

Three Purgatory Poems

The Gast of Gy

Sir Owain

The Vision of Tundale

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General Introduction

The genesis of the idea of Purgatory lies ultimately in the inevitability, finality, and mystery of death. To be human is to be aware of death and to be aware of death is to wonder what becomes of us when this quotidian life comes to an end. In the history of Christianity the consideration of the nature of life after death took varied and complex forms. From the time of the four evangelists and St. Paul, the idea of an afterlife of reward or punishment is clearly present. The acceptance of Purgatory as a middle place or state between Heaven and Hell was slower to develop. In the Middle Ages, Purgatory became a central, perhaps crucial, issue in the contemplation of the hereafter. Although speculation, theological and literary, existed from as early as the second century, it was not until the Second Council of Lyons (1274) that the doctrine was dogmatically asserted, and it was not until the Council of Trent (1545–63), during the Counter-Reformation, that it was extensively defined.

In one sense, the doctrine of Purgatory is essential to medieval Christianity in that it accommodates God's justice and mercy and connects the living and the dead. However, the nature of the "middle state" never enjoyed a clear and monolithic clarification. Hazy ideas become clearer, but are often only put into sharp relief to be debated yet again. The doctrine emerged, in fits and starts, without any clear sequence, and was an often confusing and contentious mixture of Scripture, folklore, popular belief, ecclesiastical pronouncements, and theological speculation.

The history of Purgatory is a concatenation of questions, variously and non-sequentially addressed — and then once again debated or left in abeyance. The core of the doctrine is that after death souls not directly received into Heaven or consigned to Hell experience a period of purgation or purification that eventually allows for beatitude. Beyond this, there were numerous questions, foremost of which was whether Purgatory was a place or a state. Related and subsidiary questions abounded from the inception of the Church through the Middle Ages. What, precisely, is the condition of the souls therein? How can souls, spiritual entities, suffer corporeal punishments? Is their punishment a matter of degree? How long does it last? Is the punishment, punitive or purificatory, by fire or by ice, or is it by an assault on all the senses? (In this matter, fire of some sort remained the most popular and enduring torment.) Are the souls aware that they will eventually be saved and, if so, do they know when? What do they know of the affairs of this world, and are they ever able to resist it for any reason? Can the prayers and offerings, called suffrages, of the living do any good for the souls in Purgatory? If Purgatory is a place, what is its geography?

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Such questions as these were not taken up in a systematic way. Indeed, Jacques Le Goff in *The Birth of Purgatory*, the most comprehensive history of the doctrine, argues that such a basic question as whether Purgatory was a place or state was not even provisionally resolved until the late twelfth century — and then not definitively or permanently, as the ambiguities of the Council of Trent suggest.¹ This question, like all the others, appeared in a kind of peek-a-boo development over the centuries, often complicated by the incorporation of suspect sources, doubtful datings of authorities by other authorities, and a substantial admixture of folk beliefs and alternative pagan traditions such as the Irish otherworld. If any direction is discernable, it is an evolution in which the idea of Purgatory shifts from a "temporary Hell" to a process of purification that emphasizes cleansing at least as much as torment.

Some idea of Purgatory existed from the earliest days of Christianity. The scriptural basis, however, is slender and ambiguous and is, perhaps, one of the reasons for the somewhat chaotic development of the idea. References to baptism by fire occur in Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16; punishment for sin with a possible end of the punishment, in Matthew 5:25–26 and 12:32; Christ's "descent into Hell" between His Crucifixion and Resurrection in Matthew 12:40, Acts 2:31, and Romans 10:6–7; the existence of souls "under the earth" in Apocalypse (Revelation)² 5:3, 13; approval of prayers for the dead in 1 Corinthians 15:29–30 and 2 Maccabees 12:41–46; and, perhaps most influentially in the Middle Ages, the "test by fire" in 1 Corinthians 3:11–15.

Scriptural accounts were supplemented with a variety of non-Christian authorities whose ideas circulated from antiquity: Zoroastrian beliefs about darkness, fire, and tests after death; elaborate Egyptian accounts of the torments of the dead; Plato's idea of justice, which required variations in the nature of the afterlife; Virgil's underworld, in which there are not only gradations of torment, but also a relationship between the punishment and the crime. Even more significant is the large body of apocryphal literature that circulated during the early centuries of the Church, much of which has survived: the Book of Enoch, the Apocalypses of St. Peter, Ezra, St. Paul, and St. John (only the last of which eventually achieved canonicity), and the Gospel of Nicodemus. Though these works are generally fanciful accounts of Heaven or Hell, they were easily assimilated into discussions of Purgatory.

