

AMIS AND AMILOUN,
ROBERT OF CISYLE, AND
SIR AMADACE



INTRODUCTION TO *AMIS AND AMILOUN*

The story of Amis and Amiloun was popular in many versions throughout Europe, but the Middle English version is especially lively, entertaining, and perplexing. The pace of the narrative, despite its frequent formulaic language, has a forward impulse that drives the characters from one moral dilemma to another with speed and clarity. The twelve-line stanza, rhyming *aabaabccdeed*, effectively presses the development of the action. The basic structure is a series of interrelated challenges which culminate in a predictable, though not fully earned, happy ending. That the happy ending is not earned is not a narrative flaw but the ultimate moral complexity that the poem proposes. Amis and Amiloun are taken out of the simple world of romance, in which the hero is exactly what his world calls for and rewards. Although they finally succeed, Amis and Amiloun's values are scrutinized all along the way.

The premise of the story is the deep and abiding friendship of Amis and Amiloun first manifested in their mutual pledge of "trewthe," total loyalty and fidelity. Such pledges were apparently common, and elaborate descriptions of them ornament many romances. The profound vow of friendship is the foundation of the poem's narrative structure and moral exploration. The pledge derives its power and authenticity from the way it is embedded in the poem: Amis and Amiloun, born on the same day, so physically alike that they are distinguishable only by their clothing, put to the service of "the duke" together at age twelve, and simultaneously knighted at fifteen, are almost identical in their behavior as young "flowers of chivalry." It thus seems natural and proper that they should promise perpetual fidelity to each other.

Although the immediate source of the poem as a whole is undeterminable, the pledge probably came through a *chanson de gestes* version but ultimately from more distant and diverse origins in folklore. The pledge itself is tested and its significance probed by confrontation with a variety of other familiar motifs from folklore: an evil steward, a persistent wooer, trial by combat, a test of chastity, punishment by leprosy, and infant sacrifice. Of course, these folkloric motifs had been long incorporated into the fabric of medieval narrative and are observable in romance, legend, ballad, and hagiography. Indeed, there are versions of *Amis and Amiloun* which are more strongly hagiographic than our poem is, in that the resolution is clearly attributable, say, to a "miracle of the Virgin." Such is not the case in this narrative. The Middle English *Amis and Amiloun* lodges the problem directly in the vow the two companions make and the consequences of the playing out of that pledge in unpredictable circumstances. As one might expect in folklore, the precise language is significant:

On a day the childer, war and wight,
Trewethes togider thai gun plight
While thai might live and stond

*alert and brave
Pledged their loyalty together*

That bothe bi day and bi night,	<i>by</i>
In wele and wo, in wrong and right,	<i>good and ill</i>
That thai schuld frely fond	<i>nobly try</i>
To hold togider at everi nede,	<i>to stick together</i>
In word, in werk, in wille, in dede . . . (lines 145–52)	

The implicit perils of such a promise should be clear — and the essence of it is repeated when they part from each other. The pledge is to be maintained even when it comes into conflict with competing moral values, which it does in a succession of events, each familiar in itself, but intensified and complicated by the context of the solemn pledge. The structural elegance of the poem and its moral sophistication may be illuminated by an examination of these complications and the troubling issues they raise.

All begins with Amis and Amiloun, who are always at the center of the narrative surrounded by stock or token characters who exist and act only to illuminate the natures and behavior of the heroes. These “counters” are allowed only enough development to clarify the challenges that Amis and Amiloun face. The configurations of the heroes and the “counters” reveal the moral issues. It has been argued that the heroes begin and end at the same place. It does not seem to me, however, that characterization or character development is as important in the poem as the “problems” that they face, individually and together, in these changing configurations.

The first problem arises when they must separate. It is not problematic that they should be left by their parents in the service of “the duke.” Such was a common practice in the Middle Ages and commonplace in romance. It only becomes intriguing by virtue of the simultaneity, their physical resemblance, and the bond that is thereby established. When Amiloun must return home to receive his lands upon the death of his parents, the possibilities for substantive problems emerge and are highlighted by the special attention the narrator gives to their parting:

When thai were bothe afot light,	<i>on foot set</i>
Sir Amiloun, that hendi knight,	<i>skillful</i>
Was rightwise man of rede	<i>justly; counsel</i>
And seyde to Sir Amis ful right,	
“Brother, as we er trewthe plight	<i>earlier pledged fidelity</i>
Bothe with word and dede,	
Fro this day forward never mo	
To faile other for wele no wo,	
To help him at his nede,	
Brother, be now trewe to me,	<i>loyal</i>
And y schal ben as trewe to the,	
Also God me spede!”	<i>God give me fortune</i>
(lines 289–300)	

Without direct statement, the narrator makes us suspicious that distance will result in tests of the oath so prominently asserted and here reasserted. In the rest of his speech, Amiloun warns Amis of two potential problems which quickly materialize:

“Ac brother, ich warn the biforn,	<i>But; I; in advance</i>
For His love that bar the croun of thorn	<i>bore</i>
To save al mankende,	<i>mankind</i>

Be nought ogain thi lord forsworn,
 And yif thou dost, thou art forlorn
 Ever more withouten ende.
 Bot ever do trewthe and no tresoun
 And thenk on me, Sir Amiloun,
 Now we asondri schal wende.
 And, brother, yete y the forbede
 The fals steward felawerede;
 Certes, he wil the schende!"
 (lines 301–12)

*in no way against your lord
 if; lost*

*asunder shall travel
 still I warn you against
 fellowship
 destroy*

While emphasizing their “brotherhood,” Amiloun identifies precisely the difficulties Amis will immediately face. The steward is identified as evil even before he does anything evil, and the danger of infidelity to the duke is raised even before any temptation is offered to Amis.

Even without Amiloun’s warning, readers of romance would expect a steward to be evil, and he quickly satisfies that expectation. He proposes a “trewthe-plight” with Amis as soon as Amiloun is gone. Amis rejects the offer on the grounds that, despite separation, his relationship with Amiloun is exclusive. Whatever the steward’s motive, perhaps envy, Amis’ reaction only serves to further antagonize the steward, against whom Amiloun has already warned him. There is a complex human problem in the steward’s offer: jealous of the friendship of Amis and Amiloun, the steward is eager to replace Amiloun in Amis’ favor. His attempt and Amis’ rejection enrich the conventional and expectable treachery beyond simple jealousy without excusing his behavior. The steward begins jealous, seeks friendship, and in rejection becomes all the more bitter. This is a psychologically complex steward delineated in action rather than description or direct statement.

Amiloun’s other warning, about fidelity to the duke, takes shape in the powerful passion that Belisaunt, the daughter of the duke, conceives for Amis. Here again the narrator complicates familiar conventions. That Belisaunt falls desperately in love with Amis just by looking at him and the oddity that she seems never to have seen him before should come as no surprise; love at first sight and unaccountable first sightings are common in romance. The complication is in that she turns out to be a “persistent wooer,” a folklore motif grafted on to courtly love-longing and physical decline occasioned by a poignant encounter in a garden. She reveals her love and will not take no for an answer. She goes beyond the reticence of the courtly lady and even the calculated enticements of ladies like Bercilak’s wife in *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight*. She presses her entreaty beyond the bounds not only of propriety but of morality. She threatens to cry rape if Amis does not acquiesce and coerces him into a profession of “love-plight.” This is not a violation of his troth to Amiloun, but Amis makes it clear that it is a violation of his subordinate position and consequent duty as a member of the duke’s household. Amis is trapped by Belisaunt’s persistence and compromised by his own failure of nerve: he does the wrong thing and this is not a romance in which characters are protected from the moral consequences of their actions.

Belisaunt’s successful stalking of Amis occurs while the duke is hunting, and he is finally seduced while the duke is hunting again. This is reminiscent of Sir Gawain’s situation at the castle of Bercilak de Hautdesert, though in this case the literal hunter is unaware of the love-hunting going on at home. Although *Amis and Amiloun* lacks that complexity, it develops a complexity of its own by the way it rings changes on folk and romance conventions and capitalizes on the confluence of them. The evil, but correct, steward spies on the courtly, but

culpable, rendezvous in Belisaunt's chamber. Despite Amis' misgivings, there is no doubt what happens:

And so thai plaid in word and dede,
That he wan hir maidenhede,
Er that sche went oway.

(lines 766–68)

played
won; maidenhead
Before; away

When the narrator wishes to be clear he is perfectly clear. Initially, the evil steward has the moral high ground when he reports the transgression to the duke, regardless of his spiteful intention. The immediate consequence is the proposal of a trial by combat, yet another familiar circumstance but here fraught with paradox. The steward is evil, but in the right; Amis, however much he is a victim, is in the wrong and his compromised position is emphasized when he himself proposes the trial which, according to all that is right and good, he should not win. It is peculiar that the duke should so easily take the steward's word against Amis (and become so fierce and implacable), but it is appropriate that Amis have trouble finding "borwes" (guarantors) and have to rely on Belisaunt and her mother, the only two members of court who really do know his guilt. The complications of the moral universe are not only not ignored, but emphasized.

When Amis thinks of Amiloun as his only savior in the situation, he proceeds directly to seek his help despite the fact that the presentation of his moral situation makes it clear that he is abusing his "trewthe-plight" to save himself. The description of Amis' journey to Amiloun (his horse drops dead of fatigue and he continues on foot until he collapses) would in other circumstances be pathetic but here seems a sign of desperation, almost comic. Amiloun, on the other hand, becomes involved by having a conventional dream about the nearness of his friend and immediately acts on his vow of friendship. On the surface, his reaction is a conventional fidelity, but Amis' situation has become so compromised that it is hard to look on with a simple and sympathetic eye. When Amiloun sets out disguised as Amis so he can successfully defend the trial by combat, since his oath will technically be true, the established situation does not allow us to view the enterprise with the happy complicity we usually share in such "trick contests."

While Amiloun is off on his unworthy mission, Amis sleeps with Amiloun's wife. The fact that Amis ensures his chastity by placing a sword between Amiloun's wife and himself in bed is a convention of folklore and romance, but this narrator again shakes our sense of convention by having Amiloun's wife reflect on her "husband's" uncharacteristic sexual restraint in a comic and cranky way. This is a small point but illustrative of how the characters are not allowed the "reprieve of romance."

Meanwhile, Amiloun is engaging in a trial by combat which he and we know is a sham. The battle is intense and extended, a tour de force of the poet's narrative power, but we know all along that this is all wrong. When Amiloun wins, we are relieved; after all, the steward is a scoundrel and Amis was ensnared; but we are not reconciled. We cannot help but see the conflict in the context of Amis' dishonesty, Amiloun's prior warning, and the clear admonition that the angel gives to Amiloun before the battle:

... "Thou knight, Sir Amiloun,
God, that suffred passioun,
Sent the bode bi me;
Yif thou this bataile underfong,

warning
undertake

Thou schalt have an eventour strong	<i>adventure</i>
Within this yeres thre;	
And or this thre yere be al gon,	<i>before</i>
Fouler mesel nas never non	<i>leper</i>
In the world, than thou schal be!"	(lines 1252–60)

And Amiloun explicitly rejects what is not only advice but reliable prediction:

"Certes," he seyde, "for drede of care
To hold mi treuthe schal y nought spare,
Lete God don alle His wille." (lines 1282–84)

In keeping his word to Amis, Amiloun is directly challenging God. When Amis returns ostensibly vindicated, marries Belisaunt, and eventually inherits the kingdom, we cannot escape our sense that vice is its own reward — happily for Amis but disastrously for Amiloun who, within a year, contracts the promised leprosy, not only a physical visitation but, in medieval lore, a clear sign of moral culpability.

The unusual doubleness (or tripleness) of this narrative returns in Amiloun's wife's reaction to his affliction: she turns him out to a hut and eventually gives him an ass to travel with on the condition that he get out of the neighborhood for good. Her vindictiveness, even malignity, provides an interesting contrast, implied rather than specified, to Belisaunt's original amorality and her later generosity. So much for "token" wives. In any case, the result is that Amiloun must leave his home and wander as a beggar served only by the fair and faithful young Amoraunt. The steadfastness of Amoraunt's loyalty, through all of the touchingly described tribulations of Amiloun, cannot help but be seen in contrast with the relationship between Amiloun and Amis. There is no equal "plighting" here; Amoraunt simply serves Amiloun in a humble and determined way. Why Amiloun does not immediately seek out Amis for succor in his distress is not explained, but the fact that he does not allows Amoraunt to demonstrate a selfless and uncomplicated loyalty that is seen nowhere else in the poem. The description of his faithful service is long and edifying.

Through Amoraunt's good offices, Amiloun is recognized and received, joyfully and generously, by Amis and the now good Belisaunt. The key to the acceptance is, however, Amis' recognition of the cup, one of two identical cups Amiloun had made at the time of their original parting. Recognition through such a token is nothing new and in some ways fulfills our sense of the rightness of the resolution, but the narrator will not leave well enough alone. Amiloun still must be healed of his leprosy (in the logic of this poem) and this procedure occasions still further moral ambiguities.

Amis has a dream in which he is told that Amiloun will be cured only if Amis kills his two children and anoints Amiloun with their blood. Amis agonizes over his dilemma but really he has no choice. He expresses his anguish, does the deed, and Amiloun is healed. Now, I have expressed this sequence of events flatly and without moral excuses, because that is the effect of the way the narrator tells the story. It is difficult by this time to have unambiguous sympathy with Amis' plight. His anguish is pathetic, but his behavior is already determined by the ambiguous logic of the poem. Everything is now resolved, except of course Amis has slaughtered his children. The description of his behavior once again does not allow him the "reprieve of romance." There is, however, another resolution, derived from saints' legends but used here in a darker context: the children are, miraculously, found alive and well. In other circumstances, this could be accepted as hagiographic, a "miracle of the Virgin" or the

intervention of some patron saint. But the world is already too messy for easy acceptance of this resolution as praise of God for intervening on behalf of a larger good. Too much has gone wrong in this world for us to find pleasure in divine vindication. Rather, the preservation (resurrection?) of the children simply provides an assertively happy ending, which, as I have indicated before, the tendency of the narrative has not earned. The consequence is that there is an irony in the resolution which, although it does not damn Amis or Amiloun or Belisaunt, will not let us forget the unresolved moral ambiguities of the tale.

By looking only at results, *Amis and Amiloun* can be seen as a simple vindication of the value of friendship, or “trewthe,” in the face of imposing challenges. The problem is that the story is not told that way. We are continually asked to see complexities and to remember them. In this implacability, we are reminded of comparable examples of moral ambiguity in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century: Gawain’s self-doubt despite his comrades’ approbation in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Lancelot’s attractiveness despite his culpability in the *Stanzaic Morte Arthur* and Malory. In *Amis and Amiloun*, romance conventions are configured so as to call into question the possibility, even the propriety, of total devotion to an abstraction: *Amis and Amiloun* fits a pattern that signals if not the end of idealism at least a hearty skepticism about its efficacy. Chaucer was not alone in his critique of local ethics. Lillian Herlands Hornstein (in J. Burke Severs’ *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*) is correct to classify the poem among the romances of “Didactic Intent,” but the didacticism of *Amis and Amiloun* reveals a world of moral ambiguity and tenuous ideals.

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AMIS AND AMILOUN

	For Goddes love in Trinyté	
	Al that ben hend herkenith to me,	<i>are courteous listen</i>
	I pray yow, par amoure,	<i>by (the) love (of God)</i>
	What sumtyme fel beyond the see	<i>once upon a time happened</i>
5	Of two Barons of grete bounté	<i>Concerning; generosity</i>
	And men of grete honoure;	
	Her faders were barons hende,	<i>Their fathers; well-born</i>
	Lordinges com of grete kynde	<i>Lords born of great family</i>
	And pris men in toun and toure;	<i>excellent; town and tower</i>
10	To here of these children two	<i>hear</i>
	How they were in wele and woo,	<i>good and ill</i>
	Ywys, it is grete doloure.	<i>Certainly; sorrow</i>
	In weele and woo how they gan wynd	<i>good and ill; fared</i>
	And how unkouth they were of kynd,	<i>unaffected by their lineage</i>
15	The children bold of chere,	<i>manner</i>
	And how they were good and hend	<i>courteous</i>
	And how yong thei becom frend	<i>became friends</i>
	In cort there they were,	<i>court where</i>
	And how they were made knyght	<i>knighted</i>
20	And how they were trouth plyght,	<i>how they pledged loyalty</i>
	The children both in fere,	<i>together</i>
	And in what lond thei were born	
	And what the childres name worn,	<i>children's names were</i>
	Herkeneth and ye mow here.	<i>Listen; will hear</i>
25	In Lumbardy, y understand,	
	Whilom bifel in that lond,	<i>Once upon a time it happened</i>
	In romance as we reede,	<i>read</i>
	Two barouns hend wonyd in lond	<i>barons well-born lived</i>
	And had two ladyes free to fond,	<i>noble in proof</i>
30	That worthy were in wede;	<i>stately were in dress</i>
	Of her hend ladyes two	<i>their well-born</i>
	Twoo knave childre gat they thoo	<i>Two boy children got they then</i>
	That douhty were of dede,	<i>doughty (brave)</i>
	And trew weren in al thing,	<i>true (to their word)</i>

- 35 And therfore Jhesu, hevynking, *king of heaven*
 Ful wel quyted her mede. *fulfilled their deserving*
- The childrenis names, as y yow hyght, *children's; as I promised you*
 In ryme y wol rekene ryght *will recount properly*
 And tel in my talkyng;
- 40 Both they were getyn in oo nyght *conceived; one*
 And on oo day born aplyght, *one; truly*
 For soth, without lesyng; *Truthfully, without lying*
 That oon baroun son, ywys *one; certainly*
 Was ycleped childe Amys *named*
- 45 At his cristenyng; *baptism*
 That other was clepyd Amylyoun, *named*
 That was a childe of grete renoun *renown*
 And com of hyghe ofspryng. *high background*
- The children gon then thryve, *then began to thrive*
 50 Fairer were never noon on lyve, *none alive*
 Curtaise, hende, and good; *Courteous, well-born*
 When they were of yeres fyve, *five years old*
 Alle her kyn was of hem blyth, *family; pleased*
 So mylde they were of mood; *mild; manner*
- 55 When they were sevyn yere olde,
 Grete joy every man of hem tolde
 To beholde that frely foode; *worthy offspring*
 When they were twel winter olde, *twelve*
 In al the londe was ther non hold *held*
- 60 So faire of boon and blood. *bone and blood (i.e., body)*
- In that tyme, y understond,
 A duk wonyd in that lond, *duke lived*
 Prys in toun and toure; *Esteemed in town and tower*
 Frely he let sende his sonde, *Graciously he sent his message*
 65 After Erles, Barouns, fre and bond, *To earls, barons, freemen and bound*
 And ladies bryght in boure; *lovely; bower*
 A ryche fest he wolde make *rich feast*
 Al for Jhesu Cristes sake
 That is oure savyoure; *savior*
- 70 Muche folk, as y yow saye, *as I tell you*
 He lete after sende that daye *He invited*
 With myrth and grete honoure. *With joy*
- Thoo Barouns twoo, that y of tolde, *Those*
 And her sones feire and bolde *fair*
 75 To court they com ful yare. *quickly*
 When they were samned, yong and olde, *gathered*
 Mony men gan hem byholde *looked at them*

- Of lordynges that there were,
 Of body how wel they were pyght,
 80 And how feire they were of syght,
 Of hyde and hew and here;
 And al they seide without lesse
 Fairer children than they wesse
 Ne sey they never yere.
- 85 In al the court was ther no wyght,
 Erl, baroun, squyer, ne knyght,
 Neither lef ne loothe,
 So lyche they were both of syght
 And of waxing, y yow plyght,
 90 I tel yow for soothe,
 In al thing they were so lyche
 Ther was neither pore ne ryche,
 Who so beheld hem both,
 Fader ne moder that couth say
 95 Ne knew the hend children tway
 But by the coloure of her cloth.
- That riche douke his fest gan hold
 With erles and with barouns bold,
 As ye may listen and lithe,
 100 Fourtennight, as me was told,
 With meet and drynke, meryst on mold
 To glad the berners blithe;
 Ther was mirthe and melodye
 And al maner of menstracie
 105 Her craftes for to kithe;
 Opon the fiftenday ful yare
 Thai token her leve forto fare
 And thonked him mani a sithe.
- Than the lordinges schuld forth wende,
 110 That riche douke comly of kende
 Cleped to him that tide
 Tho tuay barouns, that were so hende,
 And prayd hem also his frende
 In court thai schuld abide,
 115 And lete her tuay sones fre
 In his servise with him to be,
 Semly to fare bi his side;
 And he wald dubbe hem knyghtes to
 And susten hem for ever mo,
 120 As lordinges proude in pride.
- adorned
 fair they were to see
 skin; complexion; hair
 falsehood
 were
 They never saw before*
- person
 Earl, baron, squire, nor knight
 Like it or not
 alike; appearance
 stature; pledge
 truly
 alike
 poor nor rich
 Father nor mother that could say
 Nor could tell the courteous children apart
 Except; clothes*
- duke
 earls; barons
 hear
 Fortnight (two weeks)
 merriest on earth
 cheer; noblemen joyful*
- minstrelsy
 Their skills; show
 quite readily
 They took leave to go
 many a time*
- When; lords; left
 noble of family
 Called to him then
 Those two baron; courteous
 entreated them as*
- splendid
 In fine array to live by
 would dub them
 support
 lords magnificent in honor*

- The riche barouns answerd ogain,
 And her levedis gan to sain
 To that douke ful yare
 That thai were bothe glad and fain
 125 That her levely children tuain
 In servise with him ware.
 Thai gave her childer her blisceing
 And bisought Jhesu, heven king,
 He schuld scheld hem fro care,
 130 And oft thai thonked the douke that day
 And token her leve and went oway
 To her owen contres thai gun fare.
- Thus war tho hende childer, ywis,
 Child Amiloun and child Amis,
 135 In court frely to fede,
 To ride an hunting under riis;
 Over al the lond than were thai priis
 And worthliest in wede.
 So wele tho children loved hem tho,
 140 Nas never children loved hem so,
 Noither in word no in dede;
 Bituix hem tuai, of blod and bon,
 Trewer love nas never non,
 In gest as so we rede.
- 145 On a day the childer, war and wight,
 Trewethes togider thai gun plight,
 While thai might live and stond
 That bothe bi day and bi night,
 In wele and wo, in wrong and right,
 150 That thai schuld frely fond
 To hold togider at everi nede,
 In word, in werk, in wille, in dede,
 Where that thai were in lond,
 Fro that day forward never mo
 155 Failen other for wele no wo:
 Therto thai held up her hond.
- Thus in gest as ye may here,
 Tho hende childer in cuntré were
 With that douke for to abide;
 160 The douke was blithe and glad of chere,
 Thai were him bothe leve and dere,
 Semly to fare bi his side.
 Tho thai were fitten winter old,
 He dubbed bothe tho bernies bold
- in return
 their ladies began to say
 quite readily
 joyful
 their dear; both
 were
 their children their blessing
 would shield them from grief
 frequently thanked the duke
 took their leave; away
 To their own countries they began to travel*
- those lovely; certainly
 freely to eat (be nourished)
 branches
 then; esteemed
 worthiest in clothes
 well; loved each other then
 Never did children love each other so
 Neither in word nor in deed
 Between them two, of blood and bone
 There was never truer love
 stories; read*
- alert and brave
 Pledged their loyalty together*
- by
 good and ill
 nobly try
 to stick together*
- Wherever*
- Let each other down
 (i.e., swore an oath)*
- stories; hear
 Those courteous*
- happy; manner
 beloved and dear
 Honorably to go by
 When
 brave young men*

- 165 To knightes in that tide, *To be; time*
 And fond hem al that hem was nede, *gave them all that was necessary for them*
 Hors and wepen and worthy wede, *weapons; arms*
 As princes prout in pride. *proud*
- That riche douke, he loved hem so,
 170 Al that thai wald he fond hem tho, *He provided them all they wanted*
 Bothe stedes white and broun, *horses*
 That in what stede thai gun go, *So that; places; went*
 Alle the lond spac of hem tho, *spoke; then*
 Bothe in tour and toun;
 175 In to what stede that thai went, *place*
 To justes other to turnament, *To jousts or to tournaments*
 Sir Amis and Sir Amiloun,
 For douhtiest in everi dede, *As doughtiest; deed*
 With scheld and spere to ride on stede, *horse*
- 180 Thai gat hem gret renoun.
 That riche douke hadde of hem pris, *esteem*
 For that thai were so war and wiis *alert and wise*
 And holden of gret bounté. *generosity*
 Sir Amiloun and Sir Amis,
 185 He sett hem bothe in gret office, *them; high*
 In his court for to be;
 Sir Amis, as ye may here, *you; hear*
 He made his chef botelere, *head dispenser (of food and drink)*
 For he was hend and fre, *courteous and generous*
 190 And Sir Amiloun of hem alle *over them all*
 He made chef steward in halle, *manager of domestic affairs*
 To dight al his meine. *To set in order all members of his household*
- In to her servise when thai were brought, *their*
 To geten hem los tham spared nought, *To earn themselves praise; spared nothing*
 195 Wel hendeliche thai bigan; *honorably*
 With riche and pover so wele thai wrought, *poor so well they behaved*
 Al that hem seighe, with word and thought, *them saw*
 Hem loved mani a man; *Many a man loved them*
 For thai were so blithe of chere, *graceful of manner*
 200 Over al the lond fer and nere *far and near*
 The los of love thai wan, *honor*
 And the riche douke, withouten les, *lies*
 Of all the men that olive wes *alive were*
 Mest he loved hem than. *Most he loved them then*
- 205 Than hadde the douke, ich understand,
 A chef steward of alle his lond, *I*
 A douhti knight at crie, *manager of property*
doughty; upon call

	That ever he proved with nithe and ond	<i>tried with envy and indignation</i>
	For to have brought hem bothe to schond	<i>To bring them both to shame</i>
210	With gile and trecherie.	<i>guile</i>
	For thai were so gode and hende,	
	And for the douke was so wele her frende,	<i>because; friend</i>
	He hadde therof gret envie;	
	To the douke with wordes grame	<i>harmful</i>
215	Ever he proved to don hem schame	<i>tried to do them shame</i>
	With wel gret felonie.	<i>crime</i>
	So within tho yeres to	<i>So then within two years</i>
	A messanger ther com tho	<i>there</i>
	To Sir Amiloun, hende on hond,	<i>skillful with hands</i>
220	And seyde hou deth hadde fet him fro	<i>And said how death had fetched from him</i>
	His fader and his moder also	<i>father; mother</i>
	Thurch the grace of Godes sond.	<i>Through; mercy</i>
	Than was that knight a careful man,	<i>sorrowful</i>
	To that douke he went him than	
225	And dede him to understand	<i>explained to him</i>
	His fader and his moder hende	<i>gracious</i>
	War ded, and he most hom wende,	<i>go</i>
	For to resaive his lond.	<i>receive (claim)</i>
	That riche douke, comly of kende,	<i>noble of family</i>
230	Answerd ogain with wordes hende	<i>in return</i>
	And seyde, "So God me spede,	<i>God give me fortune</i>
	Sir Amiloun, now thou schalt wende	<i>go</i>
	Me nas never so wo for frende	<i>I was never so sorry</i>
	That of mi court out yede.	<i>That out of my; went</i>
235	Ac yif ever it befalle so	<i>But if; happens</i>
	That thou art in wer and wo	<i>danger and sorrow</i>
	And of min help hast nede,	
	Saveliche com or send thi sond,	<i>Only; messenger</i>
	And with al mi powere of mi lond	
240	Y schal wreke the of that dede."	<i>avenge</i>
	Than was Sir Amiloun ferli wo	<i>terribly sorry</i>
	For to wende Sir Amis fro,	<i>go; from</i>
	On him was al his thought.	
	To a goldsmith he gan go	<i>went</i>
245	And lete make gold coupes to,	<i>had made; cups two</i>
	For thre hundred ponde he hem bought,	<i>them</i>
	That bothe were of o wight,	<i>one (the same) weight</i>
	And bothe of o michel, yplight;	<i>one (the same) size, truly</i>
	Ful richeliche thai were wrought,	<i>richly</i>
250	And bothe thai weren as liche, ywis,	<i>alike</i>

	As was Sir Amiloun and Sir Amis, Ther no failed right nought.	<i>Nothing went wrong with that</i>
	When that Sir Amiloun was al yare, He tok his leve for to fare, 255 To wende in his jorné. Sir Amis was so ful of care, For sorwe and wo and sikeing sare, Almest swoned that fre. To the douke he went with dreri mode 260 And praid him fair, ther he stode, And seyde, "Sir, par charité, Yif me leve to wend the fro, Bot yif y may with mi brother go, Mine hert, it breketh of thre!"	<i>ready travel go; journey sorrow; woe; sighing sadly Almost fainted; nobleman sorrowful manner prayed; where for charity Give me leave to travel from you Unless in three</i>
265	That riche douke, comly of kende, Answerd ogain with wordes hende And seyde withouten delay, "Sir Amis, mi gode frende, Wold ye bothe now fro me wende?" 270 "Certes," he seyde, "nay! Were ye bothe went me fro, Than schuld me waken al mi wo, Mi joie were went oway. Thi brother schal in to his cuntré; 275 Wende with him in his journé And com ogain this day!"	<i>noble of family in return gone from me would be gone away country Go; journey back</i>
	When thai were redi forto ride, Tho bold berners for to abide Busked hem redy boun. 280 Hende, herkneth! Is nought to hide, So douhti knightes, in that tide That ferd out of that toun, Al that day as thai rade Gret morning bothe thai made, 285 Sir Amis and Amiloun, And when thai schuld wende otuain, Wel fair togider opon a plain Of hors thai light adoun.	<i>Those; young men Prepared; to go forth Gracious audience, listen Such doughty; time traveled rode mourning go apart (separate) together on They got off their horses</i>
290	When thai were bothe afot light, Sir Amiloun, that hendi knight, Was rightwise man of rede And seyde to Sir Amis ful right, "Brother, as we er trewthe plight	<i>on foot set skillful justly; counsel earlier pledged fidelity</i>

- Bothe with word and dede,
 295 Fro this day forward never mo
 To faile other for wele no wo,
 To help him at his nede,
 Brother, be now trewe to me, *loyal*
 And y schal ben as trewe to the,
 300 Also God me spede! *God give me fortune*
- Ac brother, ich warn the biforn, *But; I; in advance*
 For His love that bar the croun of thorn *bore*
 To save al mankende, *mankind*
 Be nought ogain thi lord forsworn, *in no way against your lord*
 305 And yif thou dost, thou art forlorn *if; lost*
 Ever more withouten ende.
 Bot ever do trewthe and no tresoun
 And thenk on me, Sir Amiloun,
 Now we asondri schal wende. *asunder shall travel*
 310 And, brother, yete y the forbede *still I warn you against*
 The fals steward felawerede; *fellowship*
 Certes, he wil the schende!" *destroy*
- As thai stode so, tho bretheren bold, *stood; brothers*
 Sir Amiloun drought forth tuay coupes of gold, *draw; two cups*
 315 Ware liche in al thing, *[Which] were alike*
 And bad sir Amis that he schold *bade*
 Chese whether he have wold, *Choose which he would have*
 Withouten more duelling, *delay*
 And seyde to him, "Mi leve brother, *dear*
 320 Kepe thou that on and y that other, *one*
 For Godes love, heven king;
 Lete never this coupe fro the, *Let*
 Bot loke heron and thenk on me, *here on*
 It tokneth our parting." *betokens*
- 325 Gret sorwe thai made at her parting *Great sorrow; their*
 And kisten hem with eighen wepeing, *kissed; eyes weeping*
 Tho knightes hende and fre.
 Aither bitaught other heven king, *Each commended the other to*
 And on her stedes thai gun spring *horses; mounted*
 330 And went in her jurné. *their journeys*
 Sir Amiloun went hom to his lond
 And sesed it al in to his hond, *took*
 That his elders hadde be, *That his ancestors had held*
 And spoused a levedy bright in bour *espoused; lady beautiful; bower*
 335 And brought hir hom with gret honour *her home*
 And miche solempneté. *much solemnity*

