave this place name untranslated.

Line 345 *Line 345* Andrew M. Richmond draws attention to Sir Kadore's and later Jurdan's (ll. 688–690) play as a form of beachcombing. "'The broken schippus he ther fonde': Shipwrecks and the Human Costs of Investment Capital in Middle English Romance." *Neophilologus*, 99.2 (2015), pp. 315–33, (pp. 326–27). This resonates with the sense of ME play as "gamble". https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED33654/track?counter=2&search_id=11382432.

Line 357 Laskaya and Salisbury note that the MS spells *poyn*, which is "universally emended to poynt." See https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#357.

Line 360 An audience knowing French would recognize her alias' similarity to the Old French/Anglo Norman *esgaré(e)*: outcast, lost, stray.

Line 377 Ritson does not indicate having emended *sylkyn* and White, p. 330 (f. 73rb), transcribes *sylkyn*, but Laskaya and Salisbury note "MS: *sylkly* is partially erased; I have emended to *sylkyn* following M[ills, ed.]; F[rench]&H[ale, ed.], and Ru[mble, ed.]." https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#377. Rickert, also reads the MS as *sylkly* and adds that "a letter has evidently been erased after it," p. 12, note 3.

Line 391 While audiences are aware of her nobility, Emaré/Egaré presents as a "nobody" in Galys. The phrase plays on this tension and taps into medieval literary representations of saints, whose ordeal is a "low" life despite their high birth.

Line 409 Ritson does not indicate having emended *called* and White, p. 330 (f. 73rb), transcribes *called*, but Laskaya and Salisbury indicate that the MS spells *calle*. https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#409.

Line 411 Laskaya and Salisbury and Rickert note, as White's transcription indicates, that this line was added in the margin of the MS.

Line 415 Laskaya and Salisbury gloss *ryche yn ray* as "array" but point to Mills' emendation to *ryche ray* in accordance with l. 430. Gough, p. 37, notes that "all three lines [containing *ray*, 415, 430, 451] are metrically defective. *Ray* is a kind of striped cloth, O. Fr. *drap de ray* […].[There is a]nother word *ray* = prince […]. The scribe may have been misled by one of these words." Rickert, p. 40, note 14/430, lists quotations for *ryche ray* in the sense of "powerful sovereign" as an interpretation to ll. 415, 430, and 451. It is unclear whether to translate as "the powerful sovereign" or "the powerful one in array/striped cloth."

Line 441 In medieval literature, nobility often manifests in a radiant body and in noble behavior, such as the mastery of certain courtly activities (chess and board games, dance and music, certain athletic skills in men, silk-working skills in women); often, other characters recognize the nobility of impoverished protagonists through such manifestations. In *Emaré*, there are no clear-cut signs, rather, there is only the multivalent robe which her mother-in-law suspects to be of demonic or otherwise unsavory origin.

Line 444 *gay* operates on a spectrum of positive to negative senses that each fit the context, from "handsomely attired, shining, beautiful, noble," to "lewd, lascivious." https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED18063/track?counter=3&search_id=11382432.

Line 482 "Saracen" is a (Roman) Christian term for a non-(Roman)-Christian or otherwise Orientalized Other. In the tradition of crusading literature especially, it is frequently but not exclusively mapped onto Muslim Arabs. It conflates categories such as faith, ethnicity, and race. The "Saracens" of the literary crusading tradition, which encompasses epic, romance, saint's lives, and chronicles, are written from a Latin (Roman Catholic) perspective which associates them with a range of negative attributes such as idolatry, ignorance, monstrosity, and physical deformity. This is why, in Shokoofeh Rajazabdeh's words, the term is "not a depoliticized substitute for Muslim." "The Depoliticized Saracen and Muslim Erasure." *Literature Compass*, vol. 16, 9-10, 2019, p. 3/8. To avoid erasing or reproducing the discursive violence attached to the term, I have not translated it, but signaled its constructedness typographically. Emaré uses this term when tapping into a narrative mode of crusading, but employs a more general term for the non-Christian Other when describing the origin of the textile with the *hethenes*, in l. 109.

Line 496 Ritson emends the MS's *stward* to *stiward*, p. 200.

Line 496 *Line 499* The meaning of "yn place" is obscure. Laskaya and Salisbury note that it has been variously interpreted: "R[ickert, ed.] suggests that the line be emended to 'yn thylke place' meaning 'as it was her place to do.' Ru[mble, ed.] interpolates place so that it becomes palace: 'She wente wyth chylde yn palace.' F[rench]&H[ale, ed.] gloss 'place' as 'there'." https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#499.

Line 504 Some literary noble children who are abandoned, banished or born in exile bear a physical mark of nobility, such as Lion's birthmark of the cross in *Lion de Bourges* or an intense light beam emitted from the mouth of the

sleeping Havelok in *Havelok the Dane*. This child's mark is left obscure, but the line plays on the fact that despite Emaré/Egaré's exile and apparent lowliness, her son inherits two noble bloodlines, one through his father and one through his mother.

Line 529 Ritson emends the MS's *she* to *he*, p. 200.

Line 571 *gode men and ylle* is repeatedly used to emphasize that everybody participates in certain actions.

Line 584 Rickert notes, "After t in MS., a small round blot, which does not seem to be intended for an e," p. 19, note 2.

Line 593 Ritson emends the MS's *drynke* to *drynking*, p. 202.

Line 594 See note to l. 360.

Line 632 As long as Emaré's true status is not revealed or reinstated, the choice made by the King of *Galys* to marry her appears poor.

Line 634 Ritson emends the MS's *blolde* to *blode*, p. 203.