Perhaps the most influential text in later centuries is the *Apocalypse of St. Paul*, which tells of a visit to the "Heavens" and Hell by St. Paul. The earliest version is thought to have been written in Greek and was advertised as an additional writing by St. Paul recovered from his house in Tarsus, along with a pair of Paul's shoes, in 388. The story was translated into Armenian, Coptic,

¹ See Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, pp. 84, 357.

² Since the Vulgate was the primary source for biblical information during the Middle Ages, I have utilized the Douay-Rheims translation of the Vulgate for all references to Scripture. Some attributions, particularly those among the Psalms, may differ in both chapter and verse from those found in Protestant Bibles.

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Old Slavonic, Syriac, Greek, and into eight Latin redactions from the fourth to the twelfth centuries, as well as many European vernacular languages, of which the most important for our purposes is the thirteenth-century English "Visio Sancti Pauli," based on the fourth redaction of the Latin version.¹ In the English text Paul is taken by St. Michael to meet the guardian angels and to the "Place of the Righteous"; he sees what happens to the good when they die and go to a kind of "New Jerusalem" of salvation; he meets the Hebrew prophets and speaks with Enoch, who was subsumed, body and soul, into Heaven.² But he also sees the world of torment, though it is Hell, what he sees became embodied in numerous later accounts of Purgatory. He sees sinners immersed to varying degrees in a river of fire, cast into pits by demons, and invaded by hideous vermin. Across Hell stretches a bridge from which it is possible to fall into torment. In addition to these details which became part of the literary iconography of Purgatory, it is made clear that souls are judged at the time of death in a "Particular Judgment" and thus do not have to wait until Doomsday, the "General Judgment," for assignment to their eternal destiny. Many later writers seem to have converted the sufferings seen by Paul into the sufferings of Purgatory, thus contributing to occasional overlappings of views of Purgatory and Hell and sometimes to a conception of Purgatory as a kind of temporary Hell.

But serious theological considerations of Purgatory were well underway before the *Apocalypse of St. Paul*. The earliest theological commentaries on Purgatory were by Tertullian (late second century), St. Clement of Alexandria (early third century), and Origen (mid third century).³ Tertullian, who later was declared a heretic because of other beliefs, proposed a place of "refreshment" for the dead awaiting the Second Coming of Christ. Tertullian also held, on the basis of 2 Machabees 12:41–46 and 1 Corinthians 15:29–30, that the prayers of the living could benefit the dead. These views, expressed so early by a renowned theologian, provide a notable example of how doctrine can weave simultaneously through authoritative theological argument and dubious apocrypha.

The apocryphal *Book of Nicodemus*, mentioned above, although not written until the fourth century and truly influential only much later, told that the fate of souls could be altered after death and presented a vague idea of a limbo that was rather a place of waiting than punishment, but not strictly reserved for the pre-Christian patriarchs. To further exemplify this interpenetration of theology, apocrypha, and legend, there is the early-third-century story of "The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas," a vision in which Perpetua prays for a "place of refreshment" for her deceased little brother as she sees him trying unsuccessfully to drink from a fountain. Thus, the story is illustrative of early concerns about what the living can do for the dead. So we are left with a second-century

¹ For an edition of "Visio Sancti Pauli" based on the version in the Vernon Manuscript, see Carl Horstmann, "Die Vision der heiligen Paulus," *Englische Studien* 1 (1877), 295–99.

² For the translation of Enoch, see Genesis 5:23–24.

³ See Le Goff, pp. 46–47, 52–57.

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theologian, a fourth-century apocryphon, and a third-century legend all commenting, with various nuances, on incipient notions of Purgatory.