	Lete we Sir Amiloun stille be	<i>Let</i>
	With his wiif in his cuntré —	<i>wife; country</i>
	God leve hem wele to fare —	<i>grant</i>
340	And of Sir Amis telle we;	
	When he com hom to court oye,	<i>again</i>
	Ful blithe of him thai ware;	<i>glad</i>
	For that he was so hende and gode,	<i>gracious</i>
	Men bliscd him, bothe bon and blod,	<i>blessed; bone and blood (body)</i>
345	That ever him gat and bare,	<i>Who ever conceived and bore him</i>
	Save the steward of that lond;	<i>Except</i>
	Ever he proved with nithe and ond	<i>Always; tried; malice and anger</i>
	To bring him into care.	<i>grief</i>
	Than on a day bifel it so	<i>it happened</i>
350	With the steward he met tho,	<i>then</i>
	Ful fair he gret that fre.	<i>greeted; noble person</i>
	“Sir Amis,” he seyde, “the is ful wo	<i>you are woeful</i>
	For that thi brother is went the fro,	<i>Because; from</i>
	And, certes, so is me.	<i>certainly so am I</i>
355	Ac of his wendeing have thou no care,	<i>But; going</i>
	Yif thou wilt leve opon mi lare,	<i>If; believe; teaching</i>
	And lete thi morning be,	<i>leave off your mourning</i>
	And thou wil be to me kende,	<i>If; of one kind (kin)</i>
	Y schal the be a better frende	
360	Than ever yete was he.	
	“Sir Amis,” he seyde, “do bi mi red,	<i>act on my advice</i>
	And swere ous bothe brotherhed	<i>us; brotherhood</i>
	And plight we our trewthes to;	<i>pledge; fidelity</i>
	Be trewe to me in word and dede,	
365	And y schal to the, so God me spede,	<i>to you</i>
	Be trewe to the also.”	
	Sir Amis answerd, “Mi treuthe y plight	<i>pledged</i>
	To Sir Amiloun, the gentil knight,	
	Thei he be went me fro.	<i>Though</i>
370	Whiles that y may gon and speke,	<i>walk and speak</i>
	Y no schal never mi treuthe breke,	<i>break</i>
	Noither for wele no wo.	<i>Neither</i>
	For bi the treuthe that God me sende,	<i>truth</i>
	Ichave him founde so gode and kende,	<i>I have; kind (good-natured)</i>
375	Seththen that y first him knewe,	<i>Since</i>
	For ones y plight him treuthe, that hende,	<i>once I pledged; courteous one</i>
	Where so he in warld wende,	<i>world should go</i>
	Y schal be to him trewe;	
	And yif y were now forsworn	<i>if</i>
380	And breke mi treuthe, y were forlorn,	<i>broke; vow; totally lost</i>

- Wel sore it schuld me rewe.
 Gete me frendes whare y may,
 Y no schal never bi night no day
 Chaunge him for no newe.”
- grievously; rue*
Get; friends where
Exchange
- 385 The steward than was egre of mode,
 Almost for wrethe he wex ner wode
 And seyde, withouten delay,
 And swore bi Him that dyed on Rode:
 “Thou traitour, unkinde blod,
 390 Thou schalt abigge this nay.
 Y warn the wele,” he seyde than,
 “That y schal be thi strong foman
 Ever after this day!”
 Sir Amis answerd tho,
 395 “Sir, therof give y nought a slo;
 Do al that thou may!”
- fierce of manner*
Almost for wrath he grew near mad
died on the Cross
unnatural of breeding
atone for this refusal
enemy
then
I don't give a fig
- Al thus the wrake gan biginne,
 And with wrethe thai went atuinne,
 Tho bold bernes to.
 400 The steward nold never blinne
 To schende that douhti knight of kinne,
 Ever he proved tho.
 Thus in court togider thai were
 With wrethe and with loureand chere
 405 Wele half a yere and mo,
 And afterward opon a while
 The steward with tresoun and gile
 Wrought him ful michel wo.
- trouble did begin*
wrath; apart
Those bold young men two
would never cease
shame
Always he tried thus
together
wrath; surly face
more
guile
great sorrow
- So in a time, as we tel in gest,
 410 The riche douke lete make a fest
 Semly in somers tide;
 Ther was mani a gentil gest
 With mete and drink ful onest
 To servi by ich a side.
 415 Miche semly folk was samned thare,
 Erls, barouns, lasse and mare,
 And levedis proude in pride.
 More joie no might be non
 Than ther was in that worthy won,
 420 With blisse in borwe to bide.
- stories*
put on a feast
Properly; time
guest
meat; most fitting
serve all around
Many worthy; gathered
lesser and greater
ladies magnificent in honor
worthy dwelling
castle to abide
- That riche douke, that y of told,
 He hadde a douhter fair and bold,
 Curteise, hende and fre.
- daughter*
lovely and generous

- When sche was fifyten winter old,
 425 In al that lond nas ther non yhold *there was none held*
 So semly on to se, *So splendid to look at*
 For sche was gentil and avenaunt, *noble; beautiful*
 Hir name was cleped Belisaunt, *called*
 As ye may lithe at me. *listen to*
 430 With levedis and maidens bright in bour *ladies; beautiful in bower*
 Kept sche was with honour
 And gret solempnité. *solemnity*
- That fest lasted fourten night *feast*
 Of barouns and of birddes bright *ladies beautiful*
 435 And lordinges mani and fale. *lords many and abundant*
 Ther was mani a gentil knight
 And mani a serjaunt, wise and wight,
 To serve tho hende in halle. *servant; strong*
 Than was the boteler, Sir Amis, *those nobles in hall*
 440 Over al yholden flour and priis, *chief dispenser*
 Trewely to telle in tale, *held flower and prize*
 And douhtiest in everi dede
 And worthliest in ich a wede
 And semliest in sale. *all his clothes*
most splendid in the hall
- 445 Than the lordinges schulden al gon *all had to go*
 And wende out of that worthli won, *traveled; dwelling*
 In boke as so we rede,
 That mirie maide gan aske anon *lovely*
 Of her maidens everichon *every one*
 450 And seyde, "So God you spede, *God give you fortune*
 Who was hold the doughtiest knight *considered*
 And semlyest in ich a sight *most splendid in every view*
 And worthliest in wede, *worthiest in dress*
 And who was the fairest man
 455 That was yholden in lond than, *considered; then*
 And doughtiest of dede?"
- Her maidens gan answeere ogain *began; in return*
 And seyde, "Madame, we schul the sain *shall to you say*
 That sothe bi Seyn Saviour: *truth; Holy Savior*
 460 Of erls, barouns, knight and swain *young men*
 The fairest man and mest of main *most of force*
 And man of mest honour, *most*
 It is Sir Amis, the kinges boteler; *chief dispenser*
 In al this world nis his per, *world is not his peer*
 465 Noither in toun no tour; *Neither*
 He is douhtiest in dede

- And worthliest in everi wede
And chosen for priis and flour.”
*worthiest; armor
prize and flower*
- Belisaunt, that birdde bright,
470 When thai hadde thus seyde, yplight,
As ye may listen and lithe,
On Sir Amis, that gentil knight,
Ywis, hir love was al alight,
That no man might it kithe.
475 Wher that sche seighe him ride or go,
Hir thought hir hert brac atuo,
That hye no spac nought with that blithe;
For hye no might night no day
Speke with him, that fair may,
480 Sche wepe wel mani a sithe.
*lady beautiful
truly
hear
Indeed; kindled
realize
Wherever; saw; ride or walk
She; heart would break in two
she never spoke; graceful one
Because she
maiden
wept; many a time*
- Thus that miri maiden ying
Lay in care and lovemorning
Bothe bi night and day;
As y you tel in mi talking,
485 For sorwe sche spac with him no thing,
Sike in bed sche lay.
Hir moder com to hir tho
And gan to frain hir of hir wo,
Help hir yif hye may;
490 And sche answerd withouten wrong,
Hir pines were so hard and strong,
Sche wald be loken in clay.
*merry; young
sorrow; love-mourning
spoke
ill
mother; then
ask
if she
pains
wanted to be locked in clay (buried)*
- That riche douke in o morning
And with him mani a gret lording,
495 As prince prout in pride,
Thai dight him withouten dueling,
For to wende on dere hunting,
And busked hem for to ride.
When the lordinges everichon
500 Were went out of that worthli won —
In herd is nought to hide —
Sir Amis, withouten les,
For a malady that on him wes,
At hom he gan to abide.
*on one
great lord
prepared themselves; delay
go
dressed themselves
lords everyone
stately residence
In a crowd
lies
was
stayed*
- 505 When tho lordinges were out ywent
With her men hende and bowes bent,
To hunte on holtes hare,
Than Sir Amis, verrament,
He bileft at hom in present,
*those lords
skillful; bows
deep woods
truly
stayed*

- 510 To kepe al that ther ware. *attend to*
 That hendi knight bithought him tho, *courteous; thought to himself then*
 Into the gardin he wold go,
 For to solas him thare. *solace himself there*
 Under a bough as he gan bide,
- 515 To here the foules song that tide, *birds'; time*
 Him thought a blisseful fare. *state*
- Now, hende, herkneth, and ye may here *gracious audience, listen*
 Hou that the doukes douhter dere
 Sike in hir bed lay. *Ill*
- 520 Hir moder com with diolful chere *doleful countenance*
 And al the levedis that ther were, *ladies*
 For to solas that may: *comfort; maiden*
 "Arise up," sche seyde, "douhter min, *mine*
 And go play the in to the gardin
- 525 This semly somers day; *lovely summer's*
 Ther may thou here the foules song *hear*
 With joie and miche blis among, *much*
 Thi care schal wende oway." *go away*
- Up hir ros that swete wight. *creature*
- 530 Into the gardine sche went ful right
 With maidens hende and fre.
 The somers day was fair and bright,
 The sonne him schon thurch lem of light, *summer's*
 That semly was on to se. *shone through gleaming*
splendid
- 535 Sche herd the foules gret and smale, *birds*
 The swete note of the nightingale
 Ful mirily sing on tre; *merrily; tree*
 Ac hir hert was so hard ibrought, *But her heart; troubled*
 On love-longing was al hir thought,
- 540 No might hir gamen no gle. *She could not play or enjoy*
- And so that mirie may with pride *merry maiden*
 Went into the orchard that tide, *time*
 To slake hir of hir care. *relieve*
 Than seyge sche Sir Amis beside, *saw; nearby*
 545 Under a bough he gan abide, *remained*
 To here tho mirthes mare.
 Than was sche bothe glad and blithe,
 Hir joie couthe sche noman kithe, *that sweet singing better*
 When that sche seighe him thare; *glad and joyful*
could she no one show
 saw
- 550 And thought sche wold for noman wond *no one hesitate*
 That sche no wold to him fond *make her way*
 And tel him of hir fare. *state*

- Than was that may so blithe o mode,
 When sche seighe were he stode,
 555 To him sche went, that swete,
 And thought, for alle this warldes gode,
 Bot yif hye spac that frely fode,
 That time no wold sche lete.
 And as tite as that gentil knight
 560 Seighe that bird in bour so bright
 Com with him for to mete,
 Ogaines hir he gan wende,
 With worde bothe fre and hende
 Ful fair he gan hir grete.
- 565 That mirie maiden sone anon
 Bad hir maidens fram hir gon
 And withdrawe hem oway;
 And when thai were togider alon,
 To Sir Amis sche made hir mon
 570 And seyde opon hir play,
 "Sir knight, on the mine hert is brought,
 The to love is al mi thought
 Bothe bi night and day;
 That bot thou wolt mi leman be,
 575 Ywis, min hert breketh a thre,
 No lenger libben y no may.
- "Thou art," sche seyde, "a gentil knight,
 And icham a bird in bour bright,
 Of wel heighe kin ycorn,
 580 And bothe bi day and bi night
 Mine hert so hard is on the light,
 Mi joie is al forlorn;
 Plight me thi trewthe thou schalt be trewe
 And chaunge me for no newe
 585 That in this world is born,
 And y plight the mi treuthe also,
 Til God and deth dele ous ato,
 Y schal never be forsworn."
- That hende knight stille he stode
 590 And al for thought chaunged his mode
 And seyde with hert fre,
 "Madame, for Him that dyed on Rode,
 Astow art comen of gentil blode
 And air of this lond schal be,
 595 Bithenke the of thi michel honour;
 Kinges sones and emperour
- maiden so happy of mood
 saw where he stood
 lovely one
 world's possessions
 Until she spoke to that noble young man
 let pass
 soon
 Saw; woman; bower; beautiful
 Came towards him to meet
 Towards
 greet*
- immediately
 Bade
 away
 together alone
 plea
 in her courtly love talk
 on you my heart*
- unless; beloved
 Certainly; in three
 live*
- noble
 I am a woman
 From noble family descended
 descended
 Pledge; fidelity
 exchange; no new (other)
 pledge; fidelity
 set us apart
 break my vow*
- manner
 generous
 died on the Cross
 As you; noble
 heir
 Remember; great*

	Nar non to gode to the; Certes, than were it michel unright, Thi love to lain opon a knight	<i>Are none too good for you much lay</i>
600	That nath noither lond no fe.	<i>has neither property nor rents</i>
	“And yif we schuld that game biginne, And ani wight of al thi kinne Might it undergo, Al our joie and worldes winne	<i>if; love game person; family find out pleasure</i>
605	We schuld lese, and for that sinne Wrethi God therto. And y dede mi lord this deshonour, Than were ich an ivel traitour;	<i>lose Anger; thereby If evil</i>
	Ywis, it may nought be so. 610 Leve madame, do bi mi red And thenk what wil com of this dede: Certes, no thing bot wo.”	<i>Certainly Dear; advice but woe</i>
	That mirie maiden of gret renoun Answerd, “Sir knight, thou nast no croun; 615 For God that bought the dere, Whether artow prest other persoun, Other thou art monk other canoun, That prechest me thus here?	<i>lovely maiden have no tonsure redeemed you dearly Are you a priest or parson Or; canon preaches</i>
	Thou no schust have ben no knight, 620 To gon among maidens bright, Thou schust have ben a frere! He that lerd the thus to preche, The devel of helle ichim biteche, Mi brother thei he were!	<i>should; friar taught you; preach I wish would take him though</i>
625	“Ac,” sche seyde, “bi Him that ous wrought, Al thi precheing helpeth nought, No stonde thou never so long. Bot yif thou wilt graunt me mi thought, Mi love schal be ful dere abought	<i>But; created preaching (No matter how long you) resist Unless dearly paid for</i>
630	With pines hard and strong; Mi kerchef and mi clothes anon Y schal torende down ichon And say with michel wrong, With strengthe thou hast me todrawe;	<i>pains tear; every one great violated</i>
635	Ytake thou schalt be thurch londes lawe ¹ And dempt heighe to hong!”	<i>condemned high to hang</i>

¹ You shall be arrested according to the laws of the land

- Than stode that hendy knight ful stille,
 And in his hert him liked ille,
 No word no spac he tho;
 640 He thought, "Bot y graunt hir wille,
 With hir speche sche wil me spille,
 Er than y passe hir fro;
 And yif y do mi lord this wrong,
 With wilde hors and with strong
 645 Y schal be drawe also."
 Loth him was that dede to don,
 And wele lother his liif forgon;
 Was him never so wo.
- And than he thought, withouten lesing,
 650 Better were to graunt hir asking
 Than his liif for to spille.
 Than seyde he to that maiden ying,
 "For Godes love, heven king,
 Understond to mi skille.
 655 Astow art maiden gode and trewe
 Bithenk hou oft rape wil rewe
 And turn to grame wel grille,
 And abide we al this sevensnight,
 As icham trewe gentil knight,
 660 Y schal graunt the thi wille."
- Than answerd that bird bright
 And swore, "Bi Jhesu, ful of might,
 Thou scapest nought so oway.
 Thi treuthe anon thou schalt me plight,
 665 Astow art trewe gentil knight,
 Thou schalt hold that day."
 He graunted hir hir wil tho,
 And plight hem trewthes bothe to,
 And seththen kist tho tuai.
 670 Into hir chaumber sche went ogain,
 Than was sche so glad and fain,
 Hir joie sche couthe no man sai.
- Sir Amis than withouten duelling,
 For to kepe his lordes coming,
 675 Into halle he went anon.
 When thai were comen fram dere hunting
 And with him mani an heighe lording
 Into that worthy won,
 After his douhter he asked swithe;
 680 Men seyde that sche was glad and blithe,
- he was displeased
spoke; then
Unless
destroy
Before; from*
- drawn
Reluctant
more reluctant; life give up
He was never so woeful*
- lies
life; lose
young
Listen to my excuse
As you
Think; haste will be regretted
harm; fearful
wait; week
I am; noble*
- escape not; away
fidelity; pledge
As you; noble
keep to that day
then
pledged fidelity between the two of them
then; those two
chamber; again
joyful
could; tell*
- delay
prepare for
at once
high lord
stately dwelling
quickly
joyful*

	Hir care was al agon.	<i>gone</i>
	To eten in halle thai brought that may,	<i>eat; maiden</i>
	Ful blithe and glad thai were that day	
	And thonked God ichon.	<i>everyone</i>
685	When the lordinges, withouten les,	<i>lords; lies</i>
	Hendelich were brought on des	<i>Courteously; high table</i>
	With levedis bright and swete,	<i>ladies beautiful</i>
	As princes that were proude in pres,	<i>bold in battle</i>
	Ful richeliche served he wes	<i>they were</i>
690	With menske and mirthe to mete.	<i>dignity; at dinner</i>
	When that maiden that y of told,	
	Among the birdes that were bold,	<i>women; joyous</i>
	Ther sche sat in her sete,	
	On Sir Amis, that gentil knight,	<i>noble</i>
695	An hundred time sche cast hir sight,	
	For no thing wald sche lete.	<i>leave off (stop)</i>
	On Sir Amis, that knight hendy,	
	Ever more sche cast hir eyghe,	<i>eyes</i>
	For no thing wold sche spare.	<i>let up (stop)</i>
700	The steward ful of felonie,	<i>wickedness</i>
	Wel fast he gan hem aspie,	<i>attentively; watch</i>
	Til he wist of her fare,	<i>knew; condition</i>
	And bi her sight he parceived tho	<i>perceived then</i>
	That gret love was bituix hem to,	<i>between those two</i>
705	And was agreved ful sare,	<i>aggrieved; sorely</i>
	And thought he schuld in a while	
	Bothe with tresoun and with gile	<i>guile</i>
	Bring hem into care.	<i>sorrow</i>
	Thus, ywis, that miri may	<i>sweet maiden</i>
710	Ete in halle with gamen and play	<i>Ate; pleasure</i>
	Wele four days other five,	<i>or</i>
	That ever when sche Sir Amis say,	<i>saw</i>
	Al hir care was went oway,	<i>away</i>
	Wele was hir o live.	<i>alive</i>
715	Wher that he sat or stode,	<i>Whether</i>
	Sche biheld opon that frely fode,	<i>noble young man</i>
	No stint sche for no strive;	<i>stinted; danger</i>
	And the steward for wrethe sake	<i>wrath's</i>
	Brought hem bothe in ten and wrake.	<i>injury; trouble</i>
720	Wel ivel mot he thrive.	<i>evilly might</i>
	That riche douke opon a day	
	On dere hunting went him to play,	
	And with him wel mani a man;	

- And Belisaunt, that miri may, *sweet maiden*
 725 To chaumber ther Sir Amis lay, *where*
 Sche went, as sche wele kan;
 And the steward, withouten les, *lies*
 In a chaumber bisiden he wes *nearby*
 And seighe the maiden than *saw; then*
 730 Into chaumber hou sche gan glide;
 For to asprie hem bothe that tide, *spy on them; time*
 After swithe he ran. *quickly*
- When that may com into that won, *maiden; dwelling*
 Sche fond Sir Amis ther alon, *found*
 735 "Hail," sche seyde, that levedi bright, *lady beautiful*
 "Sir Amis," sche sayde anon,
 "This day a sevensight it is gon, *week; has passed*
 That trewthe we ous plight. *fidelity; pledged*
 Therefore icham comen to the, *I am*
 740 To wite, astow art hende and fre *know, as you are*
 And holden a gentil knight, *considered*
 Whether wiltow me forsake *If you will*
 Or thou wilt trewely to me take
 And hold as thou bihight?" *promised*
- 745 "Madame," seyde the knight ogain, *in response*
 "Y wold the spouse now ful fain *espouse; gladly*
 And hold the to mi wive;
 Ac yif thi fader herd it sain *But if; said*
 That ich hadde his douhter forlain, *fornicated with*
 750 Of lond he wald me drive. *Out of the country; would*
 Ac yif ich were king of this lond *But*
 And hadde more gode in min hond *possessions*
 Than other kinges five,
 Wel fain y wald spouse the than; *gladly*
 755 Ac, certes, icham a pover man, *But certainly I am a poor man*
 Wel wo is me o live!" *alive*
- "Sir knight," seyde that maiden kinde, *noble*
 "For love of Seyn Tomas of Ynde,
 Whi seystow ever nay? *say you*
 760 No be thou never so pover of kinde, *Regardless of how poor of kin*
 Riches anough y may the finde
 Bothe bi night and day."
 That hende knight bithought him than *thought to himself*
 And in his armes he hir nam *took*
 765 And kist that miri may; *sweet maiden*
 And so thai plaid in word and dede, *played*

- That he wan hir maidenhede,
Er that sche went oway. *won; maidenhead
Before; away*
- And ever that steward gan abide *remained*
770 Alon under that chaumber side,
Their consail hem for to here. *secrets*
In at an hole, was nought to wide,
He seighe hem bothe in that tide *saw; time*
Hou thai seten yfere. *sat together*
775 And when he seyghe hem bothe with sight, *saw*
Sir Amis and that bird bright, *woman lovely*
The doukes douhter dere,
Ful wroth he was and egre of mode,
And went oway, as he were wode, *angry; fierce of manner*
780 Her conseil to unskere. *away; mad
Their secret; disclose*
- When the douke come in to that won *dwelling*
The steward ogain him gan gon, *up to him went*
Her conseyl forto unwrain, *Their secret; reveal*
"Mi lord, the douke," he seyde anon,
785 "Of thine harm, bi Seyn Jon,
Ichil the warn ful fain; *I will; gladly*
In thi court thou hast a thef, *thief*
That hath don min hert gref, *heart grief*
Schame it is to sain, *Shame; say*
790 For, certes, he is a traitour strong,
When he with tresoun and with wrong
Thi douhter hath forlain!" *lain with*
- The riche douke gan sore agram: *became grievously angry*
"Who hath," he seyde, "don me that schame?
795 Tel me, y the pray!"
"Sir," seyde the steward, "bi Seyn Jame,
Ful wele y can the tel his name,
Thou do him hong this day; *hang*
It is thi boteler, Sir Amis, *dispenser*
800 Ever he hath ben traitour, ywis
He hath forlain that may. *lain with; maiden*
Y seighe it me self, for sothe, *saw; truly*
And wil aprove biforn hem bothe, *swear before them*
That thai can nought say nay!"
- 805 Than was the douke egre of mode, *fierce of disposition*
He ran to halle, as he were wode, *mad*
For no thing he nold abide. *would not stop*
With a fauchoun scharp and gode *long curved sword*
He smot to Sir Amis ther he stode, *smote; where*

- 810 And failed of him biside. *missed*
 Into a chaumber Sir Amis ran tho *then*
 And schet the dore bituen hem to *shut*
 For drede his heved to hide. *dread; head*
 The douke strok after swiche a dent *struck; such a blow*
 815 That thurch the dore that fauchon went, *through; long curved sword*
 So egre he was that tide. *fierce; at that time*
- Al that ever about him stode, *stood*
 Bisought the douke to slake his mode, *calm his manner*
 Bothe erl, baroun, and swain; *young men*
 820 And he swore bi Him that dyed on Rode *died on the Cross*
 He nold for al this worldes gode *possessions*
 Bot that traitour were slain. *But*
 "Ich have him don gret honour,
 And he hath as a vile traitour
- 825 Mi douhter forlain; *lain with*
 Y nold for al this worldes won *possessions*
 Bot y might the traitour slon *Unless; slay*
 With min hondes tuain." *two*
- "Sir," seyde Sir Amis anon,
 830 "Lete thi wrethe first overgon, *Let your anger; die down*
 Y pray the, par charité! *for charity*
 And yif thou may prove, bi Sein Jon, *if*
 That ichave swiche a dede don, *I have such; done*
 Do me to hong on tre! *tree*
- 835 Ac yif ani with gret wrong *But*
 Hath lowe on ous that lesing strong, *lied about; lying*
 What bern that he be, *man*
 He leighth on ous, withouten fail, *lies about us*
 Ichil aprove it in bataile, *I will prove it in battle*
 840 To make ous quite and fre." *exonerated and free*
- "Ya," seyde the douke, "wiltow so,
 Darstow into bataile go,
 Al quite and skere you make?" *will you*
 "Ya, certes, sir!" he seyde tho, *Dare you; battle*
 845 "And here mi glove y give ther to, *To make you all exonerated and cleaved*
 He leighe on ous with wrake." *then*
 The steward stirt to him than *lies; malice*
 And seyde, "Traitour, fals man, *started; then*
 Ataint thou schalt be take; *Convicted*
 850 Y seighe it me self this ich day, *saw; very*
 Where that sche in thi chaumber lay,
 Your noither it may forsake!" *Neither of you; deny*

	Thus the steward ever gan say,	<i>repeatedly said</i>
	And ever Sir Amis seyde, "Nay,	
855	Ywis, it nas nought so!"	<i>Indeed; was not</i>
	Than dede the douke com forth that may,	<i>called forth that maiden</i>
	And the steward withstode al way	<i>persisted</i>
	And vouwed the dede tho.	<i>swore</i>
	The maiden wepe, hir hondes wrong,	<i>wept; hands wrung</i>
860	And ever swore hir moder among,	<i>mother</i>
	"Certain, it was nought so!"	
	Than seyde the douke, "Withouten fail,	
	It schal be proved in batail	<i>battle</i>
	And sen bituen hem to."	<i>witnessed</i>
865	Than was atuix hem take the fight	<i>between; arranged</i>
	And sett the day a fourtennight,	<i>at fortnight (two weeks)</i>
	That mani man schuld it sen.	<i>should; see</i>
	The steward was michel of might;	<i>great</i>
	In al the court was ther no wight	<i>person</i>
870	Sir Amis borwe durst ben.	<i>Sir Amis' second (guarantor) dared no one be</i>
	Bot for the steward was so strong,	<i>Because</i>
	Borwes anowe he fond among,	<i>Seconds (guarantors) enough; found</i>
	Tuente al bidene.	<i>Twenty altogether</i>
	Than seyde thai all with resoun,	<i>logically</i>
875	Sir Amis schuld ben in prisoun,	<i>should be</i>
	For he no schuld nowhar flen.	<i>should nowhere flee</i>
	Than answerd that maiden bright	<i>answered; beautiful</i>
	And swore bi Jhesu, ful of might,	
	That were michel wrong,	<i>great</i>
880	"Taketh mi bodi for that knight,	
	Til that his day com of fight,	
	And put me in prisoun strong.	
	Yif that the knight wil flen oway	<i>flee away</i>
	And dar nought holden up his day,	<i>dare</i>
885	Bataile of him to fong,	<i>Battle; undertake</i>
	Do me than londes lawe	<i>according to law</i>
	For his love to be todrawe	<i>torn to pieces</i>
	And heighe on galwes hong."	<i>high; gallows</i>
	Hir moder seyde with wordes bold	<i>said</i>
890	That with gode wil als sche wold	<i>good will also she would</i>
	Ben his borwe also,	<i>Be; second (guarantor)</i>
	His day of bataile up to hold,	<i>battle to guarantee</i>
	That he as gode knight schold	<i>should</i>
	Fight ogain his fo.	<i>against; foe</i>
895	Thus tho levedis fair and bright	<i>those ladies; beautiful</i>
	Boden for that gentil knight	<i>Pledged</i>

- To lain her bodis to.
 Than seyð the lordinges everichon,
 That other borwes wold thai non,
 900 Bot graunt it schuld be so.
- When thai had don, as y you say,
 And borwes founde withouten delay,
 And graunted al that ther ware,
 Sir Amis sorwed night and day,
 905 Al his joie was went oway,
 And comen was al his care,
 For that the steward was so strong
 And hadde the right and he the wrong
 Of that he opon him bare.
 910 Of his liif yaf he nought,
 Bot of the maiden so michel he thought,
 Might noman morn mare.
- For he thought that he most nede,
 Ar that he to bataile yede,
 915 Swere on oth biforn,
 That al so God schuld him spede
 As he was giltles of that dede,
 That ther was on him born;
 And than thought he, withouten wrong,
 920 He hadde lever to ben anhong
 Than to be forsworn.
 Ac oft he bisought Jhesu tho,
 He schuld save hem bothe to,
 That thai ner nought forlorn.
- 925 So if bifel opon a day
 He mett the levedi and that may
 Under an orchard side.
 “Sir Amis,” the levedy gan say,
 “Whi mornestow so withouten play?
 930 Tel me that sothe this tide.
 No drede the nought,” sche seyð than,
 “For to fight with thi foman,
 Whether thou wilt go or ride,
 So richeliche y schal the schrede,
 935 Tharf the never have of him drede,
 Thi bataile to abide.”
- “Madame,” seyð that gentil knight,
 “For Jhesus love, ful of might,
 Be nought wroth for this dede.
- To offer their bodies two (both)
 lords every one
 guarantors needed they none
 But allowed*
- sorrowed
 away*
- And was in the right
 bore
 life gave (cared)
 But; much
 no man mourn more*
- he must
 Before; went
 oath before
 assist*
- rather; hanged*
- But
 both of them
 So that they would not be lost*
- maiden*
- lady
 Why mourn you*
- dread you
 enemy
 walk or ride
 richly; you equip
 Need you
 battle; sustain*

- 940 Ich have that wrong and he the right, *I*
 Therefore icham aferd to fight, *I am afraid*
 Al so God me spede, *As God gives me fortune*
 For y mot swere, withouten faile, *must*
 Al so God me spede in bataile,
 945 His speche is falshede; *falsehood*
 And yif y swere, icham forsworn, *I am*
 Than liif and soule icham forlorn; *life and soul I am*
 Certes, y can no rede!" *Certainly; remedy*
- Than seyde that levedi in a while,
 950 "No mai ther go non other gile *Is there no other guile*
 To bring that traitor down?"
 "Yis, dame," he seyde, "bi Seyn Gile!
 Her woneth hennes mani a mile *There lives hence*
 Mi brother, Sir Amiloun,
 955 And yif y dorst to gon, *if I should dare*
 Y dorst wele swere bi Seyn Jon, *dare; swear*
 So trewe is that baroun, *loyal*
 His owen liif to lese to mede, *His own life to lose as a result*
 He wold help me at this nede,
 960 To fight with that feloun." *felon (criminal)*
- "Sir Amis," the levedi gan to say,
 "Take leve to morwe at day *tomorrow morning*
 And wende in thi jurné. *travel; journey*
 Y schal say thou schalt in thi way
 965 Hom in to thine owen cuntray, *own country*
 Thi fader, thi moder to se;
 And when thou comes to thi brother right,
 Pray him, as he is hendi knight
 And of gret bounté, *generosity*
 970 That he the batail for ous fong *battle; undertake*
 Ogain the steward that with wrong *Against*
 Wil stroie ous alle thre." *destroy*
- A morwe Sir Amis made him yare
 And toke his leve for to fare *In the morning; ready*
 975 And went in his jurnay. *leave; travel*
 For nothing nold he spare, *journey*
 He priked the stede that him bare *refrain from*
 Bothe night and day. *spurred; horse; bore*
 So long he priked withouten abod *delay*
 980 The stede that he on rode
 In a fer cuntray *far country*
 Was overcomen and fel down ded; *exhausted*