Line 639 Ritson emends the MS's *hond* to *honde*, p. 203.

Line 659 Ritson emends the MS's *thenge* to *thronge*, p. 204.

Line 684 Laskaya and Salisbury gloss "Accursed be such bad luck" and note "chawnses ylle. M[ills, ed.] glosses as 'tribulations,' which is perhaps best." https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#684.

Line 685 Laskaya and Salisbury note "MS: dw led. A blemish in the MS obliterates the 'el.'" https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#685. The blemish is not rendered in White's transcription.

Line 730 Ritson emends the MS's *shewed* to *sewed*, p. 206.

Line 730 Silkwork is fine needlework using the most precious materials, such as silken fabrics and threads, gold threads, pearls, gold and silver plates, and gemstones. It denotes the process and the product of sewing and embroidery using these materials.

Line 779 *he sayde* translates as "he" or "they"; "they" is inferred from the context.

Line 780 Ritson emends the MS's *the* to *they*, p. 207.

Line 792 Ritson emends the MS's *Lor* to *Lord*, p. 207.

Line 804 Rickert notes that the MS has *town* between *Castelle* and *towre*, "with a dotted line beneath them to signify erasure," p. 25, note 4; White's transcription reads "Castell town et towre et towne", p. 335 (f.75va).

Line 810 *cler* denotes beauty, but also light-reflecting qualities (radiance, shine, hue), magnificence, and excellence/praiseworthiness, all of which would also fit. See https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED7975/track?counter=3&search_id=20439830.

Line 838 The MS repeats l. 837, "That most ys of powste," following l. 839, crossed out. See White, p. 335 (f. 75vb) and Laskaya and Salisbury, note 839. https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#839. Rickert adds that it is also underlined, p. 26, note 5.

Line 845 Laskaya and Salisbury note that the MS reads *shat*. https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#846. White's transcription reads *shalt*, p. 335 (f. 75vb).

Line 847 The Middle English *palle* could also indicate a purple or deep red silk, a dye reserved for emperors and significant liturgical vestments.

Line 866 Ritson emends the MS's *Mentrelles* to *Menstrelles*, p. 209.

Line 896 The MS reads *Yyf me þs lytyll chylde body*, crossing out *chylde* between *lytyll* and *body*. See White, p. 336 (f. 76rb), Rickert, p. 28, note 2, and Laskaya and Salisbury, note 897. https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#897.

Line 904 Laskaya and Salisbury note: "*grete ende*. The meaning of the phrase is obscure. R[ickert] notes: 'The 'great end' of the hand would naturally be the thumb (see also Italian *dito grosso*, Catalan *dit gros*, English *great toe*)' (p. 46). G[ough, ed.], F[rench] & H[ale, ed.], and M[ills, ed.] read *grece ende*. G[ough, ed.] glosses *grece* as stairs (from OF *gres*), thus, according to R[ickert, ed.], 'top of the stairs.' F[rench] & H[ale, ed.] gloss as 'foot of the (dais) steps,' and M[ills, ed.] as 'foot of the steps.' Ru[mble] reads *grete end* and observes: 'possibly what is intended is the hall or stairway, leading from the central part of the building to the sleeping chambers, the 'great end' being that end nearest the central rooms' (p. 128)." See https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#905 and https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#917.

Line 916 See note to l. 904.

Line 923 Whiteness is often equated with beauty and luminosity. This might be an expression to convey that Emaré's face is white.

Line 942 Ritson emends the MS's *wat* to *that*, p. 211.

Line 944 White's diplomatic transcription indicates that the page ends after this line, beneath which *Explicit Emare* is inserted, p. 336 (f. 76rb). Ritson does not print the explicit here or at the end of the poem. No other editions note that the explicit is in the place indicated by White.

Line 949 Ritson emends the MS's *Wax* to *waxen,* p. 211.

Line 967 Ritson emends the MS's *non* to *nan*, p. 212.

Line 988 The MS reads *A*. Ritson does not indicate his emendation. Laskaya and Salisbury gloss "he" and note that "R[itson, ed.] and G[ough, ed.] both emend *A* to *And*. R[ickert, ed.], Ru[mble, ed.] and M[ills, ed.] gloss the *A* as 'he.'" https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#989.

Line 999 Laskaya and Salisbury gloss "reined in". They note that Rickert emends the MS's *sayde* to *stayde* and "G[ough, ed.] emends to *say[s]sde* (seized)." https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#1000.

Line 1023 Ritson reads the MS as *Egramour* and emends to *Segramour*, p. 213; Rickert as well as Laskaya and Salisbury read the MS as *egramour* which they emend to *Segramour*. White's transcription reads *segramour*, p. 337 (f. 76vb).

Line 1031 "Complaint of Egaré." *Emaré* thus inserts itself into two generic traditions: the complaint/plaint is a type of first-person elegiac poetry lamenting misfortune and injustice; the (Middle English) Breton lay (l. 1030) is a novelistic type of poetry relating short tales of love and adventure of "Breton" (insular Celtic) heritage or subject matter, e.g. elements of the fairy world, or the Arthurian marvellous. In fact, *Emaré* belongs to a large group of transcultually circulating tales that share the same basic plot structure. Their origin cannot be pinpointed (see Introduction). The reasons for its self-insertion into two other generic traditions are up for interpretation.

Line 1032 White's transcription reads *Jħu*, p. 337 (f. 76vb). On variant spelling across editions, see Laskaya and Salisbury's note on l. 1033. https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-emare#1033.

Line 1035 Ritson omits the MS's *Amen*, Gough, Salisbury and Laskaya and Rickert do not.

Line 1036 See note for l. 944 regarding the position of the explicit in the MS.