- Thou couthe he no better red,
His song was, "Waileway!"
*Then he knew no better plan
wellaway*
- 985 And when it was bifallen so,
Nedes afot he most go,
Ful careful was that knight.
He stiked up his lappes tho,
In his way he gan to go,
990 To hold that he bihight;
And al that day so long he ran,
In to a wilde forest he cam
Bituen the day and the night.
So strong slepe yede him on,
995 To win al this warldes won,
No ferther he no might.
*By need he must go on foot
unhappy
took; hems then
To keep to what he intended
came
world's possessions*
- The knight, that was so hende and fre,
Wel fair he layd him under a tre
And fel in slepe that tide.
1000 Al that night stille lay he,
Til amorwe men might yse
The day bi ich a side.
Than was his brother, Sir Amiloun,
Holden a lord of gret renoun
1005 Over al that cuntré wide,
And woned fro thennes that he lay
Bot half a jorné of a day,
Noither to go no ride.
*tree
time
in the morning; see
on all sides
Considered
country
lived from where he lay
But; journey
Whether walking or riding*
- As Sir Amiloun, that hendi knight,
1010 In his slepe he lay that night,
In sweven he mett anon
That he seighe Sir Amis bi sight,
His brother, that was trewethe plight,
Bilapped among his fon;
1015 Thurch a bere wilde and wode
And other bestes, that bi him stode,
Bisett he was to slon;
And he alon among hem stode
As a man that couthe no gode;
1020 Wel wo was him bigon.
*dream; dreamed
saw
pledged to loyalty
Surrounded by his enemies
By a bear wild and mad
stood
He was about to be killed
expected*
- When Sir Amiloun was awake,
Gret sorwe he gan for him make
And told his wiif ful yare
Hou him thought he seighe bestes blake
1025 About his brother with wrake
*wife immediately
saw beasts black
vengefulness*

- To sle with sorwe and care. *slay*
 “Certes,” he seyde, “with sum wrong *Certainly*
 He is in peril gret and strong,
 Of blis he is ful bare.” *barren*
- 1030 And than seyde he, “For sothe ywis,
 Y no schal never have joie no blis,
 Til y wite hou he fare.” *know; fares*
- As swithe he stirt up in that tide, *Immediately; started*
 Ther nold he no leng abide,
 1035 Bot dight him forth anon, *But prepared*
 And al his meine bi ich a side *company on each side*
 Busked hem redi to ride, *Prepared*
 With her lord for to gon; *their*
 And he bad al that ther wes, *bade all who were there*
- 1040 For Godes love held hem stille in pes, *hold themselves*
 He bad hem so ich-chon, *every one*
 And swore bi Him that schop mankende, *made mankind*
 Ther schuld no man with him wende, *go*
 Bot himself alon.
- 1045 Ful richeliche he gan him schrede *richly; dress*
 And lepe astite opon his stede, *immediately*
 For nothing he nold abide. *would not wait*
 Al his folk he gan forbede *forbade (excluded)*
 That non so hardi were of dede, *none so hardy was in deeds*
- 1050 After him noither go no ride. *After him neither to walk nor ride*
 So al that night he rode til day,
 Til he com ther Sir Amis lay *where*
 Up in that forest wide.
 Than seighe he a weri knight forgon *saw; weary; exhausted*
- 1055 Under a tre slepeand alon; *sleeping*
 To him he went that tide.
- He cleped to him anon right, *said*
 “Arise up, felawe, it is light
 And time for to go!”
- 1060 Sir Amis biheld up with his sight
 And knewe anon that gentil knight,
 And he knewe him also.
 That hendi knight, Sir Amiloun,
 Of his stede light adoun, *Got down off his horse*
- 1065 And kist hem bothe to. *kissed; two*
 “Brother,” he seyde, “whi listow here
 With thus mornand chere?
 Who hath wrought the this wo?” *lie you down*
such mournful disposition

- “Brother,” seyð Sir Amis tho,
 1070 “Ywis, me nas never so wo
 Seththen that y was born; *Since*
 For seththen that thou was went me fro,
 With joie and michel blis also
 Y served mi lord biforn.
 1075 Ac the steward ful of envie,
 With gile and with trecherie, *guile; treachery*
 He hath me wrought swiche sorn; *such sorrow*
 Bot thou help me at this nede, *Unless*
 Certes, y can no nother rede, *know no other remedy (course of action)*
 1080 Mi liif, it is forlorn!”
- “Brother,” Seyd Sir Amiloun,
 “Whi hath the steward, that feloun, *criminal (felon)*
 Ydon the al this schame?” *Done; shame*
 “Certes,” he seyð, “with gret tresoun
 1085 He wald me driven al adoun *would*
 And hath me brought in blame.”
 Than told Sir Amis al that cas,
 Hou he and that maiden was
 Bothe togider ysame, *in each other’s company*
 1090 And hou the steward gan hem wrain, *accuse*
 And hou the douke wald him have slain *would*
 With wrethe and michel grame. *wrath; anger*
- And also he seyð, yplight, *truly*
 Hou he had boden on him fight, *offered*
 1095 Batail of him to fong, *Battle; undertake*
 And hou in court was ther no wight, *person*
 To save tho tuay levedis bright, *To save those two beautiful ladies*
 Durst ben his borwe among, *Dared; second*
 And hou he most, withouten faile,
 1100 Swere, ar he went to bataile, *before; battle*
 It war a lesing ful strong; *falsehood*
 “And forsworn man schal never spede; *succeed*
 Certes, therfore y can no rede, *know no relief*
 ‘Allas’ may be mi song!”
- 1105 When that Sir Amis had al told,
 Hou that the fals steward wold
 Bring him down with mode, *passion*
 Sir Amiloun with wordes bold
 Swore, “Bi Him that Judas sold *i.e., betrayed*
 1110 And died opon the Rode, *Cross*
 Of his hope he schal now faile,
 And y schal for the take bataile, *battle*

- Thei that he wer wode; *Even if he is mad*
 Yif y may mete him aright,
 1115 With mi brond, that is so bright, *sword*
 Y schal sen his hert blode! *see his heart's blood*
- Ac brother," he seyde, "have al mi wede, *clothes*
 And in thi robe y schal me schrede, *dress*
 Right as the self it ware;
 1120 And y schal swere so God me spede
 As icham giltles of that dede, *I am*
 That he opon the bare." *brought*
 Anon tho hendi knightes to *those; two*
 Alle her wede chaunged tho, *clothes; then*
 1125 And when thai were al yare, *ready*
 Than seyde Sir Amiloun, "Bi Seyn Gile,
 Thus man schal the schrewe bigile, *villain; beguile*
 That wald the forfare! *would you destroy*
- Brother," he seyde, "wende hom now right
 1130 To mi levedi, that is so bright, *lady; beautiful*
 And do as y schal the sain; *tell (say)*
 And as thou art a gentil knight,
 Thou ly bi hir in bed ich night, *each*
 Til that y com ogain, *Until*
 1135 And sai thou hast sent thi stede ywis *horse*
 To thi brother, Sir Amis;
 Than wil thai be ful fain, *glad*
 Thai wil wene that ich it be; *think*
 Ther is non that schal knowe the,
 1140 So liche we be bothe tuain!" *alike*
- And when he hadde thus sayde, yplight, *truly*
 Sir Amiloun, that gentil knight,
 Went in his jurnay,
 And Sir Amis went hom anon right *at once*
 1145 To his brother levedi so bright, *brother's lady*
 Withouten more delay,
 And seyde hou he hadde sent his stede *horse*
 To his brother to riche mede *as a valuable gift*
 Bi a knight of that cuntray; *By*
 1150 And al thai wende of Sir Amis *thought*
 It had ben her lord, ywis,
 So liche were tho tuay.
- When that Sir Amis hadde ful yare *had completely*
 Told him al of his care,
 1155 Ful wele he wend tho,

- Litel and michel, lasse and mare,
 Al that ever in court ware,
 Thai thought it hadde ben so.
 And when it was comen to the night,
 1160 Sir Amis and that levedi bright,
 To bed thai gun go;
 And whan thai were togider ylayd,
 Sir Amis his swerd out braid
 And layd bituix hem tuo. *drew
between*
- 1165 The levedi loked opun him tho
 Wrothlich with her eighen tuo,
 Sche wend hir lord were wode.
 "Sir," sche seyde, "whi farstow so?
 Thus were thou noght won to do,
 1170 Who hath changed thi mode?"
 "Dame," he seyde, "sikerly,
 Ich have swiche a malady
 That mengeth al mi blod,
 And al min bones be so sare,
 1175 Y nold nought toche thi bodi bare
 For al this warldes gode!" *Angrily; eyes
thought; mad
why do you behave so
used to do
manner
certainly
troubles; blood
sore
I do not want to touch you naked
world's possessions*
- Thus, ywis, that hendy knight
 Was holden in that fourtennight
 As lord and prince in pride;
 1180 Ac he forgat him never a night,
 Bituix him and that levedi bright
 His swerd he layd biside.
 The levedi thought in hir resoun,
 It hadde ben hir lord, Sir Amiloun,
 1185 That hadde ben sike that tide;
 Therefore sche held hir stille tho
 And wold speke wordes no mo,
 Bot thought his wille to abide.
- Now, hende, herkneth, and y schal say
 1190 Hou that Sir Amiloun went his way;
 For nothing wold he spare.
 He priked his stede night and day,
 As a gentil knight, stout and gay,
 To court he com ful yare *spurred
quickly
same*
 1195 That selve day, withouten fail,
 That was ysett of batail,
 And Sir Amis was nought thare.
 Than were tho levedis taken bi hond, *set for battle*

- Her juggement to understand,
 1200 With sorwe and sikeing sare. *judgment to undergo
sighing sore*
- The steward hoved opon a stede *waited*
 With scheld and spere, bataile to bede, *offer*
 Gret bost he gan to blawe; *proclaim*
 Bifor the douke anon he yede *went*
 1205 And seyde, "Sir, so God the spede,
 Herken to mi sawe! *speech*
 This traitour is out of lond ywent;
 Yif he were here in present,
 He schuld ben hong and drawe;
 1210 Therefore ich aske jugement,
 That his borwes be tobrent, *seconds be burned*
 As it is londes lawe."
- That riche douke, with wrethe and wrake, *wrath; anger*
 He bad men schuld tho levedis take *those ladies*
 1215 And lede hem forth biside;
 A strong fer ther was don make *fire*
 And a tonne for her sake, *barrel*
 To bren hem in that tide. *burn them*
 Than thai loked in to the feld *field*
 1220 And seighe a knight with spere and scheld *saw*
 Com prikeand ther with pride. *spurring*
 Than seyde thai everichon, ywis,
 "Yonder cometh prikeand Sir Amis!" *galloping*
 And bad thai schuld abide. *bade; wait*
- 1225 Sir Amiloun gan stint at no ston, *rest; milestone*
 He priked among hem everichon, *rode*
 To that douke he gan wende.
 "Mi lord the douke," he seyde anon,
 "For schame lete tho levedis gon,
 1230 That er bothe gode and hende, *are*
 For ich am comen hider today *hither*
 For to saven hem, yive y may, *if*
 And bring hem out of bende, *bonds*
 For, certes, it were michel unright
 1235 To make roste of levedis bright; *roast*
 Ywis, ye eren unkende." *would be unnatural*
- Than ware tho levedis glad and blithe,
 Her joie couthe thai noman kithe, *Their; could; no man tell*
 Her care was al oway;
 1240 And seththen, as ye may list and lithe, *then; listen and hear*
 Into the chaunber thai went aswithe, *quickly*

- Withouten more delay,
 And richeliche thai schred that knight
 With helme and plate and brini bright,
 1245 His tire, it was ful gay.
 And when he was opon his stede,
 That God hem schuld save and spede
 Mani man bad that day.
- As he com prikand out of toun,
 1250 Com a voice fram heven adoun,
 That noman herd bot he,
 And sayd, "Thou knight, Sir Amiloun,
 God, that suffred passioun,
 Sent the bode bi me;
 1255 Yif thou this bataile underfong,
 Thou schalt have an eventour strong
 Within this yeres thre;
 And or this thre yere be al gon,
 Fouler mesel nas never non
 1260 In the world, than thou schal be!
- "Ac for thou art so hende and fre,
 Jhesu sent the bode bi me,
 To warn the anon;
 So foule a wreche thou schalt be,
 1265 With sorwe and care and poverté
 Nas never non wers bigon.
 Over al this world, fer and hende,
 Tho that be thine best frende
 Schal be thi most fon,
 1270 And thi wiif and alle thi kinne
 Schul fle the stede thatow art inne,
 And forsake the ichon."
- That knight gan hove stille so ston
 And herd tho wordes everichon,
 1275 That were so gret and grille.
 He nist what him was best to don,
 To flen, other to fighting gon;
 In hert him liked ille.
 He thought, "Yif y beknowe mi name,
 1280 Than schal mi brother go to schame,
 With sorwe thai schul him spille.
 Certes," he seyde, "for drede of care
 To hold mi treuthe schal y nought spare,
 Lete God don alle His wille."
- dressed*
helmet; armor; coat of mail
attire
support
prayed
galloping
warning
undertake
adventure
before
leper
warning
worse
far and near
Those
greatest enemies
kin
place that you
every one
stand; stone
fearsome
did not know
flee, or
make known
kill

- 1285 Al the folk ther was, ywis,
 Thai wend it had ben Sir Amis *believed*
 That bataile schuld bedede; *offer*
 He and the steward of pris *excellence*
 Were brought bifer the justise
- 1290 To swere for that dede.
 The steward swore the pople among, *people*
 As wis as he seyde no wrong, *Surely*
 God help him at his nede;
 And Sir Amiloun swore and gan to say
- 1295 As wis as he never kist that may, *Surely; maiden*
 Our Levedi schuld hem spede. *reward*
- When thai hadde sworn, as y you told,
 To biker tho berners were ful bold
 And busked hem for to ride. *fight*
prepared
- 1300 Al that ther was, yong and old,
 Bisought God yif that He wold
 Help Sir Amis that tide.
 On stedes that were stithe and strong *brave*
 Thai riden togider with schaftes long, *spear-shafts*
- 1305 Til thai toschiverd bi ich a side;
 And than drough thai swerdes gode *broke into pieces*
 And hewe togider, as thai were wode, *drew*
 For nothing thai nold abide. *struck (with weapons); mad*
would not stop
- Tho gomes, that were egre of sight,
 1310 With fauchouns felle thai gun to fight *men; fierce*
 And ferd as thai were wode. *long curved swords deadly*
 So hard thai hewe on helmes bright *proceeded as if*
 With strong strokes of michel might, *struck (with weapons); helmets*
 That fer biforn out stode; *great*
 1315 So hard thai hewe on helme and side, *That fire (sparks) flashed out*
 Thurch dent of grimly woundes wide, *struck; helmet; side (of his body)*
 That thai sprad al of blod. *stroke; severe*
 Fram morwe to none, withouten faile, *were covered*
 Bituixen hem last the bataile, *morning to noon*
- 1320 So egre thai were of mode. *fierce; mood*
- Sir Amiloun, as fer of flint,
 With wrethe anon to him he wint *sparks from a flint*
 And smot a stroke with main; *wrath; went*
 Ac he failed of his dint, *force*
 1325 The stede in the heved he hint *Although; blow*
 And smot out al his brain. *head; hit*
 The stede fel ded down to grounde; *smote*
 Tho was the steward that stounde *Then; moment*

- Ful ferd he schuld be slain. *afraid*
 1330 Sir Amiloun light adoun of his stede, *i.e., dismounted*
 To the steward afot he yede *went*
 And halp him up ogain. *helped*
- “Arise up, steward,” he seyde anon,
 “To fight thou schalt afot gon,
 1335 For thou hast lorn thi stede; *lost*
 For it were gret vilani, bi Seyn Jon,
 A liggeand man for to slon, *prostrate; slay*
 That were yfallen in nede.”
 That knight was ful fre to fond *willing to test (him)*
 1340 And tok the steward bi the hond
 And seyde, “So God me speide, *As God give me success*
 Now thou schalt afot go,
 Y schal fight afot also,
 And elles were gret falshed.” *else; treachery*
- 1345 The steward and that douhti man
 Anon togider thai fight gan
 With brondes bright and bare; *swords; drawn*
 So hard togider thai fight than,
 Til al her armour o blod ran,
 1350 For nothing nold thai spare.
 The steward smot to him that stounde *moment*
 On his schulder a gret wounde *shoulder*
 With his grimly gare, *formidable weapon*
 That thurch that wounde, as ye may here,
 1355 He was knowen with reweli chere, *sad countenance*
 When he was fallen in care.
- Than was Sir Amiloun wroth and wode, *angry and mad*
 Whan al his amour ran o blode,
 That ere was white so swan; *white as a swan*
 1360 With a fauchoun scharp and gode *long curved sword*
 He smot to him with egre mode *fierce disposition*
 Al so a douhti man,
 That even fro the schulder blade
 Into the brest the brond gan wade, *make its way*
 1365 Thurchout his hert it ran.
 The steward fel adoun ded, *dead*
 Sir Amiloun strok of his hed, *off*
 And God he thonked it than.
- Alle the lordinges that ther ware,
 1370 Litel and michel, lasse and mare,
 Ful glad thai were that tide.

- The heved opon a spere thai bare;
 To toun thai dight hem ful yare,
 For nothing thai nold abide;
 1375 Thai com ogaines him out of toun
 With a fair processioun
 Semliche bi ich a side.
 Anon thai ladde him to the tour
 With joie and ful michel honour,
 1380 As prince proude in pride.
- In to the palais when thai were gon,
 Al that was in that worthli won
 Wende Sir Amis it ware.
 "Sir Amis," seyde the douke anon,
 1385 "Bifor this lordinges everichon
 Y graunt the ful yare,
 For Belisent, that miri may,
 Thou hast bought hir ful dere today
 With grimli woundes sare;
 1390 Therfore y graunt the now here
 Mi lond and mi douhter dere,
 To hald for ever mare."
- Ful blithe was that hendi knight
 And thonked him with al his might,
 1395 Glad he was and fain;
 In alle the court was ther no wight
 That wist wat his name it hight;
 To save tho levedis tuain,
 Leches swithe thai han yfounde,
 1400 That gun to tasty his wounde
 And made him hole ogain,
 Than were thai al glad and blithe
 And thonked God a thousand sithe
 That the steward was slain.
- 1405 On a day Sir Amiloun dight him yare
 And seyde that he wold fare
 Hom into his cuntray
 To telle his frendes, lasse and mare,
 And other lordinges that there ware,
 1410 Hou he had sped that day.
 The douke graunted him that tide
 And bede him knightes and miche pride,
 And he answerd, "Nay."
 Ther schuld noman with him gon,
- head*
took themselves readily
wait
towards
Splendid on every side
lead
worthy dwelling
Thought
readily
sweet maiden
horrible; sore
hold; more
happy
joyful
That knew what his name was
Doctors quickly
examine
times
prepared himself quickly
offered

- 1415 Bot as swithe him dight anon *quickly prepared himself*
 And went forth in his way.
- In his way he went alone,
 Most ther noman with him gon, *Must*
 Noither knight no swain.
- 1420 That douhti knight of blod and bon,
 No stint he never at no ston *He stopped at no milestone*
 Til he com hom ogain;
 And Sir Amis, as y you say,
 Waited his coming everi day
- 1425 Up in the forest plain;
 And so thai mett togider same,
 And he teld him with joie and game
 Hou he hadde the steward slain,
- And hou he schuld spousy to mede *espouse as a reward*
 1430 That ich maide, worthli in wede, *same*
 That was so comly corn. *nobly favored*
 Sir Amiloun light of his stede, *i.e., dismounted*
 And gan to chaungy her wede, *exchange their clothes*
 As thai hadde don biforn.
- 1435 “Brother,” he seyde, “wende hom ogain.”
 And taught him hou he schuld sain, *And told him what he should say*
 When he com ther thai worn.
 Than was Sir Amis glad and blithe
 And thanked him a thousand sithe *times*
- 1440 The time that he was born.
- And when thai schuld wende ato,
 Sir Amis oft thonked him tho
 His cost and his gode dede.
 “Brother,” he seyde, “yif it bitide so *happen*
- 1445 That the bitide care other wo, *encounter*
 And of min help hast nede,
 Savelich com other send thi sond, *Only; messenger*
 And y schal never lenger withstond, *delay*
 Al so God me spede;
- 1450 Be it in peril never so strong,
 Y schal the help in right and wrong,
 Mi liif to lese to mede.” *to lose as a consequence*
- Asonder than thai gun wende;
 Sir Amiloun, that knight so hende, *gentle (kind)*
 1455 Went hom in that tide
 To his levedi that was unkende, *cruel (unnatural)*
 And was ful welcome to his frende,

- As prince proude in pride;
 And when it was comen to the night,
 1460 Sir Amiloun and that levedi bright
 In bedde were layd biside;
 In his armes he gan hir kis
 And made his joie and michel blis,
 For nothing he nold abide.
- 1465 The levedi astite asked him tho *immediately*
 Whi that he hadde farn so *behaved*
 Al that fourtennight,
 Laid his swerd bituen hem to,
 That sche no durst nought for wele no wo
 1470 Touche his bodi aright.
 Sir Amiloun bithought him than
 His brother was a trewe man,
 That hadde so done, aflight. *truly*
 "Dame," he seyde, "ichil the sain *I will say to you*
 1475 And telle the that sothe ful fain, *truth full gladly*
 Ac wray me to no wight." *But betray*
- The levedi astite him frain gan, *immediately began to ask him*
 For His love, that this world wan,
 Telle hir whi it ware.
 1480 Than astite that hendy man,
 Al the sothe he teld hir than,
 To court hou he gan fare,
 And hou he slough the steward strong,
 That with tresoun and with wrong
 1485 Wold have his brother forfare, *destroyed*
 And hou his brother that hendy knight
 Lay with hir in bed ich night
 While that he was thare.
- The levedi was ful wroth, yplight, *truly*
 1490 And oft missayd hir lord that night *criticized*
 With speche bituix hem to,
 And seyde, "With wrong and michel unright
 Thou slough ther a gentil knight;
 Ywis, it was ivel ydo!" *slew*
 1495 "Dame," he seyde, "bi heven king, *evilly done*
 Y no dede it for non other thing
 Bot to save mi brother fro wo,
 And ich hope, yif ich hadde nede,
 His owen liif to lesse to mede,
 1500 He wald help me also." *lessen (shorten) to bring comfort*

- Al thus, in gest as we sain,
 Sir Amis was ful glad and fain,
 To court he gan to wende;
 And when he come to court ogain
 1505 With erl, baroun, knight and swain,
 Honoured he was, that hende.
 That riche douke tok him bi hond
 And sesed him in alle his lond,
 To held withouten ende;
 1510 And seththen with joie opon a day
 He spoused Belisent, that may,
 That was so trewe and kende.
- Miche was that semly folk in sale,
 That was samned at that bridale
 1515 When he hadde spoused that flour,
 Of erls, barouns, mani and fale,
 And other lordinges gret and smale,
 And levedis bright in bour.
 A real fest thai gan to hold
 1520 Of erls and of barouns bold
 With joie and michel honour;
 Over al that lond est and west
 Than was Sir Amis helden the best
 And chosen for priis in tour.
- 1525 So within tho yeres to
 A wel fair grace fel hem tho,
 As God almighti wold;
 The riche douke dyed hem fro
 And his levedi dede also,
 1530 And graven in grete so cold.
 Than was Sir Amis, hende and fre,
 Douke and lord of gret pousté
 Over al that lond yhold.
 Tuai childer he bigat bi his wive,
 1535 The fairest that might bere live,
 In gest as it is told.
- Than was that knight of gret renoun
 And lord of mani a tour and toun
 And douke of gret pousté;
 1540 And his brother, Sir Amiloun,
 With sorwe and care was driven adoun,
 That ere was hende and fre;
 Al so that angel hadde hem told,
 Fouler messel that nas non hold

stories
joyful

gave

maiden
pleasing

hall
gathered; wedding
married
many and plenteous

royal

excellence

two

willed
died
wife died
buried in the ground

power

bear life
story

power

formerly
Just as
leper

- 1545 In world than was he.
 In gest to rede it is gret rewthe, *sadness*
 What sorwe he hadde for his treuthe
 Within tho yeres thre.
- And er tho thre yere com to thende *the end*
 1550 He no wist whider he might wende, *did not know where*
 So wo was him bigon;
 For al that were his best frende,
 And nameliche al his riche kende, *namely; kin*
 Bicom his most fon; *enemies*
- 1555 And his wiif, for sothe to say,
 Wrought him wers bothe night and day *worse*
 Than thai dede everichon. *Than any of them did*
 When him was fallen that hard cas,
 A frendeleser man than he was *more friendless*
- 1560 Men nist nowhar non. *Men knew nowhere none*
- So wicked and schrewed was his wiif, *depraved*
 Sche brac his hert withouten kniif, *broke; knife*
 With wordes harde and kene, *sharp*
 And seyde to him, "Thou wreche chaitif, *wretched coward*
 1565 With wrong the steward les his liif, *lost*
 And that is on the sene; *obvious*
 Therefore, bi Seyn Denis of Fraunce,
 The is bitid this hard chaunce,
 Dathet who the bimene!" *To you is coming*
 1570 Wel oft times his honden he wrong, *Cursed be he who laments you*
 As man that thenketh his liif to long, *hands; wrung*
 That liveth in treye and tene. *trial and vexation*
- Allas, alas! that gentil knight
 That whilom was so wise and wight, *once; brave*
 1575 That than was wrought so wo,
 Than fram his levedi, fair and bright,
 Out of his owen chaumber anight
 He was yhote to go, *called*
 And in his owen halle o day *own*
- 1580 Fram the heighe bord oway *high table*
 He was ycharged also
 To eten at the tables ende;
 Wald ther no man sit him hende,
 Wel careful was he tho. *Would; honorably*
sorrowful
- 1585 Bi than that half yere was ago *By the time*
 That he hadde eten in halle so *eaten*
 With gode mete and with drink,

- His levedi wax ful wroth and wo
 And thought he lived to long tho —
 1590 Withouten ani lesing —
 “In this lond springeth this word,
 Y fede a mesel at mi bord, *leper*
 He is so foule a thing,
 It is gret spite to al mi kende, *kin*
 1595 He schal no more sitt me so hende, *near at hand*
 Bi Jhesus, heven king!”
- On a day sche gan him calle
 And seyde, “Sir, it is so bifalle,
 For sothe, y telle it te, *to you*
 1600 That thou etest so long in halle,
 It is gret spite to ous alle,
 Mi kende is wroth with me.” *kin*
 The knight gan wepe and seyde ful stille, *quietly*
 “Do me where it is thi wille, *Put*
 1605 Ther noman may me se; *no man*
 Of no more ichil the praye, *I will you beg*
 Bot of a meles mete ich day,
 For seynt charité.” *holy charity*
- That levedi, for hir lordes sake,
 1610 Anon sche dede men timber take,
 For nothing wold sche wond, *hesitate*
 And half a mile fram the gate
 A litel loge sche lete make, *lodge; had made*
 Biside the way to stond.
 1615 And when the loge was al wrought, *built*
 Of his gode no wold he noght, *possessions*
 Bot his gold coupe an hond. *cup*
 When he was in his loge alon,
 To God of heven he made his mon *moan*
 1620 And thonked Him of al His sond. *sending (gifts)*
- Into that loge when he was dight *disposed of*
 In al the court was ther no wight *person*
 That wold serve him thare,
 To save a gentil child, yplight, *Except; truly*
 1625 Child Owaines his name it hight, *was called*
 For him he wepe ful sare. *sorely*
 That child was trewe and of his kende, *kin*
 His soster sone, he was ful hende;
 He sayde to hem ful yare, *sister's; generous*
 1630 Ywis, he no schuld never wond *eagerly*
hesitate

- To serven hem fro fot to hond,
While he olives ware. *foot to hand*
alive
- That child, that was so fair and bold,
Owaines was his name ytold,
1635 Wel fair he was of blode. *blood*
When he was of tuelve yere old,
Amoraunt than was he cald, *called*
Wel curteys, hend and gode. *each*
Bi his lord ich night he lay *each*
1640 And feched her livere ever day *fetchd them supplies (of food)*
To her lives fode. *For; feeding*
When ich man made gle and song, *glee*
Ever for his lord among
He made dreri mode. *sad manner*
- 1645 Thus Amoraunt, as y you say,
Com to court ich day,
No stint he for no strive. *He stinted no effort*
Al that ther was gan him pray *Everyone there bade him*
To com fro that lazer oway, *leper*
1650 Than schuld he the and thrive. *prosper*
And he answerd with milde mode *manner*
And swore bi Him that dyed on Rode
And tholed woundes five, *suffered*
For al this worldes gode to take
1655 His lord nold he never forsake
Whiles he ware olive.
- Bi than the tuelmoneth was al gon,
Amorant went into that won *year*
For his lordes liveray; *residence*
1660 The levedi was ful wroth anon *livery*
And comaunde hir men everichon
To drive that child oway, *betrayed*
And swore bi Him that Judas sold,
Thei his lord for hunger and cold *Though*
1665 Dyed ther he lay,
He schuld have noither mete no drink,
No socour of non other thing
For hir after that day. *From*
- That child wrong his honden tuain
1670 And weping went hom ogain
With sorwe and sikeing sare. *sighing*
That godeman gan him frain *question*
And bad him that he schuld him sain *tell*

- And telle him whi it ware. *why it was*
 1675 And he answerd and seyde tho, *then*
 “Ywis, no wonder thei me be wo,
 Mine hert, it breketh for care;
 Thi wiif hath sworn with gret mode *force*
 That sche no schal never don ous gode; *do us good*
 1680 Allas, hou schal we fare?”
- “A, God help!” seyde that gentil knight,
 “Whilom y was man of might, *Formerly*
 To dele mete and cloth, *dispense food and clothing*
 And now icham so foule a wight *I am; person*
 1685 That al that seth on me bi sight,
 Mi liif is hem ful loth. *loathsome*
 Sone,” he seyde, “lete thi wepeing, *leave off*
 For this is now a strong tiding, *harsh news*
 That may we se for soth;
 1690 For, certes, y can non other red, *I know no other counsel*
 Ous bihoveth to bid our brede, *It behooves us to beg our bread*
 Now y wot hou it goth.” *[That] I know how it goes*
- Amorwe astite as it was light, *In the morning as soon as*
 The child and that gentil knight
 1695 Dight hem for to gon, *Prepared themselves*
 And in her way thai went ful right
 To begge her brede, as thai hadde tight, *intended*
 For mete no hadde thai none. *food; none*
 So long thai went up and down
 1700 Til thai com to a chepeing toun, *market town*
 Five mile out of that won, *area*
 And sore wepeand fro dore to dore,
 And bad here mete for Godes love, *weeping*
 Ful ivel couthe thai theron. *begged their food*
They knew little about that (i.e., begging)
- 1705 So in that time, ich understond,
 Gret plenté was in that lond, *plenty*
 Bothe of mete and drink;
 That folk was ful fre to fond *gracious in action*
 And brought hem anough to hond
 1710 Of al kines thing; *kinds of*
 For the gode man was so messais tho, *wretched then*
 And for the child was fair also,
 Hem loved old and ying, *Old and young loved them*
 And brought hem anough of al gode;
 1715 Than was the child blithe of mode *joyful of spirit*
 And lete be his wepeing. *stopped*

- Than wex the gode man fote so sare
 That he no might no forther fare
 For al this worldes gode;
 1720 To the tounes ende that child him bare
 And a loge he bilt him thare,
 As folk to chepeing yode;
 And as that folk of that cuntray
 Com to chepeing everi day,
 1725 Thai gat hem lives fode;
 And Amoraunt oft to toun gan go
 And begged hem mete and drink also,
 When hem most nede atstode.
- Then the good man became so footsore*

lodging
Where; market went

food

When they stood at greatest need
- Thus in gest rede we
 1730 Thai duelled there yeres thre,
 That child and he also,
 And lived in care and poverté
 Bi the folk of that cuntré,
 As thai com to and fro,
 1735 So that in the ferth yere
 Corn bigan to wex dere,
 That hunger bigan to go,
 That ther was noither eld no ying
 That wald yif hem mete no drink,
 1740 Wel careful were thai tho.
- fourth year*
Grain; become scarce
increase
old nor young
would give
Very sad; then
- Amorant oft to toun gan gon,
 Ac mete no drink no gat he non,
 Noither at man no wive.
 When thai were togider alon,
 1745 Reweliche thai gan maken her mon,
 Wo was hem o live;
 And his levedi, for sothe to say,
 Woned ther in that cuntray
 Nought thennes miles five,
 1750 And lived in joie bothe night and day,
 Whiles he in sorwe and care lay,
 Wel ivel mot sche thrive!
- wife (woman)*

Ruefully; lament

Lived
Not five miles thence
- On a day, as thai sete alon,
 That hendi knight gan meken his mon
 1755 And seyde to the child that tide,
 "Sone," he seyde, "thou most gon
 To mi levedi swithe anon,
 That woneth here beside,
 Bid hir, for Him that died on Rode,
 1760 Sende me so michel of al mi gode,
- sat*

at once
dwells; nearby

- An asse, on to ride,
 And out of lond we wil fare
 To begge our mete with sorwe and care,
 No lenger we nil abide." *will not stay*
- 1765 Amoraunt to court is went
 Bifor that levedi fair and gent, *well-born*
 Wel hendeliche seyde hir anon, *courteously*
 "Madame," he seyde, "verramment, *truly*
 As messenger mi lord me sent,
- 1770 For himself may nought gon,
 And praieste with milde mode *begs; mild manner*
 Sende him so michel of al his gode
 As an asse to riden opon,
 And out of lond we schulen yfere, *will travel*
- 1775 No schal we never com eft here, *afterwards*
 Thei hunger ous schuld slon." *Though; slay*
- The levedi seyde sche wald ful fain *gladly*
 Sende him gode asses tuain,
 With thi he wald oway go *Provided that*
- 1780 So fer that he never eft com ogain. *far; after; again*
 "Nat, certes, dame," the child gan sain,
 "Thou seest ous never eft mo." *will see*
 Than was the levedi glad and blithe
 And comaund him an asse as swithe *at once*
- 1785 And seyde with wrethe tho, *anger then*
 "Now ye schul out of lond fare,
 God leve you never to com here mare, *more*
 And graunt that it be so."
- That child no lenger nold abide, *would not*
- 1790 His asse astite he gan bistride *immediately; bestride*
 And went him hom ogain,
 And told his lord in that tide
 Hou his levedi proude in pride
 Schameliche gan to sain; *Shamefully*
- 1795 Opon the asse he sett that knight so hende,
 And out of the cité thai gan wende; *city*
 Ther of thai were ful fain.
 Thurch mani a cuntré, up an doun, *Throughout*
 Thai begged her mete fram toun to toun,
 1800 Bothe in winde and rain.
- Over al that lond thurch Godes wille
 That hunger wex so gret and grille, *grew; intense*
 As wide as thai gan go; *far*

- Almost for hunger thai gan to spille, *die*
 1805 Of brede thai no hadde nought half her fille, *bread*
 Ful careful were thai tho. *then*
 Than seyð the knight opon a day,
 "Ous bihoveth selle our asse oway, *It behooves us*
 For we no have gode no mo, *possessions no more*
 1810 Save mi riche coupe of gold, *Except; cup*
 Ac certes, that schal never be sold,
 Thei hunger schuld me slo." *Though; slay*
- Than Amoraunt and Sir Amiloun,
 With sorwe and care and reweful roun *speech*
 1815 Erliche in a morning *Early*
 Thai went hem to a chepeing toun, *themselves; market town*
 And when the knight was light adoun, *dismounted*
 Withouten ani duelling, *delay*
 Amoraunt went to toun tho, *then*
 1820 His asse he ladde with him also *led*
 And sold it for five schilling.
 And while that derth was so strong, *scarcity*
 Ther with thai bought hem mete among, *food*
 When thai might gete no thing.
- 1825 And when her asse was ysold
 For five schilling, as y you told,
 Thai duelled ther dayes thre;
 Amoraunt wex strong and bold,
 Of fiftene winter was he old,
 1830 Curtays, hende and fre.
 For his lord he hadde gret care,
 And at his rigge he dight him yare *on his back he placed him readily*
 And bare him out of that cité; *carried*
 And half a yere and sum del mare *somewhat more*
 1835 About his mete he him bare, *bore*
 Yblisced mot he be. *Blessed may*
- Thus Amoraunt, withouten wrong,
 Bar his lord about so long,
 As y you tel may.
 1840 That winter com so hard and strong,
 Oft, "Allas!" it was his song,
 So depe was that cuntray; *muddy*
 The way was so depe and slider, *muddy and slippery*
 Oft times bothe togider *together*
 1845 Thai fel down in the clay.
 Ful trewe he was and kinde of blod

- And served his lord with mild mode,
Wald he nought wende oway. *gentle spirit*
- Thus Amoraunt, as y you say,
1850 Served his lord bothe night and day
And at his rigge him bare. *on his back*
Oft his song was, "Waileway!"
So depe was that cuntray,
His bones wex ful sare. *became; sore*
- 1855 Al her catel than was spent,
Save tuelf pans, verrament, *possessions*
Therwith thai went ful yare *twelve pence*
And bought hem a gode croudewain,
His lord he gan ther-in to lain, *pushcart*
- 1860 He no might him bere namare. *carry no more*
- Than Amoraunt crud Sir Amiloun *pushed*
Thurch mani a cuntré, up and down, *many*
As ye may understand;
So he com to a cité toun,
- 1865 Ther Sir Amis, the bold baroun, *Where*
Was douke and lord in lond.
Than seyde the knight in that tide,
"To the doukes court here biside
To bring me thider thou fond;
- 1870 He is a man of milde mode, *try*
We schul gete ous ther sum gode *gentle spirit*
Thurch grace of Godes sond. *giving*
- "Ac, leve sone," he seyde than,
"For His love, that this world wan *won*
1875 Astow art hende and fre, *As you*
Thou be aknowe to no man *known*
Whider y schal, no whenes y cam, *Where I am going or whence I came*
No what mi name it be."
He answerd and seyde, "Nay."
- 1880 To court he went in his way,
As ye may listen at me,
And bifor al other pover men *poor*
He crud his wain in to the fen; *pushed; cart; mud*
Gret diol it was to se. *sorrow*
- 1885 So it bifel that selve day,
With tong as y you tel may, *same*
It was midwinter tide, *tongue*
That riche douke with gamen and play
Fram chirche com the right way

- 1890 As lord and prince with pride.
 When he com to the castelgate, *castle gate*
 The pover men that stode therate
 Withdrough hem ther beside. *Withdrew*
 With knightes and with serjaunce fale *men-at-arms many*
 1895 He went into that semly sale *fine hall*
 With joie and blis to abide.
- In kinges court, as it is lawe,
 Trumpes in halle to mete gan blawe, *Horns in the hall called them to dinner*
 To benche went tho bold.
- 1900 When thai were semly set on rowe, *appropriately set in place*
 Served thai were upon a throwe, *right away*
 As men miriest on mold. *earth*
 That riche douke, withouten les, *lie*
 As a prince served he wes
- 1905 With riche coupes of gold, *cups*
 And he that brought him to that state
 Stode bischet withouten the gate, *shut out*
 Wel sore ofhungred and cold. *hungered*
- Out at the gate com a knight
- 1910 And a serjaunt wise and wight, *servant; brave*
 To plain hem bothe yfere, *To amuse themselves together*
 And thurch the grace of God Almighty *Almighty*
 On Sir Amiloun he cast a sight, *cast a look*
 Hou laith he was of chere. *hideous; appearance*
- 1915 And seththen biheld on Amoraunt, *then looked*
 Hou gentil he was and of fair semblaunt, *appearance*
 In gest as ye may here.
 Than seyde thai bothe, bi Seyn Jon,
 In al the court was ther non
- 1920 Of fairehed half his pere. *handsomeness; equal*
- The gode man gan to him go,
 And hendeliche he asked him tho, *courteously; then*
 As ye may understond,
 Fram wat lond that he com fro,
- 1925 And whi that he stode ther tho,
 And whom he served in lond.
 "Sir," he seyde, "so God me save,
 Icham here mi lordes knave, *young servant*
 That lith in Godes bond; *lies; service*
- 1930 And thou art gentil knight of blode,
 Bere our errand of sum gode *Make our errand come to some good*
 Thurch grace of Godes sond." *bounty*

- The gode man asked him anon,
 Yif he wald fro that lazer gon
 1935 And trewelich to him take;
 And he seyde he schuld, bi Seyn Jon,
 Serve that riche douke in that won,
 And richeman he wald him make;
 And he answerd with mild mode
 1940 And swore bi Him that dyed on Rode
 Whiles he might walk and wake,
 For to winne al this warldes gode,
 His hende lord, that bi him stode,
 Schuld he never forsake.
- 1945 The gode man wende he hadde ben rage,
 Or he hadde ben a folesage
 That hadde his witt forlorn,
 Other he thought that his lord with the foule visage
 Hadde ben a man of heighe parage
 1950 And of heighe kinde ycorn.
 Therefore he nold no more sain,
 Bot went him in to the halle ogain
 The riche douke biforn,
 "Mi lord," he seyde, "listen to me
 1955 The best bourd, bi mi leueté,
 Thou herdest seththen thou were born."
- The riche douke badde him anon
 To telle biforn hem everichon
 Withouten more duelling.
 1960 "Now sir," he seyde, "bi Seyn Jon,
 Ich was out atte gate ygon
 Right now on mi playing;
 Pover men y seighe mani thare,
 Litel and michel, lasse and mare,
 1965 Bothe old and ying,
 And a lazer ther y fond;
 Herdestow never in no lond
 Telle of so foule a thing.
- "The lazer lith up in a wain,
 1970 And is so pover of might and main
 O fot no may he gon;
 And over him stode a naked swain,
 A gentiler child, for sothe to sain,
 In world no wot y non.
 1975 He is the fairest gome
 That ever Crist yaf Cristendome
- leper
faithfully*
- dwelling*
- gentle manner*
- world's good*
- believed; mad
court fool
wits lost
Or
parentage
high kin chosen*
- jest; belief
since*
- bade*
- delay*
- Poor; saw*
- leper
Heard you*
- lies; cart*
- On
young man*
- I know none
creature
gave*

- Or layd liif opon,
And on of the most fole he is *one; foolish*
That ever thou herdest speke, ywis,
1980 In this worldes won." *dwelling area*
- Than seyde the riche douke ogain,
"What foly," he seyde, "can he sain?
Is he madde of mode?" *insane*
"Sir," he seyde, "y bad him fain *happily*
1985 Forsake the lazer in the wain, *leper; cart*
That he so over stode, *took care of*
And in thi servise he schuld be,
Y bihete hem bothe lond and fe, *offered; land and livestock*
Anough of warldes gode; *worldly goods*
1990 And he answerd and seyde tho *then*
He nold never gon him fro;
Therefore ich hold him wode." *mad*
- Than seyde the douke, "Thei his lord be lorn, *Though; desolate*
Par aventour, the gode man hath biforn *Perhaps*
1995 Holpen him at his nede,
Other the child is of his blod yborn, *Either*
Other he hath him othes sworn *Or; oaths*
His liif with him to lede.
Whether he be fremd or of his blod, *a stranger*
2000 The child," he seyde, "is trewe and gode,
Also God me spede.
Yif ichim speke er he wende, *If I speak to him before*
For that he is so trewe and kende, *kind (good-natured)*
Y schal quite him his mede!" *reward him*
- 2005 That douke astite, as y you told,
Cleped to him a squier bold *Called*
And hendelich gan hem sain: *say*
"Take," he sayde, "mi coupe of gold,
As ful of wine astow might hold *as you*
2010 In thine hondes tuain,
And bere it to the castelgate,
A lazer thou schalt finde therate
Liggeand in a wain. *Lying in a cart*
Bid him, for the love of Seyn Martin,
2015 He and his page drink this win, *wine*
And bring me the coupe ogain."
- The squier tho the coupe hent, *then; took*
And to the castel gat he went,
And ful of win he it bare.

- 2020 To the lazer he seyde, verrament,
 "This coupe ful of win mi lord the sent,
 Drink it, yife thou dare." *if*
 The lazer tok forth his coupe of gold,
 Bothe were gotten in o mold, *made; one*
- 2025 Right as that selve it ware, *As if they were the same*
 Therin he poud that win so riche;
 Than were thai bothe ful yliche
 And noither lesse no mare.
- The squier biheld the coupes tho, *cups then*
- 2030 First his and his lordes also,
 Whiles he stode hem biforn,
 Ac he no couthe never mo *could*
 Chese the better of hem to,
 So liche bothe thai worn. *so alike; were*
- 2035 Into halle he ran ogain,
 "Certes, sir," he gan to sain, *say*
 "Mani gode dede thou hast lorn, *lost*
 And so thou hast lorn this dede now;
 He is a richer man than thou,
- 2040 Bi the time that God was born."
- The riche douke answerd, "Nay.
 That worth never bi night no day;
 It were ogaines the lawe!" *against*
 "Yis, sir," he gan to say,
- 2045 "He is a traitour, bi mi fay, *by my faith*
 And were wele worth to drawe. *pull to pieces*
 For when y brought him the win,
 He drough forth a gold coupe fin, *fine*
 Right as it ware thi nawe; *your own*
- 2050 In this world, bi Seyn Jon,
 So wise a man is ther non
 Asundri schuld hem knawe." *Could tell them apart*
- "Now, certes," seyde Sir Amis tho, *then*
 "In al this world were coupes nomo *no more*
- 2055 So liche in al thing, *alike*
 Save min and mi brothers also,
 That was sett bituix ous to,
 Token of our parting;
 And yif it be so, with tresoun
- 2060 Mine hende brother, Sir Amiloun,
 Is slain, withouten lesing.
 And yif he have stollen his coupe oway,

- Y schal him sle me self this day,
Bi Jhesu, heven king!"
- 2065 Fram the bord he resed than *rose*
And hent his swerd as a wode man *seized; madman*
And drough it out with wrake, *drew; anger*
And to the castel gat he ran; *gate*
In al the court was ther no man
- 2070 That him might atake. *overtake*
To the lazer he stirt in the wain *goes; cart*
And hent him in his honden tuain *two hands*
And sleynt him in the lake, *cast*
And layd on, as he were wode, *attacked; mad*
- 2075 And al that ever about him stode
Gret diol gan make. *sorrow*
- "Traitor!" seyde the douke so bold,
"Where haddestow this coupe of gold
And hou com thou ther to?" *Whence*
- 2080 For bi Him that Judas sold,
Amiloun, mi brother, it hadde in wold, *possession*
When that he went me fro!"
"Ya, certes, sir," he gan to say,
"It was his in his cuntray,
- 2085 And now it is fallen so;
Bot certes, now that icham here,
The coupe is mine, y bought it dere,
With right y com ther to."
- Than was the douke ful egre of mod; *agitated in mind*
- 2090 Was noman that about him stode
That durst legge on him hond;
He spurned him with his fot *lay a hand on him*
And laid on, as he were wode,
With his naked brond, *bare sword*
- 2095 And bi the fet the lazer he drough *feet; leper; dragged*
And drad on him in the slough; *terrified him; mudhole*
For no thing wald he wond, *hesitate*
And seyde, "Therf, thou schalt be slawe, *Thief; slain*
Bot thou wilt be the sothe aknawe, *Unless you make known the truth*
- 2100 Where thou the coupe fond." *found*
- Child Amoraunt stode the pople among *people*
And seye his lord with wough and wrong *told; evil*
Hou reweliche he was dight. *dreadfully; dealt with*
He was bothe hardi and strong,
- 2105 The douke in his armes he fong *seized*

- And held him stille upright.
 “Sir,” he seyde, “thou art unhende *discourteous*
 And of thi werkes unkende, *ignoble*
 To sle that gentil knight.
- 2110 Wel sore may him rewe that stounde *time*
 That ever for the toke he wounde
 To save thi liif in fight.
- “And ys thi brother, Sir Amylioun,
 That whilom was a noble baroun *once*
 2115 Bothe to ryde and go, *driven*
 And now with sorwe ys dreve adoun;
 Nowe God that suffred passioun
 Breng him oute of his wo!
 For the of blysse he ys bare, *Because of you he is without happiness*
 2120 And thou yeldyst him all with care *give him grief*
 And brekest his bones a two; *in two*
 That he halp the at thi nede, *helped you*
 Well evell aquitest thou his mede, *pay back his help*
 Alas, whi farest thou so?”
- 2125 When Sir Amis herd him so sain,
 He stirt to the knight ogain, *leaped*
 Withouten more delay,
 And biclept him in his armes tuain, *grasped*
 And oft, “Allas!” he gan sain;
 2130 His song was “Waileway!”
 He loked opon his scholder bare
 And seighe his grimly wounde thare, *severe*
 As Amoraunt gan him say.
 He fel aswon to the grounde *fainted*
 2135 And oft he seyde, “Allas that stounde!” *time*
 That ever he bode that day. *experienced*
- “Allas,” he seyde, “mi joie is lorn, *lost*
 Unkender blod nas never born, *Ignobler blood*
 Y not wat y may do; *don't know*
 2140 For he saved mi liif biforn, *in the past*
 Ichave him yolden with wo and sorn *I have; paid; sorrow*
 And wrought him michel wo.
 O brother,” he seyde, “par charité,
 This rewely ded foryif thou me, *rueful deed forgive*
 2145 That ichave smiten the so!”
 And he forgave it him also a swithe *at once*
 And kist him wel mani a sithe,
 Wepeand with eighen tuo. *Weeping; eyes*

- Than was Sir Amis glad and fain,
 2150 For joie he wepe with his ain
 And hent his brother than,
 And tok him in his armes tuain,
 Right til he com into the halle ogain,
 No bar him no nother man.
 2155 The levedi tho in the halle stode
 And wend hir lord hadde ben wode,
 Ogaines him hye ran.
 "Sir," sche seyde, "wat is thi thought?
 Whi hastow him into halle ybrought
 2160 For Him that this world wan?"
- "O dame," he seyde, "bi Seyn Jon,
 Me nas never so wo bigon,
 Yif thou it wost understond,
 For better knight in world is non,
 2165 Bot almost now ichave him slon
 And schamely driven to schond;
 For it is mi brother, Sir Amiloun,
 With sorwe and care is dreven adoun,
 That er was fre to fond."
 2170 The levedi fel aswon to grounde
 And wepe and seyde, "Allas that stounde!"
 Wel sore wregand hir hond.
- As foule a lazer as he was,
 The levedi kist him in that plas,
 2175 For nothing wold sche spare,
 And oft time sche seyde, "Allas!"
 That him was fallen so hard a cas,
 To live in sorwe and care.
 Into hir chaumber she gan him lede
 2180 And kest of al his pover wede
 And bathed his bodi al bare,
 And to a bedde swithe him brought;
 With clothes riche and wele ywrought;
 Ful blithe of him thai ware.
- 2185 And thus in gest as we say,
 Tuelmoneth in her chaumber he lay,
 Ful trewe thai ware and kinde.
 No wold thai nick him with no nay,
 What so ever he asked night or day,
 2190 It nas never bihinde;
 Of everich mete and everi drink
 Thai had hemselve, withouten lesing,
- joyful*
eyes
seized
grasped

thought; mad
Towards; she

won

would

slain
shamefully; harm

noble in proof
in a faint

wringing

place

fortune

lead
cast off; poor clothing
naked
quickly
well made

story
Twelve-month (a year)

deny him nothing

slow in coming

- Thai were him bothe ful minde.
 And bithan the tuelmonth was ago,
 2195 A ful fair grace fel hem tho,
 In gest as we finde.
- by the time that
chance befell*
- So it bifel opon a night,
 As Sir Amis, that gentil knight,
 In slepe thought as he lay,
 2200 An angel com fram heven bright
 And stode biforn his bed ful right
 And to him thus gan say:
 Yif he wald rise on Cristes morn,
 Swiche time as Jhesu Crist was born,
 2205 And slen his children tuay,
 And alien his brother with the blode,
 Thurch Godes grace, that is so gode,
 His wo schuld wende oway.
- Christmas morning
Such
kill
anoint*
- Thus him thought al tho thre night
 2210 An angel out of heven bright
 Warned him ever more
 Yif he wald do as he him hight,
 His brother schuld ben as fair a knight
 As ever he was biforn,
 2215 Ful blithe was Sir Amis tho,
 Ac for his childer him was ful wo,
 For fairer ner non born.
 Wel loth him was his childer to slo,
 And wele lother his brother forgo,
 2220 That is so kinde ycorn.
- bade
happy; then
loath; slay
more loath; abandon
highly born*
- Sir Amiloun met that night also
 That an angel warned him tho
 And seyde to him ful yare,
 Yif his brother wald his childer slo,
 2225 The hert blod of hem to
 Might bring him out of care.
 A morwe Sir Amis was ful hende
 And to his brother he gan wende
 And asked him of his fare;
 2230 And he him answerd ogain ful stille,
 "Brother, ich abide her Godes wille,
 For y may do na mare."
- dreamed
then
fairly
slay
two
gracious
turned
await here
no more*
- Al so thai sete togider thare
 And speke of aventours, as it ware,
 2235 Tho knightes hende and fre,
- adventures
Those*

- Than seyð Sir Amiloun ful yare,
 “Brother, y nil nought spare *refrain*
 To tel the in privité. *secrecy*
 Me thought tonight in me sweven *dream*
 2240 That an angel com fram heven;
 For sothe, he told me
 That thurch the blod of thin children to *two*
 Y might aschape out of mi wo, *escape*
 Al hayl and hole to be!” *hail and whole*
- 2245 Than thought the douk, withouten lesing,
 For to slen his childer so ying, *young*
 It were a dedli sinne; *deadly*
 And than thought he, bi heven king,
 His brother out of sorwe bring,
 2250 For that nold he nought blinne. *not cease to try*
 So it bifel on Cristes night,
 Swiche time as Jhesu, ful of might,
 Was born to save mankunne, *mankind*
 To chirche to wende al that ther wes,
 2255 Thai dighten hem, withouten les, *prepared themselves*
 With joie and worldes winne. *pleasure*
- Than thai were redi for to fare, *When*
 The douke bad al that ther ware,
 To chirche thai schuld wende,
 2260 Litel and michel, lasse and mare,
 That non bileft in chaumber thare, *remained*
 As thai wald ben his frende,
 And seyð he wald himselve that night
 Kepe his brother that gentil knight
 2265 That was so god and kende.
 Than was ther non that durst say nay;
 To chirche thai went in her way,
 At hom bileft tho hende.
- The douke wel fast gan asprie *notice*
 2270 The kays of the noricerie, *keys; nursery*
 Er than thai schuld gon, *Before*
 And priveliche he cast his eighe *secretly*
 And aparceived ful witterlye *noticed full well*
 Where that thai hadde hem don. *placed*
 2275 And when thai were to chirche went,
 Than Sir Amis, verrament,
 Was bileft alon.
 He tok a candel fair and bright

- And to the kays he went ful right *keys*
 2280 And tok hem oway ichon. *each one*
- Alon him self, withouten mo,
 Into the chaumber he gan to go,
 Ther that his childer were, *Where*
 And biheld hem bothe to,
 2285 Hou fair thai lay togider tho *then*
 And slepe bothe yfere. *together*
 Than seyde himselve, "Bi Seyn Jon,
 It were gret rewethe you to slon, *slay*
 That God hath bought so dere!"
 2290 His kniif he had drawen that tide,
 For sorwe he sleynt oway biside *withdraw*
 And wepe with reweful chere.
- Than he hadde wopen ther he stode, *When; wept where*
 Anon he turned ogain his mode *again his mind*
 2295 And sayd withouten delay,
 "Mi brother was so kinde and gode,
 With grimly wounde he schad his blod *horrible; shed*
 For mi love opon a day;
 Whi schuld y than mi childer spare,
 2300 To bring mi brother out of care?
 O, certes," he seyde, "nay!
 To help mi brother now at this nede,
 God graunt me therto wele to spede,
 And Mari, that best may!" *maiden*
- 2305 No lenger stint he no stode, *stopped; moment*
 Bot hent his kniif with dreri mode *grasped; sad countenance*
 And tok his children tho; *took; then*
 For he nold nought spille her blode, *Because*
 Over a bacine fair and gode *basin*
 2310 Her throtes he schar atuo. *Their; cut*
 And when he hadde hem bothe slain,
 He laid hem in her bed ogain —
 No wonder thei him were wo — *though*
 And hilde hem, that no wight schuld se, *covered*
 2315 As noman hadde at hem be;
 Out of chaumber he gan go.
- And when he was out of chaumber gon,
 The dore he steked stille anon *fastened*
 As fast as it was biforn;
 2320 The kays he hidde under a ston *keys*
 And thought thai schuld wene ichon *everyone should think*

- That thai hadde ben forlorn. *murdered*
 To his brother he went him than
 And seyde to that careful man,
 2325 "Swiche time as God was born,
 Ich have the brought mi childer blod,
 Ich hope it schal do the gode
 As the angel seyde biforn."
- "Brother," Sir Amiloun gan to say,
 2330 "Hastow slayn thine children tuay?
 Allas, whi destow so?" *did you*
 He wepe and seyde, "Waileway!
 Ich hat lever til domesday *would have preferred*
 Have lived in care and wo!"
 2335 Than seyde Sir Amis, "Be now stille;
 Jhesu, when it is His wille,
 May send me childer mo.
 For me of blis thou art al bare;
 Ywis, mi liif wil y nought spare,
 2340 To help the now therfro."
- He tok that blode, that was so bright,
 And alied that gentil knight, *anointed*
 That er was hend in hale, *before*
 And seththen in bed him dight
 2345 And wreighe him wel warm, apleight, *covered*
 With clothes riche and fale. *many*
 "Brother," he seyde, "ly now stille *lie*
 And falle on slepe thurch Godes wille,
 As the angel told in tale;
 2350 And ich hope wele withouten lesing, *falsehood*
 Jhesu, that is heven king,
 Schal bote the of thi bale." *relieve; trouble*
- Sir Amis let him ly alon *lie alone*
 And in to his chapel he went anon,
 2355 In gest as ye may here,
 And for his childer, that he hadde slon,
 To God of heven he made him mon *lament*
 And preyde with rewely chere *rueful demeanor*
 Schuld save him fram schame that day,
 2360 And Mari, his moder, that best may, *maiden*
 That was him leve and dere;
 And Jhesu Crist, in that stede *instance*
 Ful wele He herd that knightes bede *request*
 And graunte him his praier.

- 2365 Amorwe astite as it was day,
 The levedi com home al with play
 With knightes ten and five;
 Thai sought the kays ther thai lay; *keys*
 Thai founde hem nought, thai were oway,
 2370 Wel wo was hem olive.
 The douk bad al that ther wes
 Thai schuld hold hem still in pes *peace*
 And stint of her strive, *cease; anxiety*
 And seyde he hadde the keys nome, *taken*
 2375 Schuld noman in the chaumber come
 Bot himself and his wive.

 Anon he tok his levedi than
 And seyde to hir, "Leve leman,
 Be blithe and glad of mode;
 2380 For bi Him that this world wan,
 Bothe mi childer ich have slan, *slain*
 That were so hende and gode;
 For me thought in mi sweven
 That an angel com fram heven
 2385 And seyde me thurch her blode *their blood*
 Mi brother schuld passe out of his wo;
 Therfore y slough hem bothe to,
 To hele that frely fode." *slew*
heal; noble young man

 Than was the levedi ferly wo *terribly grieved*
 2390 And seighe hir lord was also; *saw*
 Sche comfort him ful yare,
 "O lef liif," sche seyde tho, *fairly*
 "God may sende ous childer mo,
 Of hem have thou no care. *dear; then*
 2395 Yif it ware at min hert rote, *root*
 For to bring thi brother bote, *relief*
 My lyf y wold not spare.
 Shal noman oure children see,
 Tomorrow shal they beryed bee
 2400 As they faire ded ware!" *naturally*

 Thus the lady faire and bryght
 Comfort hur lord with al hur myght,
 As ye mow understonde;
 And seth they went both ful ryght *then*
 2405 To Sir Amylion, that gentil knyght,
 That ere was free to fonde. *generous in taking on adventures*
 When Sir Amylion wakyd thoo, *then*
 Al his fowlehed was agoo *foulness; gone*

- Through grace of Goddes sonde;
 2410 Than was he as feire a man
 As ever he was yet or than,
 Seth he was born in londe. *messenger*
before or then
Since
- Than were they al blith,
 Her joy couth noman kyth,
 2415 They thonked God that day.
 As ye mow listen and lyth,
 Into a chamber they went swyth,
 Ther the children lay;
 Without wemme and wound
 2420 Hool and sound the children found,
 And layen togeder and play.
 For joye they wept, there they stood,
 And thanked God with myld mood,
 Her care was al away. *joyful*
understand
hear
quickly
blemish
Whole
- 2425 When Sir Amylion was hool and fere
 And wax was strong of powere
 Both to goo and ryde,
 Child Oweys was a bold squyer,
 Blithe and glad he was of chere,
 2430 To serve his lord beside.
 Than saide the knyght uppon a day,
 He wolde hoom to his contray,
 To speke with his wyf that tyde;
 And for she halp him so at nede,
 2435 Wel he thought to quyte hur mede,
 No lenger wold he abyde.
- Sir Amys sent ful hastely
 After mony knyght hardy,
 That doughty were of dede,
 2440 Wel fyve hundred kene and try,
 And other barons by and by
 On palfray and on steede.
 He preked both nyght and day
 Til he com to his contray, *galloped*
 2445 Ther he was lord in lede. *Where; lord over his people*
 Than had a knyght of that contré
 Spoused his lady, bryght of ble,
 In romaunce as we rede. *Espoused; countenance*
- But thus, in romaunce as y yow say,
 2450 They com hoom that silf day
 That the bridal was hold; *same*
wedding

- To the gates they preked without delay, *galloped*
 Anon ther began a soory play
 Among the barouns bold.
- 2455 A messengere to the hal com
 And seide her lord was com hom
 As man meriest on molde. *earth*
 Than wox the lady blew and wan; *grew; ashen; pale*
 Ther was mony a sory man,
- 2460 Both yong and olde.
- Sir Amys and Sir Amylion
 And with hem mony a stout baron
 With knyghtes and squyers fale, *many*
 With helmes and with haberyon, *jacket of mail*
- 2465 With swerd bryght and broun,
 They went in to the hale.
 Al that they there araught, *reached*
 Grete strokes there they caught,
 Both grete and smale.
- 2470 Glad and blyth were they that day,
 Who so myght skape away *escape*
 And fle fro that bredale. *wedding feast*
- When thei had with wrake *vengeance*
 Drove oute both broun and blake
- 2475 Out of that worthy woon, *dwelling*
 Sir Amylyon for his lady sake
 And grete logge he let make *lodging had made*
 Both of lym and stoon. *mortar (lime) and stone*
- 2480 Thereyn was the lady ladde *led*
 And with bred and water was she fed,
 Tyl her lyvedays were goon. *life-days*
 Thus was the lady brought to dede, *death*
 Who therof rought, he was a queede, *cared; bad person*
 As ye have herd echoon.
- 2485 Then Sir Amylion sent his sond *messenger*
 To erles, barouns, fre and bond,
 Both feire and hende.
 When they com, he sesed in hond *(see note to line 1508)*
 Child Oweys in al his lond,
- 2490 That was trew and kynde;
 And when he had do thus, ywys,
 With his brother, Sir Amys,
 Agen then gan he wende.
 In muche joy without stryf

- 2495 Togeder ladde they her lyf,
Tel God after her dide send. *Until*
- Anoon the hend barons tway,
They let reyse a faire abbay *had built; abbey*
And feffet it ryght wel thoo, *endowed; then*
- 2500 In Lumbardy, in that contray,
To senge for hem tyl Domesday *sing; Judgment Day*
And for her eldres also. *their parents*
- Both on oo day were they dede
And in oo grave were they leide, *laid*
- 2505 The knyghtes both twoo;
And for her trewth and her godhede
The blisse of hevyn they have to mede, *for reward*
That lasteth ever moo.

Amen

NOTES TO *AMIS AND AMILOUN*

I have used the following abbreviations in these textual and explanatory notes: **A**: Auchinleck Manuscript; **D**: Bodleian Manuscript; **E**: Egerton Manuscript, **H**: Harley Manuscript; **HS**: Lillian Herlands Hornstein in J. Burke Severs, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*; **K**: Eugen Kölbing, ed., *Amis and Amiloun*; **L**: MacEdward Leach, ed., *Amis and Amiloun*; **W**: Henry Weber, ed., *Metrical Romances*.

I have based my text on A except that the beginning (lines 1–52) and the end (lines 2441–2508) are lost. Following W and L, I have supplied these lines from E. A has incomplete or damaged versions of lines 53–96, but I have used E for these lines for the sake of ease of reading, unless the fragmentary A version is overwhelmingly persuasive. For a full discussion of the manuscripts see L, who lists all variant readings in all manuscripts. Although L is the definitive critical edition, I have adopted his emendations, suggested in footnotes, only when there would be confusion in reading the text if I did not. I have expanded contractions and corrected obvious scribal errors without comment.

- 2 *hend(e)* has a variety of meanings: gracious, courteous, lovely, nearby, skillful, and others. It is probably just a polite form of address here.
- 5 *of*. Omitted in E, it appears in D and H and is adopted by L.
- 9 *toun and toure*. One of a number of common formulas in the poem like *wede and wo*, *bryght in bour*, *lef ne lothe*, *proude in pride*, *for soth without lesying*, and *worthy in wede*. See Ford, “New Conception of Poetic Formulae,” for more information on formulaic structures throughout this text.
- 13 *gan*: “began to” or “did” as an auxiliary is common throughout the poem. Similarly, *lete* is often used as an auxiliary meaning “cause to do.”
- 14 *unkouth . . . of kynd*. I have glossed this line “unaffected by their lineage,” i.e., “not proud or haughty.” L prefers Rickert’s “they were not kin,” though he does so without conviction and also mentions (without citation) Weston: “their kinsmen knew them not,” and Kölbing: “extraordinary they were in character” or “what unknown ancestry they were” (p. 113).
- 20 *trouth plyght*. The pledging of such an oath of loyalty was a serious matter and probably implied exclusivity in the deepest bond of friendship (cf. lines 361–72). The phrase is often used of marriage or betrothal vows (MED). See Ford, “Merry Married Brothers,” for more information on this vow and the paired cups (lines 255–52).

- 25 Here and elsewhere L cites relations of the English text to French versions.
- 30 *worthy were in wede*. Variations on this formula are common in this poem.
- 58 E: *twel yere olde*; A: *twelve winter old*. The use of “winter” better suits the poem’s overall tendency to use alliteration.
- 59 E: *were noon so bold*; A: *was ther non hold*. Although E is grammatically correct, A seems to provide a smoother progression for the sentence as a whole.
- 61 E: *y*; A: *ich*. I have left E’s reading for purposes of consistency within this section. Later, when A becomes the base, I use A’s more common form: *ich*.
- 64 E omits *sende* and finishes the line *his honde*; A: *sende his sonde*. A makes such good sense that I have followed L in substituting A for E.
- 65 *fre and bond*. This formula depends on the distinction between freemen (and nobles) who held their land in permanent tenure as opposed to bondmen who held land under some form of feudal obligation. *Erles*, *Barouns* are capitalized in the manuscript, though not consistently elsewhere (e.g., line 86).
- 73 E: *of*; L follows H: *and*, which seems to make more sense. A is missing this segment of the line.
- 73–74 A has only the second halves of these lines and has them in reverse order. Like L, I see no reason to disturb E, which is being used as the base for this section of the poem.
- 76 E: *comyn*; A: *samned*. I have used A because it is more precise, “gathered,” and does no violence to the rest of the E line.
- 79 A: *aplyght*; E: *pyght*. Although A is arguable, I, like L, use *pyght*, “adorned,” because it makes better sense in this physical description.
- 91–96 Ford argues in “Contrasting the Identical” that, despite their apparent similarities, Amiloun is portrayed as the more masculine and Amis as the more feminine throughout the tale.
- 97 A becomes the base text at this line.
- 101 A repeats line 98; I have followed L in using E.
- 120 *proude in pride*. This formula occurs frequently and can be variously rendered as “proud in their pride,” “proud in honor,” or “in their pride.”
- 188 *botelewe*. Although the word can refer simply to a chief servant in charge of dispensing food and drink, the office granted Amis is more likely “A nobleman of the royal court having various duties, including that of supervising the king’s buttery and that of acting as royal cupbearer on ceremonial occasions” (MED).
- 189 A repeats line 186; I have followed L in using the E, H reading.
- 191 *chef steward in halle*. L quite rightly rejects K’s association of *halle* with the place of appointment and instead considers “steward in halle” as a special office which

- involved overall management of the affairs of the castle and was ordinarily held by a noble.
- 231 *God me spede*. Here and in line 300 this phrase has the sense of the modern vernacular “God help me.”
- 244 *goldsmilþe*. A: *goldsmilþe*. A scribal efficiency, whereby the *þ* is made by a loop following *t* that leads in a single stroke to *e*.
- 280 *herkneth*. L reads *hekeneth* here and in lines 517 and 1189.
- 296 A: *faily*; I have preferred E: *faile*.
- 314 A: *Amis*; E, D, H: *Amylioun*. Amis is clearly the wrong character; L follows E, D, H. I have emended to “Amiloun,” the more common spelling in A.
- 334 *bright in bour*: literally “beautiful in bower,” a common formula in this poem.
- 350 Stewards in medieval literature were notorious for treachery. See the false stewards in *Havelok*, Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* II, 2496–2781, and the treacherous stewardship of Mordred in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*. It is no wonder that Orfeo in *Sir Orfeo* takes precautions upon his return to see that his steward has been faithful.
- 361 These lines echo Amiloun’s parting words (lines 308 ff.).
- 365 *to the*. Only found in A. Omitted in the other MSS. L deletes.
- 389 Strictly speaking, Amis is not a traitor since he has not broken an oath to the steward.
- 395 *slo*. Literally a sloe berry; since “not giving a sloe” is no longer idiomatic, I have glossed the line: “don’t give a fig.”
- 398 *wrethe*. A: *wretþe*. Also in lines 404, 718, 830, 1092, 1213, 1322, and 1785. A scribal efficiency. Similarly *wrethi* in line 606 is spelled *wretþi* in A. See note to line 244.
- 438 *halle*. L emends to *hale*, on the witness of E, thus improving the eye-rhyme with *tale* and *sale*.
- 448 *mirie*. L: *miri*.
- 478 A adds *with him* after *might*, an eye-skip from the following line.
- 487 *com*. L reads as *come* here and in lines 1549 and 2153. A, W, and K read *com*.
- 505 The episode that begins here contains both the familiar “love temptation” in a garden and the conventional “love-longing” of the courtly love tradition.
- 550–51 The sense of these lines, a bit confusing because of Middle English use of negatives, is that she would for no one hesitate to make her way to him.
- 617 A canon was an ordained clergyman who was not under monastic rule, usually attached to a cathedral or church (MED).

- 645 *drawe*. Amis fears that, if he succumbs and the duke finds out, he will be executed and “drawe,” dragged behind horses — neither a cruel nor unusual punishment for such a breach of fidelity and chastity.
- 686 *des* (dais): “The place occupied by a king, councillors, judges, etc.” (MED).
- 721–23 In medieval romance, a preferred time for sexual intrigue is often when the lord is away hunting. See the *Stanzaic Morte Arthur* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.
- 726 *Sche went, as sche wele kan*. In a note L prefers some version of E, D, H: *Wel right the way sche nam*. *Kan* is, however, a legitimate past form of *connen*: “to have the ability to do something” (MED).
- 758 *Seyn Tomas of Ynde*. In John 21:25 ff., doubting Thomas placed his hand in the wound in Christ’s side, thus proving His resurrected corporeality. According to saints’ lore, Thomas proselytized in India, was martyred and buried. Stories about him abound. In one legend he opens Mary’s tomb to see if she is still there. When he finds her body gone, he looks up and beholds it ascending. She drops him her girdle (a sign of chastity), thereby affirming the Assumption. Mandeville claims to have visited Thomas’ tomb in India (*Travels*, ch. 20) where the Apostle’s hand is kept in a separate vessel and used to make just assessments of hard cases: the hand casts aside false claims and clings to the just. It is fitting that the maiden Belisaunt calls upon Thomas as she chastises Amis for his doubts about her love: *Whi seystow ever nay?* (line 759).
- 768 L supplies *she*. The word is needed, but I have followed E, H: *sche*.
- 771 *hem for to here*. I have followed E by inserting *Their consail* at the beginning of the line.
- 785 It was common in romances to swear by saints, though here St. John the Apostle is especially popular. See lines 832, 956, 1918, 2161. Ford argues that the saints’ lives invoked throughout this text are simply variations on a formula used to fit different rhyme, meter, and alliterative needs, but have no special meanings (“New Conception of Poetic Formulae,” pp. 218–24).
- 796 St. James the Greater, whose body is said to be buried at Compostela, Spain, which consequently became a major pilgrimage site. There does not, however, seem to be any special significance here for Saint James, just as there does not seem to be elsewhere for St. Thomas of Inde (line 758), St. Giles (lines 952, 1126), St. Denis of France (line 1567), or St. Martin (line 2014).
- 835–40 The sense is that, if anyone has lied about him and the duke’s daughter, he (Amis) will challenge the lie by combat.
- 849 *Ataint* implies conviction of a serious crime subject to the death penalty or loss of civil or property rights (OED).
- 860 An ambiguous line. L observes that Rickert believes the daughter is speaking in this line and translates “among” as “before” but that H “rather confirms the reading: and her mother swore continually (ever among).”

- 872 In medieval law a “borwe” was someone who offered himself as a surety or guarantee for someone else’s appearance at court. If the charge was a capital offense, the guarantor might forfeit his life (MED). Thus, threats are made later to burn the “borwes.” Note also the difficulty Guinevere has in getting guarantors when she is accused of killing the Scottish knight in the *Stanzaic Morte Arthur* (lines 1328 ff.).
- 939 A: *wroth*; E: *wroth* (accepted by L and me).
- 950 A: *no nother*, but I emended to *non other*, an obvious false juncture.
- 952 *Seyn Gile*. A hermit saint who founded the monastery in Provence, bearing his name. The place became an important pilgrimage center on the routes to Compostela and the Holy Land. There were several English festivals honoring him as well. His patronage was thought to be beneficial to travelers, cripples, lepers, and mothers in childbearing. Amis calls upon Saint Gile as he sets out to help Amiloun, little aware of the multiple role that the saint could play in his life as he becomes crippled with leprosy that may be cured only with a baby’s blood.
- 984 *Waileway*. An interjection of lament, a “woe is me” or “woe the day” sentiment.
- 988 L explains that knights wore long coats that had to be tucked up for walking or riding (p. 123).
- 1054 L supplies *a* for a letter in A that looks like *r*.
- 1077 *sorn*. K defines as “scorn”; L prefers “mockery” from French *sorne*. I prefer MED: “grief, sorrow, distress, trouble, harm.” MED cites *Guy of Warwick* as well as *Amis and Amiloun*. The word also appears in line 2141.
- 1109–10 Judas sold (betrayed) Christ for “thirty pieces of silver.” Christ died “on Rode” (on the Cross), thereby redeeming mankind from Adam and Eve’s sin. Similar references are common in this and other medieval poems.
- 1164 The sword lying between a man and a woman, as a sign of chastity, is common, as in various tales of Tristan and Isolde. See L, p. lxiii.
- 1176 A: *wardles*; E: *worldes*. I read *wardles*, which appears elsewhere in the poem and is a simple transposition of *d* and *l* in A.
- 1217 The *tonne* (barrel) was apparently meant to conceal their nakedness — an odd delicacy of feeling under the circumstances.
- 1252 *And sayd*. A: *say*. K emends to *And sayd*, followed by L and me. W reads *Stay*.
- 1253 *passioun*: Christ’s passion is comprised of His last sufferings and culminates in the Crucifixion.
- 1290 Each participant in the combat had to swear an oath as to the truth of his cause; the winner was vindicated.
- 1339 *That*. A: *The*. K’s emendation, followed by L and me. W follows A.
- 1456 *unkende*: possibly “unnatural” or “untaught” (L); more likely here “different from her kind (family).”

- 1508 *sesed*: “put in legal or formal possession (of a kingdom, land, feudal estate, goods, etc.)” (MED).
- 1511 Of course, Belisent (Belisaunt) is not, strictly speaking, a maiden at this point.
- 1540–45 Here Amiloun is being punished for pretending to be Amis in the “ordeal.” Leprosy was often seen in medieval literature as a punishment by God and frequently used as a metaphor for moral corruption. See Saul N. Brody, *The Disease of the Soul: Leprosy in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).
- 1546 *In gest to rede*. The “geste,” which is the narrator’s source, is probably one of the Anglo-Norman versions of the tale or an English redaction of an Anglo-Norman source. The story was ubiquitous in both romance and hagiographic versions. See L, pp. ix–cii. The narrator frequently refers to his “gest” or “book” or “romance,” but no specific identification of the source has been made.
- 1567 Saint Denis (also known as Dionysius) is popularly known as the patron saint of France, and legend has it that he carried his severed head to the location where his abbey church was to be built.
- 1568 A: *Te*; I have followed L in preferring E, D: *The*.
- 1653 The five wounds of Christ were from the nails in his hands and feet and the spear in his side.
- 1678 A: *worn*; I follow L in preferring E, D: *sworn*.
- 1711 *messais*, meaning “suffering from starvation,” “hungry,” “needy,” “wretched,” “feeble,” “miserable,” etc. See MED *misese* and its variant spellings. L and K read *messaner* without conjecture as to the meaning.
- 1769 A: *mensenger*. Like L, I have followed E, D: *messenger*.
- 1771 *praieste*: probably a Northern form of *praieth the* (L). The sense of the lines 1769–73 is “He sent me as a messenger because he cannot walk and begs you to send him enough of his goods to buy an ass to ride on.”
- 1816 *hem*. L: *him*.
- 1864 *cit  town*. A town became a city if it had a cathedral.
- 2008 *gold*. A: *glod*. Emended by all.
- 2014 Saint Martin, known as Martin of Tours, was a soldier who refused to kill Christians. The popular story about St. Martin is that he split his cloak with a naked beggar. This is significant because Amis is, at the time of this oath, instructing his servant to do an act of charity for the begging leper, Amiloun.
- 2113–24 This stanza is omitted in A. These lines correspond to D lines 2012–24.
- 2136 *that*. Reduplicated in A.
- 2206 A: *childer*; like L, I have followed E, D: *brother*.
- 2209–20 This stanza is omitted in E, D.

- 2226 *care*. A reads *wo*, which is crossed out, and *care* is added in the margin in another hand.
- 2242 A: *min*; like L, I have followed E, D: *thin*.
- 2293 *hadde*. A: *hadde hadde* with the second *hadde* deleted.
- 2397 The rest of the text is from E, following L and the advice of HS.
- 2399 *Tomorow* as in E. L reads *Tomorrow*.
- 2405 A has this variant spelling of *Amiloun* here and in lines 2407 and 2425. E has it in 2461, 2485. E has *Amylyon* at 2476.
- 2424 E: *agoo*; like L, I have followed D: *away*, which maintains the rhyme.
- 2442 *steede*. L reads *steed*.
- 2472–74 Omitted in E; I have followed L in using D.



INTRODUCTION TO *ROBERT OF CISYLE*

Although it is characteristic of romance to concentrate on the experience and values of one hero (or two, as in *Amis and Amiloun*), in *Robert of Cisyle* the focus on Robert is especially intense. It is his experience as he falls from high position, is punished, and rises again that is the whole substance of the poem. All other characters, even the angel who temporarily replaces him as king, are there only for our understanding of Robert and the meaning of his experiences.

The story was common and popular: there are ten manuscript versions of *Robert of Cisyle*. The theme appears in the Bible and folklore as well as romance: that the mighty will be brought low and the humble exalted. The most prominent biblical statement of the theme is the Magnificat, Mary's speech to Elizabeth revealing that she has conceived the Redeemer, which is partially quoted in the poem:

Deposuit potentes de sede,
Et exaltavit humiles.
(lines 40–41)

*He hath put down the mighty from their seat,
And hath exalted the humble.*

The theme is pious and didactic — and comforting to a popular audience who can enjoy the fall of the great as well as the ultimate triumph of the hero once he has been thoroughly humiliated. That is the double enjoyability of *Robert of Cisyle*: in the fall of the mighty, so common in medieval tragedy (see, for example, the Monk's compendium in *The Canterbury Tales*), there is a didactic caution to "all of us." In romance versions, however, the fall and rise is doubly satisfying since we can observe the punishment of arrogance and the reward for humility which links the hero to "people like us."

The didactic point is sharpened by the insistent concentration on Robert, his position, his suffering, his remorse, and his restoration. Robert does not even have a wife. He begins as a good king of great family: one brother is Pope Urban, the other is the Holy Roman Emperor Valemounde. There is a temptation because of the specificity to find an historical model, but, although there were two popes Urban who might fit the bill, there is no precedent for the trial and, indeed, no Holy Roman Emperor named Valemounde (although his made-up name is suggestive since it means "farewell to the world," a version of *contemptus mundi* that Robert must learn in order to regain his kingdom). The importance of his brothers is just that — their importance. Robert is king of a prosperous Sicily and the brother of the two most powerful men in the Christian world. If he can be laid low, who is not vulnerable? This heightens the doubled joy of this romance. Even Robert can be humbled by God and even the sinful can be restored through genuine repentance.

At the outset it is made clear that he is high-born, the flower of chivalry:

In Cisyle was a noble kyng,
Fair and strong and sumdel yng.
(lines 3–4)

*Sicily
somewhat young*

The opening descriptions are abstract and laudatory; his youth may even mitigate to some extent the foolishness of his pride, though if that is the case it is one of the few mercies the poet allows Robert. More prominent is his arrogance:

The kyng thoughte, he hedde no peer
In al the worlde, fer no neer;
And in his thought he hedde pryde,
For he was nounpeer in uch a syde.
(lines 25–28)

*had
arbiter (judge) on either side*

His arrogance even extends, ominously, to matters of religion:

He thoughte more in worldes honour,
Than in Crist, ur saveour.
(lines 33–34)

*cared more about
our savior*

When he is at vespers and hears the Magnificat he must ask for a translation:

He made a clerk hit him rehers
In langage of his owne tonge,
In Latyn he nuste, that heo songe.
(lines 36–38)

*repeat
He did not know Latin*

Although his ignorance of Latin may soften some of the sharp edges of his personality for a popular audience, it also identifies him as an outsider who does not understand the language of the Church. When he hears the translation his reaction is not merely arrogant but blasphemous; he directly challenges the truth of Scripture:

“Al your song is fals and fable!
What mon hath such pouwer,
Me to bringe lowe in daunger?”
(lines 50–52)

*false
man; power
danger*

And this challenge is explicitly chastised by the narrator: “This errour he hedde in thought” (line 58). Thus, he is so self-absorbed as to blind himself to the necessary truth of Scripture. This is a serious error, because revelation must be true even if it does not seem to be borne out in our own experience thus far. He is also so bored as to fall asleep. Robert’s nap during vespers has consequences harsher than the ordinary experience of most drowsy worshippers because of his high position and because it is a metaphor for his indifference to the word of God.

That he is not recognized by the guards when he awakes after the service is not simply a convenience of romance but a sign that his obstinacy in the face of revealed truth has made him unrecognizable even by his own retainers. The angel who takes his form and place is easily accepted because he is an idealized version of Robert; he is Robert at his best. He is received joyously by the people while the fallen Robert is seized as a potential robber.

Here again the poem is metaphorical and didactic. Robert at his best is angelic; Robert in defiance of Scripture is indeed a spiritual thief. When his asseverations of his identity are rejected by the porter and he is excluded from his own palace, he is displayed as someone who has put himself outside of the Christian community. His ferocity when he is rejected may not be more than one would expect of a confident king, but it is certainly presented as a sign of his failure to understand the limitations on the prerogatives of human power:

"Thou schalt witen, ar I go:	<i>know, before</i>
Thi kyng I am; thow schalt knowe.	
In prison thou schalt ligge lowe	<i>lie</i>
And ben anhonged and todrawe	<i>be hanged and pulled to pieces</i>
As a traytur bi the lawe.	<i>traitor according to the law</i>
Thou schalt wel witen, I am kyng,	<i>know</i>
Open the gates, gadelyng!"	
(lines 98–104)	

His attempts to justify and identify himself by his family are tellingly futile:

"The Pope of Roome is my brother	
And the emperour myn other."	<i>my</i>
(lines 149–50)	

When the porter reports his encounter with Robert, the angel-king uses the word "fool" for the first time to refer to Robert, and this becomes the dominant metaphor for his outcast situation throughout the rest of the poem:

"Thou art a fol, that art nought fert	<i>fool; afraid</i>
Mi men to don such vilenye."	<i>do; villainy</i>
(lines 142–43)	

Spiritually foolish, Robert is in fact made into a "king's fool":

"Thow art my fol," seide the angel,	<i>fool</i>
"Thou schal be schoren everichdel,	<i>shaved completely</i>
Lych a fool, a fool to be . . ."	<i>Like</i>
(lines 153–55)	

His relationship to animals, apes, and dogs establishes a new position for him in the hierarchy of creation. The irony is intensified by the fact that his assayer (royal food taster) will be a dog and not only will he be bestial (he might learn from an ape), but he will have to contend with the dogs for his food. Unlike the title character in *Sir Gowther*, who also is a "fool" and must eat under the table with the dogs, Robert is not undergoing the transformation from "wild man" to knight that Gowther is. Robert has been moved dramatically downward in the chain of being. Robert does not accept his humiliation easily, yet it is always clear that he has no choice. The narrator is sympathetic, but he does not justify Robert: his humiliation is painfully described, but we are told clearly that the angel-king ruled well.

Bad becomes even worse when, after three years of rule by the angel-king, Valemounde issues an invitation for the three brothers to get together in Rome. The invitation, coming

at this point, only makes sense within the narrator's logic of romance: it is motivated by the development of theme rather than any internal necessity of plot; it is intended to make humiliation even more humiliating. The angel-king goes, clad in brilliant white (Robert at his best), and is joyfully greeted by his "brothers." Robert goes along as the king's fool and, despite his protestations, is perceived as the fool that he is both literally and figuratively:

Tho was he more fol iholde,
More then er a thousand folde;
To cleyne such a bretherhede:
Hit was holde a foles dede.
(lines 289–92)

*Therefore; fool considered
before; times
claim; brotherhood
considered; fool's deed*

He goes wild with grief when he is rejected by his brothers:

"Allas," quath he, "nou am I lowe."
For he hoped, bi eny thing,
His bretheren wolde ha mad hym kyng;
And whon his hope was al ago,
He seide "allas" and "weilawo."
(lines 296–300)

*said
hoped, somehow
brothers; have
when; gone
alas; wellaway*

It is, however, this ultimate rejection by his potent brothers that occasions Robert's renovation, poignantly introduced by his "allas" in line 307. He here begins a series of recognitions, not just of his situation but of his interior disposition. He thinks of the biblical example of Nebuchadnezzar, who was brought low even though Holofernes had thought of him as a "god." Despite the fact that the biblical basis of the exemplum is scanty, it is significant that Robert's first recognition comes through Scripture, the rejection of which had been the narrative turning point in his own fortunes.

Robert eventually applies the story to himself, accepts his guilt, and admits his pride:

"Now am I wel lowe ipult,
And that is right that I so be."
(lines 346–47)

brought down

Many casual critics of the poem (few have dealt with it intensively) have dismissed the narrative as "sprawling" and "simplistic." Such commentators should pay particular attention to the lyrical self-conviction that follows this fundamental recognition; the next twenty-four lines are devoted to a graceful revelation, by Robert himself, of his transgressions. He prays to Mary (and to God) to forgive him for his culpable foolishness. It is particularly appropriate that this admission insist on the metaphor of the fool that recurs throughout his confession as a refrain: "Lord, on Thi fool Thow have pité" (line 348). He explicitly cites his rejection of Scripture and lists his trespasses. He accepts his "fooldom" and generalizes it to the human condition. He prays to Mary for the very humility he is now displaying: his recognition is interior and total. Since we are "in a romance" we have every reason to expect that the consequences will be salubrious — and they are.

The angel accepts Robert's self-abasement and reinforces the lesson by restoring him, while explaining that one hour in heaven brings more joy than one hundred thousand years as a noble man on earth. Having underlined the point, the angel disappears and Robert,

morally chastened and spiritually elevated, returns to his exalted role with a critical new awareness of where even the mighty fit into the great scheme of God's universe. When he regains power, he rules as a better king than ever. Why he, a "yyng" man (line 4), should die within two years is left unexplained; perhaps the kingdom of heaven is all that is left for his exaltation. Appropriately, upon his death, he lets his story be known as a lesson to his people and to the world.

In any case the lesson is clear and is reiterated: the mighty will be brought low and the humble exalted. The pious conclusion, which refers both to Christ's redemptive act and to the experience of the individual Christian, invites, more explicitly than is usual in romance, a fourfold allegorical interpretation. Literally, this is the story of the experience of the king of Sicily. Allegorically, it is the expression of the human condition within the divinely shaped hierarchy of the created world: human pride can expect a fall, while humility will bring rewards. Analogically, it is the story of Christ's self-abasement in his acceptance of the pain and humiliation of crucifixion for the salvation of mankind. Anagogically, it is advice to all Christians on what is necessary for salvation. *Robert of Cisyle* certainly is didactic, but it is not a slender or careless redundancy. It is a lively, powerful, and sometimes charmingly playful statement of a fundamental and gratifying Christian principle.

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ROBERT OF CISYLE

	Princes proude that beth in pres,	<i>proud; in company</i>
	I wol you telle thing, not lees!	<i>lies</i>
	In Cisyle was a noble kyng,	<i>Sicily</i>
	Fair and strong and sumdel yyng.	<i>somewhat young</i>
5	He hedde a brother in grete Roome,	<i>had</i>
	Pope of alle Cristendome;	<i>Christendom</i>
	Another he hedde in Alemayne,	<i>had; Germany</i>
	An Emperour, that Sarazins wroughte payne.	<i>pain [upon] Saracens</i>
	The kyng was hote kyng Robert,	<i>named</i>
10	Never man ne wiste him fert;	<i>No one ever knew him to be afraid</i>
	He was kyng of gret honour	
	For that he was conquerour;	
	In al the world nas his peer,	<i>was not his equal</i>
	Kyng ne prince, fer no neer.	<i>far or near</i>
15	And, for he was of chivalrie flour,	<i>flower of chivalry</i>
	His brother was mad Emperour,	<i>made</i>
	His other brother Godes vikere,	<i>vicar</i>
	Pope of Rome, as I seide ere.	<i>before</i>
	The pope was hote pope Urban,	
20	He was good to God and man;	
	The Emperour was hote Valemounde,	
	A strengur weorreour nas non founde	<i>stronger warrior was not</i>
	After his brother of Cisyle,	
	Of whom that I schal telle a while.	
25	The kyng thoughte, he hedde no peer	<i>had</i>
	In al the worlde, fer no neer;	
	And in his thought he hedde pryde,	
	For he was nounpeer in uch a syde.	<i>arbiter (judge) on either side</i>
	At midsomer, a Seynt Jones Niht,	<i>on June 24</i>
30	The kyng to church com ful riht,	<i>church; directly</i>
	Forto heeren his evensong.	<i>To hear; (see note)</i>
	Hym thoughte, he dwelled ther ful long;	
	He thoughte more in worldes honour,	<i>cared more about</i>
	Than in Crist, ur saveour.	<i>our savior</i>
35	In "Magnificat" he herde a vers,	<i>verse</i>
	He made a clerk hit him rehers	<i>repeat</i>
	In langage of his owne tonge,	

	In Latyn he nuste, that heo songe.	<i>He did not know Latin</i>
	The vers was this, I telle the:	
40	Deposuit potentes de sede,	<i>(see note)</i>
	Et exaltavit humiles.	
	This was the vers, withouten les.	<i>lies</i>
	The clerk seide anone riht;	<i>right away</i>
	“Sire, such is Godes miht,	
45	That he may make heyghe lowe	<i>high</i>
	And lowe heighe in luytel throwe.	<i>in an instant</i>
	God may do, withoute lyghe,	<i>lie</i>
	His wil in twynklyng of an eighe.”	<i>eye</i>
	The kyng seide with herte unstable:	<i>heart not steadfast (in virtue)</i>
50	“Al your song is fals and fable!	<i>false</i>
	What mon hath such pouwer,	<i>man; power</i>
	Me to bringe lowe in daunger?	<i>danger</i>
	I am flour of chivalrye,	<i>flower of chivalry</i>
	Myn enemys I may destruye;	<i>destroy</i>
55	No mon lyveth in no londe,	
	That me may withstonde.	<i>withstand</i>
	Then is this a song of nouht!”	
	This errour he hedde in thought.	<i>had</i>
	And in his thouht a sleep him tok	<i>took</i>
60	In his pulput, as seith the bok.	<i>royal pew</i>
	Whon that evensong was al don,	<i>When; done</i>
	A kyng ilyk him out gan gon,	<i>looking like him went out</i>
	And alle men with hym gan wende,	<i>went</i>
	Kyng Robert lafte out of mynde.	<i>was forgotten</i>
65	The newe kyng was, as I you telle,	
	Godes angel, his pruide to felle.	<i>pride; destroy</i>
	The angel in halle joye made,	
	And alle men of hym weore glade.	<i>were glad</i>
	The kyng wakede, that lay in church,	<i>waked who</i>
70	His men he thouhte wo to worche,	<i>woe (i.e., harm) to work</i>
	For he was laft ther alon,	<i>left there alone</i>
	And derk niht him fel uppon.	<i>dark</i>
	He gan crie after his men,	<i>began to call</i>
	Ther nas non, that spak agen.	<i>was none; back</i>
75	But the sexteyn atten eende	<i>sexton; at the back</i>
	Of the church to him gan wende,	<i>went</i>
	And seide: “What dost thou nouthe her,	<i>now here</i>
	Thou false thef, thou losenger?	<i>thief; scoundrel</i>
	Thou art her with felenye,	<i>here; evil intent</i>
80	Holy church to robbye.”	<i>rob</i>
	He seide: “Foule gadelyng,	<i>said; rascal</i>
	I am no thef, I am a kyng!	<i>thief</i>
	Opene the church dore anon,	<i>at once</i>
	That I mowe to mi paleis gon!”	<i>might go to my palace</i>

- 85 The sexteyn thouhte anon with than,
That he was sum wood man,
And wolde the chirche dilyveret were
Of hym, for he hedde fere;
And openede the chirchedore in haste.
- 90 The kyng bygon to renne out faste,
As a mon that was wood.
At his paleys gate he stood,
And heet the porter gadelyng
And bad hym come in highing,
- 95 Anon the gates up to do.
The porter seide: "Ho clepeth so?"
He onswerde anon tho:
"Thou schalt witen, ar I go:
Thi kyng I am; thou schalt knowe.
- 100 In prison thou schalt ligge lowe
And ben anhonged and todrawe
As a traytur bi the lawe.
Thou schalt wel witen, I am kyng,
Open the gates, gadelyng!"
- 105 The porter seide: "So mot I the,
The kyng is mid his meyne;
Wel I wot, withoute doute,
The kyng nis not now withoute."
The porter com into halle,
- 110 Bifore the newe kyng aknes gan falle
And seide: "Ther is atte gate
A nyce fool icome late.
He seith he is lord and kyng
And clept me foule gadelyng.
- 115 Lord, what wol ye that I do?
Leten hym in or leten him go?"
The angel seide ryght in haste:
"Do him come in swithe faste!
For my fol I wole him make,
- 120 Forte he the name of kyng forsake."
The porter com to the gate
And him he called in to late.
He smot the porter, whon he com in,
That blod barst out of mouth and chyn.
- 125 The porter yeld him his travayle,
Him smot ageyn, withouten fayle,
That neose and mouth barst a blood;
Thenne he semed almost wod.
The porter and his men in haste,
- 130 Kyng Robert in a podel caste;
Unsemely heo maden his bodi than,
- sexton; thereupon
mad
wanted the church rid
he had fear*
- began to run
man
palace
called
haste
to lift up
Who says
answered; then
know, before*
- lie
be hanged and pulled to pieces
traitor according to the law
know*
- might I thrive
with his company
know
is not; outside*
- on his knees*
- silly fool come recently*
- called; rascal*
- Let*
- Have; very quickly
fool; will
Until*
- let
struck; when
burst*
- requited; pains
struck back
[So] that nose; burst with
insane*
- puddle
Unattractive they*

- That he nas lyk non other man, *was not like*
 And brouht him bifore the newe kyng;
 And seide: "Lord, this gadelyng
 135 Me hath smyte withoute decert; *Has hit me; desert*
 He seith, he is ur kyng apert. *our; openly*
 This harlot oughte for his sawe *vagabond; assertion*
 Ben ihonged and todrawe; *hanged and pulled to pieces*
 For he seith non other word,
 140 Bote that he is bothe kyng and lord." *But*
 The angel seide to kyng Robert:
 "Thou art a fol, that art nought fert *fool; afraid*
 Mi men to don such vilenye; *do; villainy*
 Thi gult thou most nede abuye. *guilt; atone for*
 145 What art thou?" seide the angel.
 Qwath Robert: "Thou shalt wite wel, *Said; know*
 That I am kyng and kyng wol be, *will*
 With wronge thou hast my dignité. *have; worthiness*
 The Pope of Roome is my brother
 150 And the emperour myn other; *my*
 Heo wol me wreke, for soth to telle, *They; avenge; truth*
 I wot, heo nulle not longe dwelle." *know; they will not; delay*
 "Thow art my fol," seide the angel, *fool*
 "Thou schal be schoren everichdel, *shaved completely*
 155 Lych a fool, a fool to be, *Like*
 Wher is now thi dignité? *your honor*
 Thi counseyler schal ben an ape, *advisor*
 And o clothyng you worth ischape. *one (same) clothing; shall be dressed*
 I schal him clothen as thi brother,
 160 Of o clothyng — hit is non other;
 He schal beo thin owne feere, *be; companion*
 Sum wit of him thou miht lere. *learn*
 Houndes, how so hit bifalle, *Hounds; as it will happen*
 Schulen eten with the in halle; *Shall eat*
 165 Thou schalt eten on the ground;
 Thin assayour schal ben an hound,
 To assaye thi mete bifore the; *taster*
 Wher is now thi dignité?" *test; you*
 He heet a barbur hym bifore, *dignity*
 170 That as a fool he schulde be schore, *called*
 Al around lich a frere *So that; shorn*
 An hondebrede bove either ere, *like a friar*
 And on his croune made a crois. *hand's width above each ear*
 He gan crie and make nois. *crown (top of his head); cross*
 175 He swor, thei schulde alle abuye, *cry out; noise*
 That hym dude such vileynye, *pay for it*
 And evere he seide he was lord, *did; villainy*
 And uche mon scorned him for that word, *each man*

- And uche mon seide he was wod,
 180 That proved wel, he couthe no good.
 For he wende in none wyse,
 That God Almihti couthe devyse,
 Him to bringe to lower stat:
 With o drauht he was chekmat!
 185 With houndes everi niht he lay,
 And ofte he cryede weylaway,
 That he evere was ibore,
 For he was a mon forlore.
 Ther nas in court grom ne page,
 190 That of the kyng ne made rage;
 For no mon ne mihte him knowe,
 He was defygured in a throwe.
 So lowe er that was never kyng;
 Allas, her was a deolful thing,
 195 That he scholde for his pryde
 Such hap among his men betyde!
 Hunger and thurst he hedde grete,
 For he ne moste no mete ete,
 But houndes eeten of his disch,
 200 Whether hit weore flesch or fisch.
 He was to dethe neigh ibrouht
 For hunger, ar he miht eten ouht
 With houndes that beth in halle.
 How might him hardore bifalle?
 205 And whon hit nolde non other be,
 He eet with houndes gret plenté.
 The angel was kyng, him thoughte long;
 In his tyme was never wrong,
 Tricherie, ne falshede, ne no gyle
 210 Idon in the lond of Cisyle.
 Alle goode ther was gret plenté:
 Among men, love and charité;
 In his tyme was never strif
 Bitwene mon and his wyf;
 215 Uche mon lovede wel other:
 Beter love nas nevere of brother.
 Thenne was that a joyful thing
 In londe to have such a kyng.
 Kyng he was threo yeer and more.
 220 Robert yeode as mon forlore.
 Seythe hit fel uppon a day
 A luytel bfore the moneth of May,
 Sire Valemound, the emperour,
 Sende lettres of gret honour
 225 To his brother, of Cisyle kyng,
- each; mad*
showed well; understood [nothing]
thought in no way
could
state
one move; checkmated

cried allas
born
man totally lost
was not; groom nor
ridicule
no man; recognize
changed in appearance; instant
before
here; mournful

fortune; experience
had great
could not eat food

meat or fish
nearly brought
before; could; anything

How might (anything) harder befall him
when it might not be otherwise
great plenty
it seemed to him

Treachery; falsehood; guile
Done
goods; great plenty

strife
man; wife
Each
was never between

three years
went as man utterly lost
Later it happened upon a day
little

great

	And bad him come withouten lettyng, That heo mihten beo bothe isome With heore brother, Pope of Rome. Hym thoughte long heo weore atwinne;	<i>delay</i> <i>they might be; together</i> <i>their</i>
230	He bad him lette for no wynne, That he neore of good aray In Roome an Holy Thoresday. The angel welcomede the messagers And gaf hem clothes riche of Pers,	<i>it seemed to him; they; apart</i> <i>spare; consideration</i> <i>arrive in good array</i> <i>on Holy Thursday</i> <i>messengers</i> <i>gave; from Persia</i>
235	Furred al with ermyne; In Cristendom is non so fyne; And al was chouched mid perré, Better was non in Cristianté. Such cloth, and hit weore to dihte,	<i>Trimmed with ermine</i> <i>decorated with gems</i> <i>Christendom</i> <i>if it had to be made</i>
240	Al Cristendom hit make ne mihte; Of that wondrede al that lond, Hou that cloth was wrought with hond; Wher such cloth was to selle, Ne ho hit maade, couthe no mon telle.	<i>could not make it</i> <i>wondered</i> <i>How; made; hand</i>
245	The messagers wenten with the kyng To grete Rome withoute lettyng. The fool Robert also went, Clothed in lodly garnement, With foxes tayles mony aboute:	<i>Who made it, could</i> <i>messengers</i> <i>delay</i> <i>hideous garments</i> <i>tails many</i>
250	Men miht him knowen in the route. The angel was clothed al in whit; Nas never seygh such samyt; And al was chouched myd perles riche, Never mon seigh none hem liche.	<i>recognize; along the way</i> <i>white</i> <i>Was never seen such rich silk</i> <i>decorated with pearls</i> <i>man saw; like</i>
255	Al whit atyr was and steede, The steede was feir, ther he yede; So feir a steede, as he on rod, Nas never mon that ever bistrod. The angel com to Roome sone,	<i>white attire; horse</i> <i>horse; on which he went</i> <i>rode</i> <i>man; bestrode</i> <i>soon</i>
260	Real, as fel a kyng to done; So real kyng com never in Rome, Alle men wondrede whethen he come. His men weore realliche diht; Heore richesse con seye no wiht	<i>Royally; was fitting</i> <i>Such a royal</i> <i>from where</i> <i>royally dressed</i>
265	Of clothes, gurdeles, and other thing, Everiche sqyyer thoughte a kyng. And alle ride of riche aray Bote Kyng Robert, as I you say. Alle men on him gon pyke,	<i>Their; gainsay; person</i> <i>girdles (belts)</i> <i>Every; seemed</i> <i>Except</i> <i>look</i>
270	For he rod al other unlyke. An ape rod of his clothing, In tokne that he was underlyng.	<i>rode</i> <i>rode in the same clothing</i> <i>As a sign he was an underling</i>

- The pope and the emperour also
 And other lordes mony mo *more*
 275 Welcomede the angel as for kyng,
 And made joye of his comyng.
 Theose threo bretheren made cumfort; *three brothers*
 The angel was brother mad bi sort; *made by necessity*
 Wel was the pope and emperour *Great*
 280 That hedden a brother of such honour. *had*
 Forth con sturte Kyng Robert *leapt*
 As fool and mon that nas not fert, *afraid*
 And cryede with ful egre speche *fierce*
 To his bretheren to don him wreche *brothers revenge him*
 285 Of him that hath with queynte gyle *On him who has with clever guile*
 His coroune and lond of Cisyle. *crown; land*
 The pope ne the emperour nouthur, *nor; neither*
 The fol ne kneugh not for heor brother. *fool; knew; their*
 Tho was he more fol iholde, *Therefore; fool considered*
 290 More then er a thousand folde; *before; times*
 To cleyme such a bretherhede: *claim; brotherhood*
 Hit was holde a foles dede. *considered; fool's deed*
 Kyng Robert bigon to maken care, *to grieve*
 Muche more then he dude are, *did before*
 295 Whon his bretheren nolde him knowe: *When; brothers did not*
 "Allas," quath he, "nou am I lowe." *said*
 For he hopede, bi eny thing, *hoped, somehow*
 His bretheren wolde ha mad him kyng; *brothers; have*
 And whon his hope was al ago, *when; gone*
 300 He seide "allas" and "weilawo." *alas; wellaway*
 He seide "allas" that he was bore, *born*
 For he was a mon forlore;
 He seide "allas" that he was mad, *made*
 For of his lyf he was al sad.
 305 "Allas, allas," was al his song:
 His heer he tar, his hondes wrong, *hair; tore; wrung*
 And evere he seide, "Allas, Allas."
 And thenne he thoughte on his trespas.
 He thoughte on Nabugodonosore, *Nebuchadnezzar*
 310 A noble kyng, was him bifore. *before him*
 In al the world nas his peer, *was not his equal*
 Forte acounte, fer ne neer. *According to the record, far nor near*
 With him was Sire Olyferne, *Holofernes*
 Prince of knihtes stout and steorne. *bold; stern*
 315 Olyferne swor evermor *swore*
 Bi god Nabugodonosor, *By*
 And seide ther nas no god in londe *was no*
 But Nabugodonosor, ich understonde. *Except; I*
 Therfore Nabugodonosor was glad,

- 320 That he the name of god had,
 And lovede Olofern the more;
 And seythe hit greved hem bothe sore. *later; grieved them; sorely*
 Olofern dyyede in dolour, *died; sorrow*
 He was slaye in hard schour. *slain; pain*
- 325 Nabugodonosor lyvede in desert; *lived*
 Dorst he noughwher ben apert; *Dared he nowhere be seen*
 Fyftene yer he livede thare *there*
 With rootes, gras, and evel fare. *roots, grass, and poor food*
 And al of mos his clothing was: *moss*
- 330 Al com that bi Godes gras: *by; grace*
 He cryede merci with delful chere, *cried mercy; sorrowful countenance*
 God him restored, as he was ere. *before*
 "Nou am I in such caas, *Now; condition*
 And wel worse then he was. *much worse*
- 335 Whon God gaf me such honour, *When; gave*
 That I was clepet conquerour, *called*
 In everi lond of Cristendome
 Of me men speke wel ilome; *spoke; often*
 And seiden, noughwher was my peer *said, nowhere; equal (peer)*
- 340 In al the world, fer no neer. *far nor near*
 For that name I hedde pride, *Because of that name (reputation) I had pride*
 As angels that gonne from joye glyde, *Like angels that from joy fell*
 And in twynklyng of an eighe *eye*
 God binom heore maystrie. *took away their power*
- 345 So hath he myn, for my gult, *guilt*
 Now am I wel lowe ipult, *brought down*
 And that is riht that I so be.
 Lord, on Thi fool Thow have pité. *pity*
 I hedde an errour in myn herte, *had*
- 350 And that errour doth me smerte. *pain*
 Lord, I leaved not on The. *believed*
 On Thi fol Thou have pité.
 Holy Writ I hedde in dispyt, *held in contempt*
 For that is reved my delyt, *taken away my delight*
- 355 For that is riht a fool I be,
 Lord, on Thi fool Thou have pité.
 Lord I am Thi creature,
 This wo is riht that I endure, *woe*
 And wel more, yif hit may be. *if it*
- 360 Lord, on Thi fool Thou have pité.
 Lord, I have igult The sore. *offended You sorely*
 Merci, Lord, I nul no more; *will not*
 Evere Thi fol, Lord, wol I be. *will*
 Lord, on Thi fol Thou have pité.
- 365 Blisful Marie, to the I crie, *Mary; you; cry*
 As thou art ful of cortesy, *courtesy*

	Preye thi Sone, that dyed for me,	<i>Pray</i>
	On me, His fol, thow have pité.	
	Blisful Marie, ful of graas,	<i>grace</i>
370	To the I knowe my trespas;	<i>you; acknowledge</i>
	Prey thi Sone, for love of the	<i>Pray</i>
	On me, His fool, thow have pité."	
	He seide no more "Allas, Allas!"	
	But thonked Crist of His gras,	<i>thanked; grace</i>
375	And thus he gon himself stille	<i>be quiet</i>
	And thonked Crist mid good wille.	<i>with</i>
	Then pope, emperour, and kyng	
	Fyve wikes made heore dwellyng.	<i>Five weeks made their abode</i>
	Whon fyve wykes weore agon,	<i>When five weeks had passed</i>
380	To heore owne lond heo wolden anon,	<i>their; wanted to go</i>
	Bothe emperour and the kyng;	
	Ther was a feir departyng.	<i>fair</i>
	The angel com to Cisyle,	
	He and his men, in a while.	
385	Whon he com into halle,	<i>When</i>
	The fool anon he bad forth calle.	
	He seide: "Fool, art thou kyng?"	<i>are you</i>
	"Nay, sire," quath he, "withoute lesyng."	<i>said; lying</i>
	"What artou?" seide the angel.	<i>are you</i>
390	"Sire, a fol, that wot I wel,	<i>know</i>
	And more then fol, yif hit may be;	<i>if it</i>
	Kep I non other dignité."	<i>desire</i>
	The angel into chaumbre went,	
	And after the fol anon he sent.	<i>at once</i>
395	He bad his men out of chaumbre gon,	<i>bade; go</i>
	Ther lafte no mo but he alon	<i>There were left no more</i>
	And the fol that stod him bi.	<i>stood; by</i>
	To him he seide: "Thou hast merci!	<i>forgiveness</i>
	Thenk, thou weore lowe ipult,	<i>Think; were brought down</i>
400	And al was for thin owne gult.	<i>guilt</i>
	A fool thou weore to Hevene kyng,	
	Therefore thou art an underlyng.	<i>underling</i>
	God hath forgiven thi mysdede,	<i>misdeed</i>
	Evere herafter thou him drede!	<i>dread</i>
405	I am an angel of renoun,	
	Isent to kepe thi regioun;	<i>Sent to protect your region</i>
	More joye me schal falle	<i>befall</i>
	In hevene among my feren alle	<i>companions</i>
	In an houre of a day	
410	Then in eorthe, I the say,	<i>earth, I tell you</i>
	In an hundred thousand yeer,	
	Theigh al the world, fer and neer,	<i>Though</i>
	Weore myn at my lykyng.	<i>Were</i>

- I am an angel, thou art kyng!”
 415 He went in twynklyng of an eye;
 No more of him ther nas seye. *seen*
 Kyng Robert com into halle,
 His men he bad anon forth calle, *bade at once*
 And alle weore at his wille, *were*
 420 As to heore lord, as hit was skille. *their; as it was right*
 He lovede God and holi church, *Holy Church*
 And evere he thoughte wel to worche. *to do good*
 He regned after two yer and more
 And lovede God and his lore. *teaching*
 425 The angel gaf him in warnyng *gave*
 Of the tyme of his dying. *dying*
 Whon tyme com to dyde son, *When; soon*
 He let write hit riht anon, *had it written; immediately*
 Hou God myd His muchel miht *with His great*
 430 Made him lowe, as hit was riht. *just*
 This storie he sende everidel *every bit of it*
 To his bretheren, under his seel. *brothers; seal*
 And the tyme, whon he schulde dye *when; die*
 That tyme he diiede as he gon seye. *died*
 435 Al this is writen withouten lyde, *lies*
 At Roome to ben in memorie *be*
 At Seint Petres chirche, I knowe.
 And thus is Godes miht isowe, *disseminated*
 That heighe beoth lowe, theigh hit ben ille, *high; though it be*
 440 And lowe heighe, at Godes wille.
 Crist, that for us gon dye, *died*
 In His kyneriche let us ben heighe, *royal lineage; be elevated*
 Evermore to ben above,
 444 Ther is joye, cumfort and love. Amen.

NOTES TO *ROBERT OF CISYLE*

I have used the following abbreviations in these textual and explanatory notes: **FH**: French and Hale, *Middle English Metrical Romances*; **H**: Horstmann, *Sammlung ae Legenden*; **N**: R. Nuck, *Roberd of Cisyle*; **S**: Simons, “A Byzantine Identity for *Robert of Cisyle*”; **V**: Vernon Manuscript. H and N “modernize” the text with variants from fragmentary manuscripts. V, however, is the most coherent witness; Simeon follows V closely. Therefore, I have based my text on V with some modifications from H, N, and FH. V has Robert as the name of the hero. Other MSS have Roberd; N rhymes with *ferd* (line 282).

- 1 Formulas such as *princes proude*, *proude in pres*, are common in the poem.
- 2 I have printed *you* for V *ou*. I have, however, retained most dialectal spellings: e.g., *heo*, *heore*, *weore*, *beo*, for *he*, *their*, *were*, *be*; *uch* for *ech(e)*; *mon*, *mony* for *man*, *many*.
- 3 *Cisyle*: Sicily. The history of Sicily has been turbulent, in part because of its proximity to opportunists from Italy, North Africa, and Spain. It was a perennial site of conflict for the Pope and the Holy Roman Empire. I have not been able to find any historical basis for the brotherhood of Robert, Urban, and Valemounde. There is no evidence for an Emperor Valemounde. Pope Urban IV (1261–64) was deeply involved in Sicilian affairs and there was Saracen involvement in Sicily from the ninth century. However, the familial configuration seems wholly fictional.
- 13 *nas*: *n* for an initial consonant was a standard form of negation.
- 15 Hopkins, “Roberd of Cisyle,” pp. 194–95, notes that the poem views Robert in isolation; Robert’s personal spiritual growth is the focus of the poem, and he performs no knightly deeds, nor is he seen as king.
- 21 S, pp. 106–07, speculates Valemounde could be a Greek narrator’s attempt to pronounce “Bohemund,” “a restless and warlike adventurer,” and notes his legacy as an enemy of Byzantium and a campaigner against Saracens in Sicily.
- 29 *Seynt Jones Niht*: Saint John’s Night (June 24, the feast of St. John the Baptist).
- 31 *evensong*: vespers, “usually celebrated shortly before sunset” (OED). The Magnificat (line 35) is a regular part of vespers.
- 35 See note to lines 40–41.
- 40–41 These lines are from the Magnificat, Mary’s revelation of her divine pregnancy to her sister Elizabeth. The whole passage, now a prayer, is found in Luke 1:46–55:

- "He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble" (Luke 1:52). V: *exultavit* should be *exaltavit*.
- 60 It is impossible to say what the "book" is, or if there was one. See Hornstein, "King Robert of Sicily," p. 13, for a discussion of manuscript variations. FH, p. 935, assume the reference is to a written source; Olsen, "Oral Tradition," p. 77, argues "the phrase is a 'tag' line whose only purpose is to provide the poet with a rhyming word and therefore indicates oral transmission."
- 62, 63 *gan*: "began to" or "did," a common auxiliary of incipient or preterit aspect.
- 66 S notes that Orthodox theology regards the liturgy as a space out of time, through which angels may come to participate in the service; Sicily's Norman rulers accepted some Greek liturgical practices, as well as other Byzantine customs, despite their devotion to the Latin church (p. 108).
- 75 *sexteyn*: The sexton is "a church official having the care of the fabric [church building] and its contents" (OED).
- 79 V: *ffelenye*. V also doubles initial *f* at line 247 (*ffool*) and line 249 (*ffoxes*). I have singled the *f*'s since the usual doubling as a form of capitalization does not apply.
- 117 *ryght*. Not in V, H, or FH. Emendation based on Harley 525 for meter.
- 142 For more on the religious origins of Robert's fool status, see Baker ("*Deposuit potentes*," pp. 36–37), and S (pp. 109–10).
- 154–55 Medieval fools were sometimes shaved, as were monastics and penitents, to mark their special status. Diseases, like madness, were perceived as divine punishment for sin; some medieval medical texts recommended shaving a madman's head as part of treatment. See Harper, *Insanity, Individuals, and Society*.
- 157 The ape also represents madmen, sinners, penitents, and the sin of pride. See Hopkins, "Roberd of Cisyle," p. 188, and Hornstein, "King Robert of Sicily," p. 19.
- 166 An assayer could be either a server (waiter) or a taster, for safety's sake (OED).
- 195 FH emend V *he* to *him*, but, following H, N, I do not see the necessity.
- 232 Holy Thursday, the day commemorating Jesus' Last Supper with the apostles.
- 255 V: *Al whit atyr was*; FH, following H: *Al was whit, atyr*.
- 281 V: *com*, but there is merit in FH: *con*. FH, following V, have Robert as the last word in the line and the rhyme word in line 282 is *fert* (afraid).
- 315–16 King Nebuchadnezzar and General Holofernes appear in the apocryphal Book of Judith, when the king sends the general to put down the Jewish defense of Jerusalem from Bethulia. Judith entices and beheads Holofernes; after he has blasphemously called the king a god (line 316), Holofernes' fall (line 323) is thus apt. See "The Story of Judith," in *Heroic Women from the Old Testament in Middle English Verse*, ed. Russell A. Peck (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991), and Penelope Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in*

- Middle English Literature* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974). For analysis of the Nebuchadnezzar episode, see Hopkins, "Roberd of Cisyle," pp. 189–92.
- 325 Nebuchadnezzar's fifteen years in the desert living on roots, grass, and poor food (lines 327–28) derives particularly from Daniel 4:22. For a detailed discussion of that passage in Middle English literature, see Russell A. Peck, "John Gower and the Book of Daniel," in *John Gower: Recent Readings*, ed. R. F. Yeager (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989), pp. 159–87. Peck does not mention *Robert of Cisyle*.
- 342 *As*. V: *And*, followed by FH. H's emendation.
- 344 FH states "the construction is faulty, the sense clear" in lines 341–44, and N reads "*As in*" at line 343 (p. 935); Olsen argues FH and N presuppose a written source, and the erratic grammar suggests oral transmission ("Oral Tradition," pp. 73–74).
- 352 *On*. Trinity and Harley 1701 read: *Lord on*, followed by H and FH. The anaphora is compelling but not necessary.
- 358 *endure*. V: *dure*, followed by H and FH.
- 388 "*withoute lesyng*." H leaves out quotation marks.



INTRODUCTION TO *SIR AMADACE*

The complexity of the apparently simple *Sir Amadace* lies in the ambiguity of its ideal. The poem uses much of the idealistic paraphernalia of conventional romance in the exposition of an ideal that sometimes seems merely materialistic. Is *Sir Amadace* a story of generosity put to the test and finally vindicated? Or is it just a story of wealth lost and regained? Traditionally, the values of the romance hero are vindicated by the complicit universe in which he lives. Certainly Sir Amadace, despite his tribulations, is, like more obviously altruistic romance heroes, in the right world at the right time. The narrator seems to imply that Amadace's predicament is the result of excessive, but basically admirable, liberality; he may be foolish, but he is not evil, and therefore deserves the restoration of his wealth. It is hard to ignore, however, the pervasively materialistic context in which the "ideal" is represented. This discontinuity between the vision of the narrator and the tendency of the narrative makes a slight, amusing story problematic and fascinating.

The version of *Sir Amadace* presented here is from the Ireland Manuscript, but it differs little from the version in the Advocates Manuscript. Although neither version seems derived from the other or from an identifiable common source, the ambiguities of idealism and materialism are prominent in both. Despite uncertainty about what its moral "lesson" is, the poem is a good specimen of whatever it is. The twelve-line stanza rhymed *aabccbddbeeb* in tetrameters except for trimeters in the B lines, provides a compact structural unit that is generally executed successfully. The movement is lively and the story, no matter what it means or implies, is engaging. The romance is not even bourgeois; it often seems the most lower class of romances, celebrating money and its associated power from a vantage point near the bottom of the social scale. It is popular not aristocratic, indeed, a view of the world, or the world of romance, from the perspective of the underclasses who mistake the bourgeois for the noble. And perhaps that is why moral idealism and material well-being become so intriguingly intertwined. All of the ingredients of romance are there, and all of the ingredients of didactic narrative, as well as a fair helping of folklore. Yet, largely because of the ambiguity of its ideal, *Sir Amadace* remains a good story that defies literary taxonomy.

Both versions (those in the Ireland and the Advocates Manuscripts) are acephalous. We enter the story when it is already clear that something has gone seriously wrong with Amadace's finances. His expenses exceed his income, and he is down to his last forty pounds. He reminds us of other admirable "spendthrift knights" like Sir Launfal and Sir Cleges. However, Launfal's decline in wealth is largely attributable to the malice of Guenevere and Cleges' extravagance is more fully and sympathetically described. With Amadace, perhaps because the poem is acephalous, his steward, a pragmatic rather than an evil one in this poem, gives him some straight talk:

“Sir, ye awe wele more
 Thenne ye may of your londus rere
 In faythe this sevyn yere.
 Quoso may best, furste ye mun pray,
 Abyde yo till anothir day.
 And parte your cownte in sere;
 And putte away full mony of your men;
 And hald butte on, quere ye hald ten,
 Thaghe thay be nevyr so dere.”

(lines 4–12)

*steward; owe much more
 Than; lands collect
 seven years
 Whoever best; must ask
 Endure you
 divide your court in parts
 many
 keep but one, where you kept
 Though; never*

Whether the cause is liberality or prodigality, Amadace is facing a version of “romance adversity.” If he is guilty it seems likely that his failure is foolishness rather than self-indulgence. He honorably refuses to force payment from his debtors but foolishly wants to leave with a last flourish:

“Yette wille I furst, or I fare,
 Be wele more riall then I was are,
 Therfore ordan thu schall,
 For I wulle gif full ryche giftus
 Bothe to squiers and to knyghtis;
 To pore men dele a dole.

(lines 37–42)

*first, before I travel
 royal; before
 decree you
 will give; gifts
 squires
 give alms*

He departs, like Sir Orfeo, not in order to do something specific, to take on some well-defined quest, but in reaction to the way things are at his court. Unlike Orfeo, he is not motivated by the desperation of the human agony of lost love, but by the need to avoid his creditors until his income catches up with his expenses. He is buying time; presumably he will not be able to get further into debt in the woods; if he has a plan it is not related to anything but regaining financial solvency.

When he comes upon the stinking chapel (the elaborate insistence on the stench is one of the things that keeps his nobility in perspective), with the weeping wife and unburied husband, he has a folkloric opportunity. The dead man cannot be buried because of his debts; this has an ominous ring to it. Why the merchant, who is the creditor, has such power over the body and soul of the knight is not made clear in the story, but the problem is common in folklore. Amadace’s immediate reaction is identification with the victim — for good reason. Despite the “self-interest,” his expenditure of his last forty pounds, thirty for the creditor and ten for burial and memorials, suggests that his own difficulties are the result of instinctive generosity rather than profligacy. The problem is that the situation is framed in such wholly economic terms that it is difficult to focus on the spiritual dimensions that the poem’s didactic intentions seem to call for.

Pointlessly proceeding into the woods, penniless, Amadace is visited by a “white knight.” Although we are not told explicitly, this knight seems to be a manifestation of the knight he has buried and becomes a guide. The white knight’s advice is curious. He comforts Amadace and urges him to seek out the marriageable daughter of the king. Why Amadace is wandering, for what specific purpose, is not clear, nor is the motive of the mysterious white knight. Unlike its analogues, this poem does not have Amadace set off on a quest for a specific rich maiden. It is also clear that his spiritual guide, however helpful, is duplicitous. He recommends that Amadace present himself as the victim of a shipwreck to explain his

lack of companions; there is enough of a real wreck nearby, apparently magically provided, for Amadace to equip himself plausibly. The white knight, however, is not simply a “romance engineer,” a figure sent to lead the hero in a direction that will prove successful and establish the hero’s essential harmony with the world he lives in. The white knight is oddly commercial even in referring to God when he counsels Amadace that Amadace’s situation is the way of the world, but that God will set things right and, even more strongly, when he insists on half of whatever Amadace gets from the mercenary quest he has set him on.

Warmly received at court, Amadace wins a series of tournaments and gives half of the proceeds to the king, “nobly” reserving half for the white knight whom he knows he owes. Amadace also wins the love of the king’s daughter, and has a child, wherein lies the problem when the white knight returns to collect his “half.” Amadace, with his wife’s devoted compliance, is willing to have her and their child riven in half in order to keep his word to the white knight. Fortunately, if predictably, the white knight relents — he is after all “a good guy” and in fact the person whose burial Amadace arranged — and praises the wife for her loyalty. The white knight then departs, Amadace pays off his debts, the king conveniently dies, and Amadace inherits the kingdom.

Although the elements and impulse of romance are present, there is an insistently commercial quality about the story of Amadace that limits the idealism and may finally compromise his eventual success. As a romance, *Sir Amadace* is based on the folk motif of “the grateful dead” and its hero’s behavior is shaped accordingly. Like countless knights of romance he is beset by misfortune, undertakes a vague quest, behaves generously to the unburied knight, wins jousts, overcomes adversity with the magical help of the white knight, and finds a rich and happy ending. The form fits and yet the poem remains oddly ambiguous as romance, though fascinating as narrative.

This narrator implies that this is all to be taken as the story of the reward for Amadace’s original liberality: his generosity got him into difficulties but God restores him because his insolvency was the result of noble impulses. But these hints do not seem to be fully developed or realized in the plot. As a result, *Sir Amadace* seems to be a “commercial romance.” The structural elements of traditional romance are present, but there is a peculiar reduction of ideals to wealth. It is not simply that Amadace is too middle class to be a romance hero. Long before, *Havelok* presented us with a romance hero not even middle but lower class. However, the terms of Havelok’s situation are different. Havelok’s means, and much of his heroism, are lower class, not even bourgeois, while his ideals are transcendent. Amadace is further up the social scale, but his context and motives, despite the shape of romance, remain material and mercantile. There are many noble and magical ornaments, but this finally is a story of a knight who gets out of debt.

Amadace’s original plight is material, his succor of the unburied knight is material, the white knight’s assistance to him is material, his redemption is material (paying off his debts), and his ultimate happiness is material. Yet the narrator seems to hope that we will somehow make something more of all this. This is not to say that it is a poorly made or unworthy poem, but it does take the form and matter of folklore and romance and turn them not to the celebration of moral idealism but to the vindication of material well-being. Doubtless the poem is also didactic, but its lesson may be more commercial than spiritual and therein lies its special fascination.

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SIR AMADACE

	Thenne the knyght and the stuard fre, Thay casten there houe hit best myghte be Bothe be ferre and nere. The stuard sayd, “Sir, ye awe wele more	<i>steward noble calculated; how by far and near steward; owe much more</i>
5	Thenne ye may of your londus rere In faythe this sevyen yere. Quoso may best, furste ye mun pray, Abyde yo till anothir day. And parte your cowrte in sere;	<i>Than; lands collect seven years Whoever best; must ask Endure you divide your court in parts</i>
10	And putte away full mony of your men; And hald butte on, quere ye hald ten, Thaghe thay be nevyr so dere.”	<i>many keep but one, where you kept Though; never</i>
	Thenne Sir Amadace sayd, “I myghte lung spare Or all these godus qwitte ware, 15 And have noghte to spend; Sithun duell here, quere I was borne, Bothe in hething and in scorne — And I am so wele kennit. And men full fast wold ware me,	<i>long economize Before all this money were paid nothing Afterwards dwell; where contempt known</i>
20	That of thayre godus hade bynne so fre, That I have hade in honde. Or I schuld hold men in awe or threte, That thay myghte noghte hor awne gud gete — Thenne made I a full fowle ende.	<i>very quickly would be wary of me goods; generous had in hand dread; threat their own goods completely disgraceful</i>
25	“Butte anothir rede I wulle me toe, Wurche anothir way then soe, Bettur sayd soro thenne sene. Butte, gode stuard, as thu art me lefe, Lette nevyr mon wete my grete mischefe,	<i>counsel; will; take Work; than so Better said sorrow be than seen to me dear know; distress</i>
30	Butte hele hit us betwene. For sevyen yere wedsette my lond To the godus that I am awand Be quytte holly bidene. For oute of the cuntray I wille weynde,	<i>hold (keep it a secret) seven; put as a pledge Until the goods; owing paid back wholly at once go</i>

- 35 Quil I have gold, silvyr to spende, *Until*
And be owte of dette full clene.
- “Yette wille I furst, or I fare, *first, before I travel*
Be wele more riall then I was are, *royal; before*
Therefore ordan thu schall, *decree you*
40 For I wulle gif full ryche giftus *will give; gifts*
Bothe to squiers and to knyghtis; *squires*
To pore men dele a dole. *give alms*
Suche men myghte wete that I were wo, *know; in difficulty (woe)*
That full fayn wold hit were such toe, *would very much like; so happened*
45 That myghte notte bete my bale. *help my trouble*
So curtase a mon was nevyr non borne *courteous; never none born*
That schuld scape withoute a scorne *escape*
Be iche mon had told his tale.” *If each man had his story told*
- Thanne Sir Amadase, as I yo say,
50 Hase ordanut him opon a day *prepared*
Of the cuntray in a stowunde. *To leave; moment*
Yette he gafe ful riche giftus, *Beforehand*
Bothe to squiers and to knyghtis, *squires*
Stedus, haukes, and howundes. *Horses, hawks; hounds*
55 Sethun afturward, as I yo say, *Then*
Hase ordanut him opon a day, *prepared*
And furthe thenne conne he founde. *forth; he set out*
Be that he toke his leve to wynde. *leave to travel*
He lafte no more in his cofurs to spende, *left; coffers*
60 But evyn forty powunde. *only; pounds*
- Thenne Sir Amadace, as I yo say,
Rode furthe opon his way, *forth*
Als fast as evyr he myghte. *As; ever*
Throowte a forest, by one cité, *Beyond; city*
65 Ther stode a chapell of stone and tre, *stood; wood*
And therinne se he a lighte. *saw*
Commaundut his knave for to fare, *Commanded; young servant; go*
To wete quat lighte that were thare — *find out what*
“And tithing bring me ryghte.” *news; directly*
70 The knave did as his maister him bade, *young servant*
Butte suche a stinke in the chapell he hade, *experienced*
That dwelle ther he ne myghte. *remain*
- He stopput his nase with his hude;
Nerre the chapell dur he yode,
75 Anturs for to lere. *stopped; nose; hood*
And as he loket in atte the glasse, *Nearer; door; made his way*
To wete quat mervail that ther wasse, *Adventures; learn*
looked in at the window
find out what marvel

- So see he stonde a bere. *stood a bier*
 Candils ther were brennyng toe, *burning two*
 80 A woman sitting, and no moe. *more*
 Lord! carefull wasse hur chere. *sorrowful was her expression*
 Tithinges there conne he non frayn, *News; he did not try to ask*
 Butte to his lord he wente agayn,
 Told him quat he see thare. *what*
- 85 And sayd, "Sir, atte yondur chapell have I bene,
 A selcothe sighte ther have I sene, *strange*
 My herte is hevyn as lede. *heavy as lead*
 Ther stondus a bere and canduls toe; *stands a bier; two*
 Ther sittus a woman, and no moe. *sits; more*
 90 Lord! carefull is hur rede. *sorrowful is her countenance*
 Suche a stinke as I had thare,
 Sertis thenne had I nevyr are
 Noquere in no stid. *Certainly; before*
 For this palfray that I on ryde, *Nowhere; place*
 95 Ther myghte I no lengur abide; *horse (for riding)*
 I traue I have keghte my dede." *longer remain*
believe; incurred my death
- Thenne Sir Amadace commawundut his squier to fare, *commanded; go*
 To witte quat woman that there ware, *find out what*
 "And tithinges bring thu me." *news*
 100 As he loket in atte the walle, *looked*
 As the knave sayd, he fund withalle,
 Him thoghte hit grete peté. *young man; found withal*
 Butte in his nace smote such a smell, *pity*
 That there myghte he no lengur duelle, *But; nose struck*
 105 But sone agayn gose he. *remain*
 He sayd, "Gud Lord, nowe with your leve, *goes*
 I pray yo take hit noghte on greve, *permission*
 For ye may notte wete for me." *nothing learn*
- He sayd, "Sir, ther stondus a bere, and candils toe, *stands a bier; two*
 110 A woman sitting, and no moe. *more*
 Lord! carefull is hur chere. *sorrowful; expression*
 Sore ho sikes and hondus wringus, *Sorely she sighs; hands wrings*
 And evyr ho crius on hevyn kynges, *always she cries*
 How lung ho schall be thare. *long she*
 115 Ho says, Dere God, quat may that be, *She; what*
 The grete soro that ho opon him se, *sorrow; she*
 Stingcand opon his bere, *Rotting*
 Ho says, ho will notte leve him allone *She; not leave*
 Till ho fall dede downe to the stone, *she*
 120 For his life was hur full dere." *(to) her; very dear*

- Thenne Sir Amadace smote his palfray with his spur,
 And rode unto the chapell dur;
 And hastele doune he lighte.
 As his menne sayd, so con him thinke
 125 That he nevyr are hade such a stynke,
 And inne thenne wente that knyghte.
 He sayd, "Dame, God rest with the,"
 Ho sayd, "Sir, welcum most ye be."
 And salit him anon ryghte.
 130 He sayd, "Dame, quy sittus thu here
 Kepand this dede cors opon this bere,
 Thus onyli upon a nyghte?"
- Ho sayd, "Sir, nedelonges most I sitte him by,
 Hifath, ther will him non mon butte I,
 135 For he wasse my wedutte fere."
 Thenne Sir Amadace sayd, "Me likes full ill,
 Ye ar bothe in plyit to spille,
 He lise so lung on bere.
 Quat a mon in his lyve wasse he?"
 140 "Sir, a marchand of this cité,
 Hade riche rentus to rere.
 And eviryche yere thre hundrythe powndee
 Of redy monay and of rowunde,
 And for dette yette lise he here."
- 145 Thenne Sir Amadace sayd, "For the Rode,
 On quat maner spendutte he his gud
 That thusgate is away?"
 "Sir, on gentilmen and officers,
 On grete lordus, that was his perus,
 150 Wold giffe hom giftus gay.
 Riche festus wold he make,
 And pore men, for Goddus sake,
 He fed hom evyriche day.
 Quil he hade any gud to take,
 155 He wernut no mon, for Goddus sake,
 That wolnotte onus say nay.
- "Yette he didde as a fole.
 He cladde mo men agaynus a yole
 Thenne did a nobull knyghte:
 160 For his mete he wold not spare;
 Burdes in the halle were nevyr bare,
 With clothes richeli dighte.
 Giffe I sayd he did noghte wele,
 He sayd, God send hit everyche dele,
- struck; horse; his
 door
 hastily; alit
 man; it seemed to him
 before*
- She
 greeted; directly
 why; sit
 Watching ever; corpse
 alone*
- necessarily must
 In faith; no one
 wedded companion*
- danger of destruction
 lies; long; bier
 What; life
 merchant
 rents; collect
 every; hundred pounds
 round (i.e., coins)
 debt; lies*
- By the Cross
 In what; spent; substance
 thus*
- lords; peers
 them gifts
 feasts*
- them every
 While; possessions
 refused
 would not once say no*
- behaved; fool
 clothed more; Christmas season
 Than
 food
 Boards (tables)
 prepared
 If*

- 165 And sette my wurdus atte lighte. *dismissed my words lightly*
 Bi thenne he toke so mycul opon his name, *much*
 That I dar notte telle yo, lord, for schame
 The godus now that he aghte. *goods; owed*
- “And thenne come dethe, wo hym be,
 170 And partutt my lord and me, *parted*
 Lafte me in all the care.
 Quen my neghteburs herd telle that he seke lay, *When; neighbors*
 Thay come to me, as thay best may,
 Thair gud aschet thai thare. *goods asked for*
- 175 All that evyr was his and myne,
 Hors and naute, shepe and squwyne, *Horses; cattle; sheep; swine*
 Away thay drafe and bare. *drove; bore*
 My dowary to my lyve I sold, *dowry*
 And all the penneys to hom told. *pennies; them counted out*
- 180 Lord! Yette aghte he wele mare. *owed; more*
- “Quen I hade quytte all that I myghte gete, *When; paid back*
 Yette aghte he thritté powunde bi grete, *owed; on demand*
 Holly till a stydde; *Wholly at a time*
 Till a marchand of this cité, *merchant*
- 185 Was fer oute in anothir cuntré,
 Come home quen he was dede. *when*
 And quenne he herd telle of my febull fare, *when; poor condition*
 He come to me as breme as bare, *as ferociously as a boar*
 This corse the erthe forbede, *corpse; forbade*
- 190 And sayd, howundus schuld his bodi to draw, *hounds should; tear apart*
 Then on the fild his bonus toгнаue. *field; bones gnaw on*
 Thus carefull is my rede. *sorrowful; countenance*
- “And this sixtene weke I have setyn here, *sat*
 Kepand this dede cors opon this bere, *Watching over; dead corpse; bier*
- 195 With candils brennand bryghte. *burning*
 And so schall I evyrmore do,
 Till dethe cum and take me to,
 Bi Mary, most of myghte!”
 Thenne Sir Amadace franut hur the marchandes name *asked her; merchant's*
- 200 That hade done hur all that schame.
 Ho told him anon ryghte. *She; directly*
 He sayd, “God that is bote of all bale, *help; trouble*
 Dame, cumford the, and so He schale; *comfort you*
 And, Dame, have thu gud nyghte.”
- A Fitte**
- 205 Thenne Sir Amadace on his palfray lepe; *leapt*
 Unnethe he myghte forgoe to wepe, *Scarcely he can*

- For his dedus him sore forthoghte;
 Sayd, "Yondur mon that lise yondur chapell withinne,
 He myghte full wele be of my kynne,
 210 For ryghte so have I wroghte."
 Thenne he told his sometour quat the marchand heght,¹
 And sayd, "I will sowpe with him tonyghte,
 Be God that me dere boghte!
 Go, loke thu dighte oure soper syne,
 215 Gode ryall metis and fyne,
 And spicis thenne spare thu noghte."
- And sone quen the sometour herd,
 To the marchandus howse he ferd,
 And ordanut for that knyghte.
 220 Thenne Sir Amadace come riding thoe,
 But in his hert was him full woe,
 And hasteli dowun he lighte.
 Sithun intylle a chambur the knyghte yede,
 And kest opon him othir wede,
 225 With torches brennyng bryghte.
 He cummawundutte his squier for to goe,
 To pray the marchand and his wife allsoe
 To soupe with him that nyghte.
- Thenne the squier weyndut upon his way,
 230 And to the marchand conne he say;
 His ernde told he thenne.
 He squire, "Be Jhesu, Mare sone,
 That Lordus will hit schall be done,
 Of cumford was that man."
 235 Thenne thayre soper was nere dighte;
 Burdes were hovyn hee on lighte;
 The marchand the dees began.
 Sir Amadace sate, and made gud chere,
 Butte on the dede cors that lay on bere
 240 Ful mycull his thoghte was on.
- Sir Amadace sayd, "Tonyghte as I come bi the strete,
 I see a sighte I thenke on yete,
 That sittus me nowe full sore.
 In a chapell beside a way
 245 A dede cors opon a bere lay,
 A womon all mysfare."
 "Ye," the marchand sayd "God gif him a sore grace,

*deeds; regretted
man; lies*

just so; wrought

*eat
By; dearly bought (redeemed)
prepare; then
Good royal meats
spices*

*soon when; pack-horse driver
merchant's; went
prepared
at that time*

*hastily down he dismounted
Then into; went
put on; clothes
burning
commanded*

eat

*went
began
message
swore By Jesus, Mary's son
Lord's; it
comfort*

*supper; almost prepared
Boards; placed high
merchant; high table*

much

*yet
grieves*

come to grief

¹ Then he told his pack-horse driver what the merchant promised

- And all suche waisters as he wasse, *wasters (spendthrifts)*
 For he sittus me nowe sare; *grieves*
 250 For he lise there with my thritti powunde *lies; thirty pounds*
 Of redy monay and of rowunde, *round (i.e., coins)*
 Of hitte gete I nevyr more."
- Thenne Sir Amadace sayd, "Take the till a bettur rede, *better advice*
 Thenke that Gode forgave His dede. *death*
 255 Grete merit thu may have.
 Thenke how God ordant for the *ordained*
 Bettur grace then evyr had He.
 Lette the cors go inne his grave." *corpse*
 Thenne he squire, "Be Jhesu, Mare sun, *swore*
 260 That body schall nevyr in the erthe come
 My silvyr tille that I have; *silver until*
 Till ho be ded as wele as he, *Until she*
 That howundus schall, that I may se, *hounds*
 On filde thayre bonus toгнаue." *field their bones gnaw*
- 265 Quen Sir Amadace herd that he hade squorne, *When; sworn*
 He cald his stuard him beforne, *called*
 Of kyndenesse that knyghte con kithe, *did show*
 And bede, "Go foche me thritti powunde *bade; fetch; thirty pounds*
 Of redy monay and of rowunde, *Of cash (spendable money); round (i.e., coins)*
 270 Hastely and belyve." *hastily; quickly*
 The stuard thoghte hit was agaynus skille, *contrary to reason*
 Butte he most nede do his maistur wille —
 Now listun and ye may lithe. *hear*
 Ther Sir Amadace payd him thritti powund of monay fyne. *finally*
 275 And thenne Sir Amadace asket to wyne, *asked*
 And prayd the marchand be blythe. *merchant; happy*
- Then Sir Amadace asket, "Awe he the any mare?" *asked; Owed*
 "Nay, Sir," he sayd, "wele most ye fare.
 For thus muche he me aghte." *owed*
 280 Thenne Sir Amadace sayd, "As furthe as ten pounce will take *far; accomplish*
 I schall lette do for his sake,
 Querthroghe he have his righte. *Whereby; rites*
 I schall for him gere rede and singe, *arrange readings and singing*
 Bring his bodi to Cristun berunge, *Christian burial*
 285 That schall thu see wythe sighte.
 Go pray all the religius of this cité *religious*
 Tomorne that thay wold dyne with me,
 And loke thayre mete be dyghte." *And see their food be prepared*
- Howe erly quen day con spring, *when; began*
 290 Then holli all the bellus con ring *bells; began*

- That in the cité was. *everyone*
 Religius men evrichon
 Toward this dede cors are thay gone
 With mony a riche burias. *many a rich burgess*
 295 Thritty prustus that day con sing, *Thirty priests; began*
 And thenne Sir Amadace offurt a ring *offered*
 Atte evyriche mas. *every Mass*
 Quen the servise was all done, *When*
 He prayd hom to ete with him atte none, *prayed them to eat; at once*
 300 Holli more and lasse. *Wholly*
- Thenne the marchand wente tille one pillere; *merchant; to; pillar*
 Mony a mon droghe him nere *drew near him*
 To wete quat he wold say. *know what*
 He sayd, "Sirs, there hase byn here
 305 A ded cors opon a bere — *corpse; bier*
 Ye wotte querfore hit lay. *know; why*
 And hase comun a full riall knyghte, *has come; royal*
 Of all the godes the cors me heghte *goods; corpse owed me*
 Hase made me redi pay. *has*
 310 Unto his cofurs he hase sente, *his coffers*
 And gevyn ten powunde to his termente, *given; interment*
 Wythe riche ringus today. *costly rings*
- "Hit is on his nome that I say,
 He prays yo holly to mete today, *at his behest*
 315 All that ther bene here." *wholly; dinner*
 Thay did as the marchand bade;
 Mete and drinke ynughe thay hade, *enough*
 With licius drinke and clere. *delicious; sparkling*
 And Sir Amadace wold noghte sitte downe,
 320 Butte to serve the pore folke he was full bowne, *very ready*
 For thay lay his hert nere.
 And quen thay hade etun withinne that halle, *when; eaten*
 Thenne Sir Amadace toke leve atte all, *leave of all*
 Unsemand with full glad chere. *Pretending*
- 325 Quen Sir Amadace hade etun, *When; eaten*
 To sadull his horse was noghte forgetun, *saddle; forgotten*
 Thay broghte hym his palfray.
 Thenne his sometour mon before was dyghte, *pack-horse driver; prepared*
 Ther as that lord schuld leng all nyghte *As if; stay*
 330 And hade nothing to pay.
 Quat wundur were hit thaghe him were wo *What wonder; though*
 Quen all his godus were spendutte him fro, *When; goods; spent*
 The sothe gif I schuld say? *truth if*
 Thenne Sir Amadace kidde he was gentilman bornne, *revealed*

- 335 He come the grattust maystur beforne, *went to the greatest lord there*
Tok leve, and wente his way. *Took leave*
- Quen he was gone on this kin wise, *kind of way*
Thenne iche mon sayd thayre devise, *opinion*
Quen he wasse passutte the gate. *When; passed*
- 340 Sum sayd, "This gud full lighteli he wan, *wealth; lightly; acquired*
That thusgate spendutte hit on this man, *thus spent*
So lightely lete hit scape." *easily*
Sum sayd, "In gud tyme were he borne
That hade a peny him biforne," *penny (bit of money)*
- 345 That knew full litull his state. *Who; situation*
Lo, how thay demun the gentill knyghte, *judged*
Quen he hade spendut all that he myghte. *When; spent*
Butte the trauthe full litull thay wote. *truth; knew*
- Quen he come sex mile the cité fro, *When*
- 350 A crosse partut the way atoe. *cross parted; in two*
Thenne speke Sir Amadace:
To his stuard he sayd full rathe, *quickly*
His sometour and his palfray mon bothe, *pack-horse driver; groom*
- 355 Sayd, "Gode sirs, take noghte on greve, *be not sad*
For ye most noue take your leve, *now; leave*
For youreselvun knauyn the cace; *yourselves know; case*
For I may lede no mon in londe,
Butte I hade gold and silvyr to spend,
- 360 Nevyr no quere in no place." *where*
- Now the hardust hertut men that there ware, *hardest hearted*
For to wepe thai myght notte spare
Quen thay herd him say so. *When*
He sayd, "Gode sirs, have ye no care, *sorrow*
365 For ye mone have maysturs evyrqware, *will have masters*
As wele wurthi ye ar soe. *As well worthy as you are*
Yette God may me sende of his sele, *largesse*
That I may kevyr of this full wele, *recover*
And cum owte of this wo.
- 370 A mery mon yette may ye se me, *man*
And be full dere welcum to me,
Bothe ye and mony moe."
- Sir Amadas seyde in that stonde: *time*
"Tho warst hors is worthe ten pownde *worst*
375 Of hom all that here gon. *them; go*
Sqwyar, yomon, and knave, *Squire, yeoman; young man*
Ylke mon his owne schall have *Each man*

- That he syttes apon.
 Sadyll, brydyll, and oder geyre,
 380 Fowre so gud thoffe hit were,
 I woch hit save bi Sen Jon.²
 God mey make yo full gud men.
 Chryst of hevon y yo beken!"
 Thei weped and partyd ylke on. *other equipment*
heaven; bid
wept; parted each one
- 385 Quen all his men was partutte him fro,
 The knyghte lafte still in all the woe,
 Bi himselvun allone. *parted*
remained
By himself alone
 Throghe the forest his way lay righte;
 Of his palfray doune he lighte, *Through*
dismounted
 390 Mournand and made grete mone. *Mourning; moan*
 Quen he thoghte on his londus brode, *lands broad*
 His castels hee, his townus made, *high; well-constructed*
 That were away evyrichon,
 That he had sette, and layd to wedde,
 395 And was owte of the cuntray for povrté fledde. *set, and put in mortgage*
 Thenne the knyghte wexe will of wone. *out; poverty*
grew uncertain of expectation
- Thenne bespeke Sir Amadace,
 "A mon that litul gode hase,
 Men sittus ryghte noghte him bye;
 400 For I hade thre hundrythe powunde of rente,
 I spendut two in that entente. *wealth has*
set
 Of such forloke was I. *spent; for that purpose*
foresight
 Evyr quyll I suche housold hold, *Always while*
 For a grete lord was I tellut, *reputed*
 405 Much holdun uppe thareby. *Much held up (admired)*
 Nowe may wise men sitte atte home,
 Quen folus may walke full wille of wone,³
 And, Christ wotte, so may hi." *knows; they*
- He sayd, "Jhesu, as Thu deet on the Rode,
 410 And for me sched Thi precius blode,
 And all this world Thu wanne; *died on the Cross*
shed
 Thu lette me nevyr come in that syghte, *won (redeemed)*
 Ther I have bene knauen for a knyghte,
 Butte if I may avoue hit thanne. *Where; known*
Until I may declare it
 415 And gif me grace to somun all tho *summon; those*
 That wilsumly are wente me fro, *willfully; gone from me*
 And all that me gode ons hase done; *once have done me good*

² *Though it were four times as good (as it is), / I guarantee it by Saint John*

³ *When fools may walk wholly bewildered (homeless)*

- Or ellus, Lord, I aske The rede, *else; help*
 Hastely that I were dede, *dead*
 420 Lord, wele were me thanne. *then*
- “For all for wonting of my witte, *deficiency; wit*
 Fowle of the lond am I putte, *Disgraced in the land I am set*
 Of my frindes I have made foes;
 For kyndenes of my gud wille,
 425 I am in poynte myselfe to spille.” *at the point of being destroyed*
 Thus flote Syr Amadace. *drifted (in mind)*
 He sayd, “Jhesu, as Thu deut on tre, *died on the tree (cross)*
 Summe of Thi sokur and Thu me, *Some; succor*
 Spedely in this place, *Quickly*
 430 For summe of Thi sokur and Thu me send, *some; succor if*
 And yette I schuld ful gladely spende
 On all that mestur hase.” *need have*
- Now thro the forest as he ferd, *made his way*
 He wende that no mon hade him herd, *thought; heard*
 435 For he seghe no mon in sighte. *saw*
 So come a mon ryding him bye,
 And speke on him fulle hastely,
 Therof he was afryghte.
 Milke quyte was his stede, *white*
 440 And so was all his othir wede — *clothes*
 Hade contiens of a knyghte. *bearing*
 Now thoghe Sir Amadace wasse in mournyng broghte, *though*
 His curtasé forgete he noghte, *courtesy forgot*
 He saylut him anon ryghte. *saluted; directly*
- 445 Quod the quite knyghte, “Quat mon is this,
 That all this mowrnyng makes thus
 With so simpull chere?” *Said; white; What*
 Thenne Syr Amadace sayd, “Nay!” *mourning*
 The quite knyghte bede tho, “Do way, *demeanor*
 450 For that quile have I bene here. *white; commanded then “Stop”*
 Thowe schild noghte mowrne no suche wise, *while*
 For God may bothe mon falle and rise, *bring down and raise up*
 For His helpe is evyrmore nere.
 For gud His butte a lante lone, *wealth is but a loaned gift*
 455 Sumtyme men have hit, sumtyme none;
 Thu hast full mony a pere. *many an equal*
- “Now thenke on Him, that deut on Rode. *think; died on Cross*
 That for us sched His precius blode,
 For the and monkynd all. *mankind*
 460 For a mon that gevees him to god thewis, *devotes himself to good habits*

- Authir to gentilmen or to schrewis,
 On summe side wille hit fall.
 A mon that hase all way bynne kynde,
 Sum curtas mon yette may he fynde,
 465 That mekille may stonde in stalle;
 Repente the noghte that thu hase done,
 For He that schope bothe sunne and mone,
 Full wele may pay for alle.”
- Quod the quite knyghte, “Wold thu luffe him avre all thing
 470 That wold the owte of thi mournyng bringe,
 And kevyr the owte of kare?
 For here beside duellus a riall king,
 And hase a doghtur fayre and yinge,
 He luffis nothing mare.
 475 And thu art one of the semelist knyghte
 That evyr yette I see with syghte,
 That any armes bare.
 That mun no mon hur wedde ne weld,
 Butte he that first is inne the fild,
 480 And best thenne justus thare.
- “And thu schalt cum thedur als gay
 Als any erliche mon may,
 Of thi sute schall be non;
 Thu schall have for thi giftus gevand,
 485 Grete lordus to thi honde,
 And loke thu spare righte none.
 Thu say the menne that come with the,
 That thay were drounet on the see,
 With wild waturs slone.
 490 Loke that thu be large of feyce,
 Tille thu have wonon gode congrece,
 And I schall pay ichone.”
- He sayd, “That thu be fre of wage,
 And I schall pay for thi costage,
 495 Ten thowsand gif thu ladde.
 Ther schall thu wynne full mekille honowre,
 Fild and frithe, towne and towre,
 That lady schall thu wedde.
 And sithun I schall come agayne to the,
 500 Qwen thu hase come thi frindus to see,
 In stid quere thu art stadde.
 Butte a forwart make I with the or that thu goe,
 That evyn to part betwene us toe
 The godus thu hase wonun and spedde.”
- Either; evil persons*
In some respect
man
courteous man
greatly; be of help
what you have done
made
- love; over*
out
retrieve; out; sorrow
nearby dwells; royal
young
loves; more
fairest
- may; hold*
field
jousts
- there as*
As; earthly
your class
gifts given
lords; at hand
- drowned; sea*
waters slain
generous of rewards
group of attendants
each one
- generous; payment*
expense
undertake
great honor
Field; woods; town; tower
- later*
When; your friends
In place where; set
covenant; before
evenly to divide; two
goods; won; obtained

- 505 Thenne bespeke Sir Amadace,
 “And thu have myghte thrughe Goddus grace
 So to cumford to me,
 Thu schalt fynde me true and lele
 And evyn, lord, for to dele
 510 Betwix the and me.”
 “Fare wele,” he sayd, “Sir Amadace!
 And thu schall wurche thrughe Goddus grace,
 And hit schall be with the.”
 Sir Amadace sayd, “Have gode day,
 515 And thu schall fynde me, and I may,
 Als true as any mon may be.”

A Fitte

- Now als Sir Amadace welke bi the se sonde,
 The broken schippus he ther fonde —
 Hit were mervayl to say.
 520 He fond wrekun among the stones
 Knyghtes in menevere for the nones,
 Stedes quite and gray,
 With all kynne maner of richas
 That any mon myghte devise
 525 Castun uppe with waturs lay;
 Kistes and cofurs bothe ther stode,
 Was fulle of gold precius and gode,
 No mon bare noghte away.
- Thenne Sir Amadace he him cladde,
 530 And that was in a gold webbe,
 A bettur myghte none be.
 And the stede that he on rode,
 Wasse the best that evyr mon hade
 In justing for to see.
 535 Ther he wanne full mecul honoure,
 Fild and frithe, toune and towre,
 Castell and riche cité.
 Aure that gud he hove full ryghte.
 That see the king and his doghtur bryghte,
 540 The justing furthe schild be.
- The kinge sayd to his doghtur bryghte,
 “Lo, yond hoves a riall knyghte!”
 A messyngere he ches,
 His aune squier, and knyghtes thre,
 545 And bede, “Go loke quat yone may be,
 And telle me quo hit is.
 And his gud hitte schall be tente

*If
 comfort
 loyal
 evenly divide; deal*

work well

*if
 As*

*walked by the sea sand
 ships
 marvel
 wrecked
 ceremonial trim; at that time
 Horses white
 richness
 imagine
 Cast
 Chests; coffers
 bore*

*dressed
 woven cloth*

*jousting
 won; great
 Field; wood; town; tower*

*Above; lingered
 saw; lovely
 should*

*lingers; royal
 chose
 own
 commanded; what over there
 who
 welfare; attended to*

- Holly to his cummawundemente,
 Certan withoutun lesse.
 550 Go we to his comyng all togethir,
 And say that he is welcum hethir,
 And he be comun o pese.”
- As the messingerus welke bi the see sonde,
 Thay toke Sir Amadace bi the quite honde,
 555 And tithinges conne him frayne:
 And sayd, “Oure lord, the king, hase send us hethir
 To wete youre comyng all togethir,
 And ye wold us sayn.
 He says your gud hitte schall be tente,
 560 Holly atte youre commawundemente,
 Certan is noghte to layne.
 Quatsever ye wille with the kinges men do,
 Yo thar butte commawunde hom therto,
 And have servandis full bayne.”
- 565 And Sir Amadace sayd, “I wasse a prince of mekil pride,
 And here I hade thoghte to ryde,
 Forsothe atte this journay.
 I was vetaylet with wyne and flowre,
 Hors, stedus, and armoure,
 570 Knyghtus of gode aray.
 Stithe stormes me oredrofe,
 Mi nobull schippe hit all torofe,
 Tho sothe youreselvun may say.
 To spend I have enughe plenté,
 575 Butte all the men that come with me,
 Forsothe thai bynne away.”
- Then Sir Amadace, that wasse so stithe on stede,
 To the castell gates thay conne him lede,
 And told the king all the cace.
 580 The king sayd, “Thu art welcum here,
 I rede the be full gud chere,
 Thonke Jhesu of His grace.
 Seche a storne as thu was inne,
 That thu myghte any socur wyne,
 585 A full fayre happe hit wase.
 I see nevyr man that sete in sete,
 So muche of my lufue myghte gete
 As thu thiselvun hase.”
- Thenne the king for Sir Amadace sake
 590 A riall cri thenne gerutte he make

*Wholly; command
lies*

If; come in peace

*messengers walked; seashore
while
asked him about himself*

*know of
If; tell*

attended to

*Wholly; command
conceal*

Whatever

command them

servants; accommodating

great

supplied

*Strong; overthrew
tore apart
truth; see*

are away (lost)

*strong
began
case (situation)*

*advise
Thank*

*succor
chance*

*sat in seat
praise; get
have*

royal; caused

- Throoute in that cité.
 To all that ther wold servyse have,
 Knyghte, squiere, yoman and knave,
 Iche mon in thayre degré,
 595 That wold duelle with Sir Amadace,
 Hade lost his men in a cace,
 And drownet hom on the se.
 He wold gif hom toe so muche, or ellus more,
 As any lord wold evyr or quare,
 600 And thay wold with him be.
- Quen gentilmen herd that cry,
 Thay come to him full hastely,
 With him for to be.
 Be then the justing wasse alle cryed,
 605 There was no lord ther besyde
 Had halfe as mony men os he.
 Ther he wanne so mycull honoure,
 Fild and frithe, towne and toure,
 Castell and riche cité;
 610 A hundrithe sedis he wan and moe,
 And gave the king the ton halve of thoe,
 Butte ther othir til his felo keput he.
- Quen the justing was all done,
 To unarme hom thay wente anone,
 615 Hastely and belyve,
 Then sayd the king anon ryghte,
 And bede, "Gromersy, gentull knyghte!"
 Ofte and fele sithe.
 Then the kingus doghtur that wasse gente,
 620 Unlasutte the knyghte, to mete thay wente,
 All were thay gladde and blithe.
 Quen aythir of othir hade a sighte,
 Suche a lufue betuene hom lighte,
 That partut nevyr thayre lyve.
- Quen thay hade etun, I understonde,
 The king toke Sir Amadace bi the quite honde,
 And to him conne he say:
 "Sir," he sayd, "withoutun lesse,
 I have a doghtur that myn ayre ho isse.
 625 And ho be to yaure pay,
 And ye be a mon that will wedde a wife,
 I vouche hur safe, by my life,
 On yo that fayre may.
 630 Here a gifte schall I yo gife,
- yeoman
 Each man
 abide
 accident
 drowned them
 them; else
 anywhere
 If*
- When*
- By*
- as
 won; great
 Field and forest*
- hundred districts; won
 one half of those
 for his partner (i.e., the white knight); kept*
- disarm
 quickly*
- Many thanks
 many times
 fair*
- Took the armor off; dinner
 happy
 When either
 love
 parted*
- eaten
 white*
- deceit
 my heir she is
 If she; pleasure (reward)*
- entrust
 fair maiden*

- 635 Halfe my kyndome quilles I life – *while*
 Take all aftur my daye.”
- “Gramarcy,” seyd Sir Amadas,
 And thonkyd tho kyng of that grace,
 Of his gyfftes gudde.
- 640 Sone after, as y yow sey,
 To the kyrke yode thei *church went*
 To wedde that frely fode. *noble young warrior*
 Ther was gold gyffon in that stonde, *given; at that time*
 And plenty of sylver, many a ponde, *pound*
- 645 Be the way as thei yode. *went*
 And after in hall thei satte all,
 Tho lordes and tho lades small *young gentlemen*
 That comon wer of gentyll kyn. *noble kin*
- Thus is Sir Amadace kevyrt of his wo, *recovered*
 650 That God lene grace, that we were so! *grant*
 A riall fest gerut he make. *royal; caused*
 Ther weddut he that lady brighte, *wedded*
 The maungery last a faurtenyghte, *feasting; fortnight*
 With schaftes for to schake. *spears; shake*
- 655 Othir halfe yere thay lifd in gomun, *joy*
 A fayre knave child hade thay somun, *boy; together*
 Grete myrthes con thay make. *began*
 Listuns now, lordinges, of anters grete, *adventures*
 Quyll on a day before the mete *While; dinner*
- 660 This felau come to the gate. *fellow*
- He come in als gay gere, *such; apparel*
 Ryghte as he an angell were,
 Cladde he was in quite. *white*
- Unto the porter speke he thoe, *then*
 665 Sayd, “To thi lord myn ernde thu go, *message*
 Hasteli and alstite. *immediately*
 And if he frayne oghte aftur me, *asks*
 For quethun I come, or quat cuntré, *whence; what*
 Say him my sute is quite. *suit; white*
- 670 And say we have togethir bene,
 I hope full wele he have me sene, *expect; seen me*
 He wille hitte nevyr denyte.” *deny*
- Thenne the porter wente into the halle,
 Alsone his lord he metes withalle,
 675 He sailles him as he conne: *As soon as*
 Sayd, “Lord, here is comun the fayrist knyghte *approaches; can*
 That evyr yette I see with syghte,

- Sethen I was market mon. *man*
 Milke quite is his stede, *white*
 680 And so is all his other wede, *clothing*
 That he hase opon.
 He says ye have togethir bene,
 I hope full well ye have him sene,
 Butte with him is comun no mon.”
- 685 “Is he comun,” he sayd, “myn owun true fere? *my own; companion*
 To me is he bothe lefe and dere, *beloved and dear*
 So aght him wele to be. *ought*
 Butte, all my men, I yo commawunde, *command*
 To serve him wele to fote and honde,
 690 Ryghte as ye wold do me.”
 Then Sir Amadace agaynus him wente, *to*
 And allso did that ladi gente, *fair*
 That was so bryghte of ble. *lovely; face*
 And did wele that hur aghte to do; *what she ought*
 695 All that hur lord lufd wurschipput ho; *loved she worshiped*
 All suche women wele myghte be. *Such all women well might be*
- Quo schuld his stede to stabulle have? *Who*
 Knyghte, squier, yoman ne knave,
 Nauthir with him he broghte. *None of these*
- 700 Thenne Sir Amadace wold have takyun his stede,
 And to the halle himselvun lede,
 Butte, so wold he noghte.
 He sayd, “Sertan, the sothe to telle,
 I will nauthir ete, drinke, no duelle, *Certain; truth*
 705 Be God, that me dere boghte. *neither; remain*
 Butte take and dele hit evun in toe, *By; dearly bought (redeemed)*
 Gif me my parte, and lette me goe, *But; divide; two*
 Gif I be wurthi oghte.” *If I be worthy of anything*
- Thenne spoke Sir Amadace so fre,
 710 “For Goddus luffe, lette suche wurdus be! *love; let; words*
 Thay grevun my herte full sore. *grieve*
 For we myghte noghte this faurtenyghte *fortnight*
 Owre rich londus dele and dighte, *divide; prepare*
 Thay liun so wide quare. *lie; broadly here and there*
 715 Butte lette us leng together here, *abide*
 Righte as we brethir were, *Just as if we were brothers*
 As all thin one hit ware. *thine (your) own*
 And othir gates noghte part will wee, *otherwise*
 Butte atte thi will, sir, all schall bee;
 720 Goddes forbote, Sir, thou hit spare!” *refrain from using it*

- He sayd, "Broke wele thi londus brode,
 Thi castels hee, thi townus made,
 Of hom kepe I righte none;
 Allso thi wuddus, thi waturs clere,
 725 Thi frithis, thi forestus, fer and nere,
 Thi ringus with riche stone,
 Allso thi silvyr, thi gold rede,
 For hit may stonde me in no stidde,
 I squire, bi Sayn John!
 730 But, be my faythe, wothoutun stryve,
 Half thi child, and halfe thi wyve,
 And thay schall with me gone."
- "Alas!" sayd Sir Amadace than,
 "That evyr I this woman wan,
 735 Or any wordes gode.
 For His life, that deet on tre,
 Quatsever ye will, do with me,
 For Him that deet on Rode.
 Ye, take all that evyr I have
 740 Wythe thi, that ye hur life save."
 Thenne the knyghte wele undurstode,
 And squire, "Be God, that me dere boghte,
 Othir of thi thinge then kepe I noghte,
 Off all thi wordes gode!
- 745 Butte thenke on thi covenant that thu made
 In the wode, quen thu mestur hade,
 How fayre thu hettus me thare!"
 Sir Amadace sayd, "I wotte, hit was soe,
 But my lady for to sloe,
 750 Me thinke grete synne hit ware."
 Then the lady undurstode anon,
 The wurd that was betwene hom,
 And grevyt hur nevyr the more.
 Then ladi sayd, "For His luffe thet deet on tre,
 755 Loke youre covandus holdun be,
 Goddes forbotte ye me spare!"
- Thenne bespeke that ladi brighte,
 Sayd, "Ye schall him hold that ye have highte,
 Be God, and Sayn Drightine!
 760 For His lufe that deet on tre,
 Loke yaure covandus holdun be,
 Yore forward was full fyne.
 Sithun Crist will that hit be so,
 Take and parte me evun in toe,
- Enjoy
high
your woods
woods; forests far and near
rings
enjoy
swear
without strife
Divide; divide
won
died on tree (Cross)
Whatsoever
died on Cross
If only; you her
swore; dearly bought (redeemed)
covenant
when; need
entreated
know
slay
promise; them
grieved
love; died on tree (Cross)
See that covenant be held (kept)
forbid
promised
Holy Lord
love; died on tree (Cross)
covenant be held (kept)
agreement; proper
two*

- 765 Thu wan me and I am thine.
 Goddus fobotte that ye hade wyvut, *forbid; wived*
 That I schuld yo a lure makette, *temptation (bait)*
 Yore wurschip in londe to tyne!" *lose*
- Still ho stode, withoutun lette, *she*
 770 Nawthir changet chere, ne grette, *Neither changed expression, nor wept*
 That lady myld and dere.
 Bede, "Focher me my yung sun me beforen, *Commanded, "Fetch*
 For he was of my bodi borne,
 And lay my herte full nere."
- 775 "Now," quod the quite knyghte thare,
 "Quethur of hom luffus thu mare?" *Which; them; love; more*
 He sayd, "My wife, so dere!" *love*
 "Sithun thu luffus hur the more,
 Thu schalt parte hur evyn before, *divide her evenly*
 780 Hur quite sidus in sere." *white; apart*
- Thenne quen Sir Amadace see *when*
 That no bettur hitte myghte bee,
 He ferd as ho were wode. *behaved; mad*
 Thenne all the mene in that halle,
 785 Doune on squonyng ther con thay falle, *swooning*
 Before thayre lord thay stode.
 The burd was broghte that schuld hur on dele;
 Ho kissute hur lord sithis fele, *board; divide*
 And sithun therto ho yode. *She kissed; times many*
 790 Ho layd hur downe mekely enughe, *afterwards; she went*
 A cloth then aure hur enyn thay droghe; *She*
 That lady was myld of mode. *over her eyes*
calm of spirit
- Thenne the quite knyghte, "I will do the no unskill, *white; wrong*
 Thu schalt dele hit atte thi wille, *divide*
 795 The godus that here now is." *goods*
 Thenne speke Sir Amadace so fre, *gracious*
 Sayd, "Atte your wille, lord, all schall be,
 And so I hope hit is."
 Then Sir Amadace a sward uppehente, *sword took up*
 800 To strike the ladi was his entente,
 And thenne the quite knyghte bede "Sese!" *white; bade; Stop*
 He toke uppe the ladi, and the litull knave,
 And to Sir Amadace ther he hom gave, *them*
 And sayd, "Now is tyme of pees!" *peace*
- 805 He sayd, "I con notte wite the gif thu were woe, *blame you if; distressed*
 Suche a ladi for to slo, *slay*
 Thi wurschip thus wold save.

- Yette I was largely as gladde,
 Quen thu gafe all that evyr thu hade,
 810 My bones for to grave. *When bury*
 In a chapell quere I lay to howundus mete, *where; as hounds' food*
 Thu payut furst thritty powund by grete, *paid; in full*
 Sethun all that thu myghtus have. *Then*
 Ther I besoghte God schuld kevyr the of thi care, *remove*
 815 That for me hade made the so bare,
 Mi wurschip in lond to save." *honor*
- "Fare wele now," he sayd, "mynne awne true fere!
 For my lenging is no lengur her,
 With tunge sum I the telle. *own; friend*
 820 Butte loke thu lufe this lady as thi lyve, *dwelling; longer here*
 That thus mekely, withouten stryve, *love*
 Thi forwardus wold fulfille." *without strife*
 Thenne he wente oute of that tounne, *promises*
 He glode away as dew in towne, *went*
 825 And thay abode ther stille. *knelt*
 Thay knelutte downe opon thayre kne, *thanked; gracious*
 And thonket God and Mary fre,
 And so thay hade gud skille.
- Thenne Sir Amadace and his wive,
 830 With joy and blis thay ladde thayre live,
 Unto thayre ending daye.
 Ther is ladis now in lond full foe *few*
 That wold have servut hor lord soe,
 Butte sum wold have sayd nay.
 835 Botte quoso serves God truly, *whoever*
 And His modur, Mary fre,
 This dar I savely say: *safely*
 Gif hom sumtyme like full ille, *If them*
 Yette God will graunte hom all hor wille, *them; their*
 840 Tille hevyn the redy waye. *To*
- Then Sir Amadace send his messingerus,
 All the londus ferre and nere, *far and near*
 Unto his awne cuntré. *own*
 Till all that evyr his lond withheld,
 845 Frithe or forest, towne or filde, *Woods; field*
 With tresur owte boghte he. *He repaid his debts with money*
 His stuard and othir, that with him were,
 He send aftur hom, as ye may here, *them*
 And gafe hom gold and fee. *them; riches*
 850 And thay ther with him for to leng, *remain*

Evyrmore till thayre lyvus ende,
With myrthe and solempnité.

joy; proper ceremony

Thenne sone aftur the kinge deet, atte Goddus wille,
And thay abode thare stille,
855 As ye schall undurstond.

died

Thenne was he lord of toure and towne,
And all thay comun to his somoune,
All the grete lordus of the londe.

summons

Thenne Sir Amadace, as I yo say,
860 Was crownette kinge opon a day,
Wyth gold so clure schinand.

crowned

Jhesu Criste in Trinité,
Blesse and glade this cumpany,
And ore us halde His hande!

brilliantly shining

Trinity

make happy

over

Finis de Sir Amadace

NOTES TO *SIR AMADACE*

I have used the following abbreviations in these textual and explanatory notes: **A**: Advocates Manuscript; **B**: Christopher Brookhouse, ed., *Sir Amadace and The Avowyng of Arthur*; **IR**: Ireland Manuscript; **M**: Maldwyn Mills, ed., *Six Middle English Romances*; **MED**: *Middle English Dictionary*; **P**: Ad Putter, “Gifts and Commodities.” **R**: John Robson, ed., *Three Early English Metrical Romances*; **W**: Henry Weber, ed., *Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries*.

I have based my text on the Ireland Manuscript (c. 1450) following R, B, M. There are notable differences from the Advocates Manuscript (late fifteenth century), documented by R. W prints A. I have followed B, R in supplying some lines from A.

- 1 A leaf, containing four stanzas (24 lines) is missing from IR. It is clear, however, that Sir Amadace has put himself in financial jeopardy by excessive spending that is understood to be generosity rather than profligacy — a common didactic motif. A note has been inserted in IR explaining that a leaf is lost, but I have chosen to begin lineation with fol. 17, following the practice of past editors.
- 3 *be*. B: *þe*; R, M: *be*.
- 7 *Qu* for “wh” or “w” is common throughout. Third-person singular pasts in *-it* (e.g., *kennit*, line 18) and *-ut* (e.g., *ordanut*, line 50) are also common. For a detailed account of spelling and accidence see B, pp. 11–16.
- 11 *on*. B: *one*.
- 12 *Thaghe*. IR: *Thazghe*. M: *Thagh*.
- 29–30 Keeping one’s debts a secret was a cardinal mercantile rule. See Chaucer’s Shipman (VIII[B²]225–34). See notes to lines 34 and 48.
- 31 *wedsette*: to mortgage, to put one’s land up as a pledge against debt (*OED*).
- 34 Compare Chaucer’s Merchant “sownynge alwey th’ encrees of his wynnyng” (I[A] 275) and his Shipman, who meticulously keeps his debts a secret, else he might have to flee the country. See note to line 48 below.
- 40 Sir Amadace’s display of generosity creates more an image of affluence than charity as he prepares to go into hiding.
- 48 Compare Chaucer’s Shipman who avows that he would have to pretend to go on “a pilgrimage, or goon out of the weye” (VII[B²] 230–34) if his *pryvetee* were known.

- 50, 56 R, B, M inserted the *a*.
- 60 P argues that the story of *Sir Amadace* is designed to “exemplify the wisdom and ultimate profitability of reckless spending” (371), thereby creating an enduring body of indebtedness and gratitude (similar to that of a blood-brother relationship) between Sir Amadace and the White Knight/merchant. This celebration of generosity is based on the religious belief that one does not own goods, and espouses a gift economy in which “repaying kindness does not cancel gratitude but only engages the giver’s gratitude in return” (P, pp. 374, 394).
- 81 *hur*. IR originally reads *his*, which is deleted and changed to *hur*.
- 93 *no*. B: *so*.
- 96 *my*. B: *me*.
- 97 IR, M: *Amace*. B notes the mark in IR indicating that the scribe intended to correct the word. I have corrected to *Amadace*.
squier. B: *squir*.
- 121 *his*. B: *is*.
- 129 IR, M: *A*; I have followed R. B: *And*.
- 134 *mon*. Omitted by B.
- 143 *rowunde*: a round minted coin. *MED* lists this alternative spelling which is consistent with the dialect and orthographical patterns of the poem.
- 157 The lady’s explanation parallels Sir Amadace’s situation. Here is the first reference to *fole* (fool), which will become Amadace’s role.
- 172 *telle that he seke lay*. B silently “emends” to *tell that seke he lay*.
- 204 IR inserts *A Fille* at the end of this line and at the end of line 516.
- 206 *he*. B: *me*.
- 212 *I will*. IR: *will*. Acephalous syntax (the dropping of a subject pronoun) commonly occurs in Middle English. R’s emendation, followed by B, M, and me.
- 225 According to P, Sir Amadace does not see his gift to the White Knight/merchant as a loss, but as a “conversion of real capital into ‘gret merit,’ an entitlement to gratitude and future reward that binds one to other bearers of this ‘symbolic capital.’ By refusing to invest in ‘merit,’ the merchant excludes himself from the community of givers, a community whose founding member is of course God himself” (379).
- 237 R, B, M insert *The . . . the*.
- 246 *womon*. B: *woman*.
- 250 *thritti powunde*. Perhaps a loose analogue to Judas’ selling of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver lurks in the background here as Amadace kindly uses the sum to redeem the lady and her knight, rather than betray them, even though it is all

- that he has. Rather than being like Judas, he's like the widow with her mite, which goes for charity.
- 260 B (p. 103) explains the ancient tradition, preserved in folklore, of punishing a debtor by refusing burial. The practice had long since disappeared by the time of the poem. This section begins the "grateful dead" motif, wherein the hero finds and buries a previously unburied corpse. The ghost of the grateful dead person subsequently offers to help the hero on condition of receiving half of whatever reward is ultimately obtained. See G. H. Gerould, *The Grateful Dead*, Publications of the Folk-Lore Society 60 (London, 1908). Williams suggests that in this type of story, there are, in fact, two folk motifs operating: the "Grateful Dead" and the "Divided Winnings" (*Sir Amadace*, p. 65). As a literary example of the "Grateful Dead" motif in isolation, Williams offers Cicero's story of Simonides who, having buried an exposed corpse, is warned in a dream not to set out to sea; those who ignore the warning are drowned. See also the *Book of Tobit*, the medieval French texts *Richard le Biaus* and the *Lion de Bourges*, and the fifteenth-century prose romance of *Oliver de Castille et Artus d'Algarbe*.
- 295 *Thritty prustus*. The singing of a "trental" was deemed the most efficacious of masses for the dead. Compare the boast of the friar in Chaucer's Summoner's Tale (III[D] 1724–28).
- 373–81 I have followed R, B in supplying lines 344–55 from A. Because M does not, his lineation is twelve lines lower from this point.
- 411 IR, R, B, M: *word*. I have emended to *world* on the grounds that the phrase is so common in this poem and elsewhere as to be formulaic.
- 414 *hit*. B: *his*.
- 429 IR reduplicates *in this*.
- 435 *no mon*. IR: *non*. R's emendation followed by M and me.
- 439 B, following IR, has this line between my lines 468 and 469. Shifting the line to this position not only creates two twelve-line stanzas but also clarifies the sequence in lines 436–41. The scribe may have skipped the line, then incorporated it later where it makes grammatical sense but leaves lines 436–41 somewhat obscure.
- 441 See note to line 260.
- 449 *tho*. Omitted by both R and B; M: *the[m]*.
- 453 This line is repeated in the IR following line 455.
- 455 R, B insert *have*. This line is written in the margin and in what appears to be a later hand.
- 486 *loke*. B: *like*.
- 500 *come*. Mills: *tome* (leisure) without explanation. It is frequently difficult to distinguish "c" from "t" in Middle English manuscripts. MED notes *come* as an erroneous variant of *tome* in MS Fairfax 3 of John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, II, 2680.

- 504 *hase*. B omits the *e* here and in line 681.
- 510 *Betwix*. B: *Bettwix*.
- 561 *Certan*. R, B, M: *Sertan*.
- 569 *stedus* as opposed to “hors” are “warhorses” or “chargers” (MED).
- 571 *oredrofe*. “Overdriven,” referring to violent motions of the sea (MED).
- 593 *yoman*. B: *yomon*. So too in line 698.
- 594 *degré*. B: *degree*.
- 629 IR, R, B: *My nayre*: As B notes, this is clearly a false juncture. Such disjunctures are common in Middle English manuscripts. I have corrected to *Myn ayre* as has M.
- 637–48 I have followed R, B to supply lines 575–86 from *Sir Amadas* (Advocates MS). Because M has not, his lineation is twenty-four lines from this point.
- 650 *lene*. B: *leue*.
- 685 IR, R, B: *my nowun*; I have read: *myn owun*, as has M. Clearly a false juncture.
- 699 *he*. B: *be*.
- 707 Within the “Grateful Dead” story type, there is no known literary source for the White Knight’s threat to kill the wife and child of Sir Amadace. However, a similar plot climax does appear in the later *Olvier et Artus* (Williams, “*Sir Amadace*,” p. 67).
- 709 *spoke*. R, M: *speke*.
- 717 *thin one*. IR, R, B: *thi none*; M: *thin one*. Correction of another false juncture.
- 719–20 B concludes line 719 with *thu hit spare*, taken from the end of line 720. He erroneously omits *all schall be / Goddes forbote, Sir*, and thus is a line short in this stanza.
- 759 *Sayn Drightine*: Holy Lord (from Old English).
- 786 *thay*. B: *that*.
- 801 *bede*. IR: *be*; I have followed R, B, M: *bede*. The test of obedience to his covenant parallels that of God’s testing of Abraham (Genesis 22), where the father will slay his son rather than break his vow to God. Like Isaac, the child is spared when the angel bids “cease” and provides the redemptive substitution of a ram stuck in thorns, which medieval commentaries interpreted as a figuration of Him who died on the Cross. Perhaps this is why the poet sets Amadace’s test on the Eve of Christ’s nativity.
- 805 *woe*. B: *toe*.
- 812 *by*. B, M: *be*.
- 823 *toune*. B: *towne*.
- 845 IR, R, B: *of*. Although “of” is possible, “or” fits the familiar formula much better. M agrees.



GLOSSARY

abigge	<i>atone, redeem</i>	bacine	<i>basin</i>
abuye	<i>atone for</i>	bade	<i>trouble</i>
ac	<i>but, although</i>	bale	<i>trouble</i>
aghte	<i>owed</i>	bar(e)	<i>bore</i>
agrame	<i>angry</i>	bede	<i>offer</i>
aither	<i>either, both</i>	belyve	<i>quickly</i>
aknes	<i>on knees</i>	bernes	<i>young men, children, warriors</i>
al bidene	<i>all together</i>	bifel	<i>occurred, happened</i>
Alemayne	<i>Germany</i>	bifelt	<i>stayed</i>
alien	<i>anoint</i>	bihight	<i>promised</i>
almest	<i>almost</i>	bilapped	<i>surrounded</i>
also	<i>as</i>	bileft	<i>stayed</i>
alstite	<i>immediately, quickly</i>	bimene	<i>lament</i>
amorwe	<i>tomorrow, in the morning</i>	bird	<i>lady, woman</i>
antur(s)	<i>adventure(s)</i>	birddes	<i>ladies, women</i>
aplyght	<i>truly; pledged</i>	bistride	<i>mount</i>
ar	<i>before</i>	bitaught	<i>commended</i>
araught	<i>reached</i>	bithenke	<i>remember</i>
aschet	<i>asked for</i>	bitide	<i>happen</i>
asondri	<i>asunder, apart</i>	blawe	<i>proclaim</i>
aspie	<i>notice, spy out</i>	ble	<i>countenance</i>
astite	<i>immediately, quickly</i>	blesied	<i>blessed</i>
astow	<i>as you</i>	blinne	<i>cease</i>
as wis as	<i>surely, certainly</i>	blisced	<i>blessed</i>
atake	<i>overtake</i>	blisceing	<i>blessing</i>
ato, atuo	<i>apart</i>	blithe	<i>happy, graceful, joyful</i>
atten	<i>finally</i>	bode	<i>warning</i>
atuinne	<i>apart, separate</i>	bold	<i>daring, courageous</i>
authir	<i>either, both</i>	boon and blood	<i>body</i>
avenaunt	<i>attractive, agreeable, beautiful, fortunate</i>	borwe	<i>castle; guarantor</i>
avergon	<i>die down</i>	bote	<i>relieve</i>
avre	<i>over</i>	boteler(e)	<i>dispenser (of food and drink)</i>
awand	<i>owing</i>	bounté	<i>bounty, generosity</i>
awe	<i>dread</i>	bourd	<i>jest</i>
awne	<i>own</i>	boure, bowre	<i>chamber, apartment</i>
		bove	<i>above</i>
		braid	<i>drew, unsheathed</i>

bright *lovely, attractive, glittering*
brini *coat of mail*
brushed *dressed, prepared*
busked *dressed, prepared*

cace *accident*
care *worry, trouble, care, grief*
careful *sorrowful*
casten *calculate(d)*
chaitif *coward*
chaumber, chaunber *private room*
chaungy *exchange*
chepeing *buying*
chere *appearance, mood, manner, disposition*
childer *children*
Cisyle *Sicily*
cleped *named, called*
cloth *clothing*
comly *noble, comely*
con *began*
consail, conseyl *secret(s)*
costage *expense*
countrai, cuntr  *country*
coupes *cups*
couthe *could*
croudeuain *pushcart*
crud *pushed*
curtais(e), curteis(e) *courteous, gracious, polite*

dathet *cursed*
dede *dead*
dede(e) *deed(s), action(s)*
defygured *disfigured, changed in appearance*
dempt *damned*
denyte *deny*
depe *deep; muddy*
derth *scarcity*
dight *set in order, prepare(d)*
diol *dole, sorrow*
diolful *doleful, sorrowful*
dole *alms*
doloure *sorrow, misfortune*
doughti, doughty *stouthearted, courageous*

dreri *sad, sorrowful*
droghe *drew*
dueling *delay*
duell *live, dwell*

echon, echoon *each one*
egre *fierce, bold*
eighen *eyes*
evell *evil*
eventour *adventure*
everichdel *completely*

fain *joyful, gladly*
fale, fele *many*
fare *state*
fare *travel, live, go*
fare *fare(s)*
fay *faith*
febull *poor, feeble*
fede *eat*
feffet *endowed*
fel *occurred*
felawerede *fellowship*
felle *destroy*
felo *partner, colleague*
fer *fire*
fere *together*
ferli *terribly*
fert *afraid*
fest *feast*
fet *fetched*
feyce *rewards*
flote *drifted (in mind)*
fode *young man; fool*
fol *fool*
folesage *court fool*
fond *prove, ascertain, try*
foode *offspring*
forfare *destroy*
forlain *lain with*
forlore *utterly lost*
foryetun *forgotten*
foryif *forgive*
fouchoun, fauchon *long curved sword*
foules, fowles *birds*
fowle *disgraced*
franut *asked, inquired*

frayn(e) *ask, inquire*
fre(e) *generous, splendid, noble(man)*
frely *graciously, worthy*
frith(e) *woods*

gadelyng *rascal*
galwes *gallows*
gamen *play*
gan, gun *began to, caused to*
gat *conceived*
gente *fair*
gerutte *caused*
gest *story, stories; guest*
gete *goods*
getyn *conceived*
geyre *gear, equipment*
gile *guile*
gle *enjoy*
gome(s) *man (men)*
grame *harmful*
gret *great; greeted*
grille *fearsome*
grimli *horrible*

hend(e) *courteous, gracious, well-born, skillful; near (at hand)*
hendelich(e) *honorably*
hennes *hence*
hent *seized*
here *hair*
hight, hyght *promise, tell; named*
holtes *woods*
hom *them*
hote *named*
hove(d) *wait(ed)*
hoves (hovet) *lingers (ed)*
hyde *skin*

ibore *born*
ichon *each one*
ipult *brought down*
ischape *dressed*
iwis, iwys *certainly, I know*

jurnay, jorné, jurné *journey*
just(es) *joust(s)*

kan(ne) *knew*
keghte *incurred*
kend(e) *kin; kind; pleasing*
kest *put on, cast*
kin *kin, kind, kindly*
kithe *realize, slow, know*
knave *boy*
kyn, kynde *family, kin, kind*
kyneriche *kindred*

lare *teaching*
layne *conceal*
lazer *leper*
leeved *believed*
lef(e) *dear, agreeable*
leighth *lies*
lem *gleaming*
leman *lover, beloved*
lese *lose*
les(se) *lies, falsehood*
lesying *lying*
lettyyng *delay*
leueté *belief*
leve *beloved; permission*
levedi *lady*
libben *live*
liche, lyche *alike, similar*
liif *life*
lithe *listen, hear*
lodly *hideous*
loge, logging *dwelling*
lo(o)th(e) *unwilling, reluctant*
lordinges *lords*
lorn *lost, abandoned*
lourand *lowering*
lung *long*

main *force*
marchand *merchant*
mare *more, better*
may *maiden*
mecul *much, great*
mede *desire, reward*
meiné *household, retainers*
mekil *much, great*
mené *crowd, retainers*
menevere *ceremonial trim (dress)*

mengeth *troubles, disturbs*
menske *dignity*
menstracie *minstrelsy*
mesel *leper*
mest *most*
mete *food, meat*
mett *dreamed*
miche *much*
micel *great, size, greatness*
mild(e), myld(e) *mild, gentle*
miri(e) *pleasing, delightful*
mode, moode *manner, countenance, frame of mind*
mold *earth*
mon *moan, lament; man*
mow *may, will*
muchel *much, great*
mycull *much, great*

nace *nose*
naute *cattle*
nedelonges *necessarily*
neghteburs *neighbors*
nithe *envy, malice*
noither *neither, whether*
noricerie *nursery, child's room*

o, oon *one*
ogain *in return, again*
olive *alive*
on lyve *alive*
ond *indignation, anger*
ones *once*
onest *honest, fitting*
onus *once*
ordanut *prepared*
other *or*
otuain *apart*
overgon *die down*
oye *again*

palfrey *riding horse*
pight, pyght *adorned, decorated*
pines *pains*
plain *amuse*
plate *armor*
plight, plyght *plighted, pledge(d)*

pouer, pouwer, pover *poor*
pousté *power*
preke(d) *spur(red)*
pres *company, crowd*
prikeand *riding, galloping*
pris, priis, prys *excellent, prize*
pulput *royal pew*

queede *bad person*
quite *exonerated*
quyted *fulfilled, rewarded*

rade *rode*
red(e) *advice, counsel*
reede *read, counsel*
rekene *recount, reckon*
rere *collect*
resaive *receive, claim*
reweli *sad*
riall *royal*
rigge *back*
riis *branches*
Rode *Cross*
rowund(e) *round(s); coin(s)*

sailles *approaches*
sale *hall*
salit *saluted, greeted*
samned *gathered*
samyt *rich silk*
saveliche *except, only*
schaftes *spears*
schameliche *shameful(ly)*
scheld *shield*
schende *shame*
schond *shame; destroy*
schop *made*
schoren *shorn, shaved*
schour *pain*
schrede *equip, dress*
schuld *should, would*
semelist *fairest*
semly *in fine array, appropriately*
sere *part(s)*
serjaunt *man-at-arms*
sese(d) *give (gave), entrust(ed), yield(ed)*

sethen, sethun, sithun *since, afterwards; then; later*
sexteyn *sexton*
sey, seyghe *saw*
shuld *would, should*
sike *sick, ill*
sikeing *sighing*
sithe *time, instance*
sithun *afterwards, then, later*
skere *exonerated, cleared*
skille *excuse*
slo *fig, sloe, plum*
sloe, slon *slay*
solempneté *solemnity*
sometour *pack-horse driver*
sond *mercy*
sond(e) *message, messenger; mercy*
so(o)the *truth, truly*
sorn *sorrow*
spare *economize, spare*
spendutte *spent*
spille *kill, destroy*
spousy, spoused *espouse(d)*
sprad *covered*
squwyne *swine*
stede, stedus, stedes *horse(s); places*
stithe *strong*
stounde, stowunde *moment, time, instant, instance*
stroie *destroy*
stuard *steward*
susten *sustain, support*
swain *young man*
sweven *dream*
swithe *quickly*

teain, tuai *two, both*
tene *vexation; pain*
tente *attended to*
termente *interment*
thaghe *though*
the *the; you*
thennes *thence*
thewis *habits*
tho *then*
thoffe *though*
thole(d) *suffer(ed)*

tite *soon*
tithinges *news, tidings*
tobrent *burned*
todrawe *violate(d)*
tognaue *gnaw to pieces*
torende *tear*
torofe *tore apart*
toschiverd *broke into pieces*
traue *believe*
travayle *pain(s)*
trew(e) *faithful*
treye *trial*
Trinyté *Trinity*
trouth, treuthe, trewthe *truth, loyalty, fidelity*
trumpes *horns*
tuay, tuai, tway *two*

underfong *undertake*
unkouth *untaught, unaware*
unsemand *pretending*
unwrain *reveal*

vetaylet *supplied*
vouwed *vowed*

wald *would*
war(e) *aware, alert*
ware *were*
warld *world*
wede *clothing, dress; armor*
wele, weele *success, good fortune*
welke *walked*
wemme *blemish*
wend *believed*
wend(e) *go, travel*
wene *think*
wer *danger*
weyndut *went, wended*
whilom *at one time, once upon a time*
wight, wyght *brave, person*
withstode *withstood, persisted*
witte *find out*
wo(o) *sadness, ill fortune*
wode, wood *mad, crazy*
won *dwelling, possessions*
wond *hesitate*

wonyd *lived, resided*

worn *were*

worthli, worthy *deserving, stately,
valuable*

wrake *trouble*

wray *betray*

wreke *avenge*

wrengand *wringing*

wrethe *wrath*

wrothlich *angrily*

wyght *person*

wynd *fared*

yaf *gave*

yare *fair; ready, prepared, readily*

ybliscd *blessed*

ycleped *named, called*

ycorn *born, descended*

yede *went*

yere *before*

yhote *called*

yif, yive *if*

yode *went*

yplight *truly*

ywys *certainly, indeed*