Although the idea of Purgatory is more a product and concern of the Western Latin Church (indeed the Greek Eastern Church had to be brought into line with Western thought at the Second Council of Lyons in 1274), it was Clement of Alexandria and Origen, writing in Greek, who argued that punishment by God must be to educate and, thereby, contribute to salvation. Neither went so far as Tertullian, who seemed to believe that eventually all would be saved. Basing his ideas especially on Old Testament notices of fire as a divine means of punishment and St. Paul's notion, in *Corinthians*, of a purifying fire after death, Clement concluded that the fire mentioned in Scripture must be purifying or "cleansing," because God cannot be vindictive. Origen went further in speculating on the fate of souls after death. Indeed, he seems to have seen Hell as a kind of Purgatory in which redemptive suffering is unfortunately eternal. Although vague on the circumstances of souls until the Last Judgment, he held that on Doomsday there occurs a fire that purifies; for some the fire lasts only an instant; the truly sinful must endure longer periods. Origen, unlike Tertullian and Clement, does not suggest that praying for the dead can have any effect on their fate, but he does introduce the idea of gradations of punishment, or necessary purification, and it is clear in Origen that the experience of souls is individual in the sense that each person's experience is related to the life he or she has lived.⁶

Late in the third century, St. Ambrose took these ideas further by distinguishing three categories: the righteous (the saved), the truly wicked (the damned), and those who would endure a Pealine trial by fire. For the third group, St. Ambrose believed that the prayers of the living could be efficacious even though some degree of fire was inevitable for all of them. Thus, Ambrose perpetuated the idea of gradations of punishment (or purification) and trial, but, more explicitly than anyone before, emphasized the hopeful note that the living could help the dead. He thereby advanced the doctrine of suffrages: prayers, masses, or other devotions offered on behalf of the dead to reduce or eliminate their remaining time in Purgatory.

It is St. Augustine (354–430), however, who, learning so much from St. Ambrose about how to read Scripture, made the earliest comments that would inform later debates about the organization of the afterlife. The idea that suffrages are efficacious is clear in his prayers for his mother, Monica, in *The Confessions*, though there is no hint of the idea of purchased masses and memorials. Although it seems that Augustine is more interested in Hell in *The Enchiridion*, he does refer to a fire that is different from the fire of damnation (*Enchiridion* 18.69 / *PL* 40.265).⁷ Most importantly in these works, he divides the afterlife into four segments, a division that would be influential well into the twelfth century and beyond. The first Augustinian part of the afterlife was

⁶ For a full exposition of the views of Clement and Origen, see Le Goff, pp. 52–57.

⁷ The citations are from Louis A. Anselm's translation of the *Enchiridion*, cited in the Bibliography, followed by the Latin citations from the *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne.

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for the *boni*, the truly virtuous such as saints and martyrs, and this place is Paradise. At the other end of the spectrum are the *maliti*, the unmistakably evil, who are damned to eternal punishment in the retributive fires of Hell. The two middle groups are the *nulli non valde*, the not completely wicked, and the *non valde boni*, the not completely good. Both of these groups could be assisted by suffrages (*Enchiridion* 29.110 / *PZ* 49.283), though it seems that for the former repentance and the prayers of the living created a "more tolerable" Hell, while the latter would pass through a penitential fire at the time of the Last Judgment and be admitted to Heaven, though the purgative fire could be lessened by the benefactions of the living.

Augustine is not entirely clear on the fate of the two middle groups; indeed, he saw their existence in a "state" rather than a "place" and was more concerned about repentance by human beings while living. Nevertheless, he established for succeeding centuries a clear connection between repentance and purgation, a major theme of later puratorial literature, and suggested a kind of non-spatial geography of the afterlife that was crucial in later developments. St. Gregory the Great, who became pope in 590, held in his *Dialogues* an essentially Augustinian view that provided succeeding centuries with exempla for sermons that were of great significance in defining the more familiar Purgatory of Dante and his successors. It would be hard to overemphasize the importance of Gregory's *Dialogues* in establishing the torments of Purgatory as a powerful motive for repentance in this life.

Jacques Le Goff suggests that even though learned debate on the doctrine of Purgatory was muted from the fifth to the eleventh centuries, Purgatory did not disappear from folk-consciousness and penitential practices.⁸ The doctrine thrived in this period in a plethora of works dealing with visions and journeys. Although these are usually of Heaven or Hell, the infernal parts kept vividly alive the images of puratorial torment which were to re-emerge in the twelfth century, for it should be remembered that in the ambiguous and non-sequential development of doctrine, ideas of Hell and Purgatory often overlapped to the point that Purgatory was seen as a mild or temporary version of the Hell of these spiritual visions. Thus, these visions and voyages, which are so well chronicled by Eileen Gardiner,⁹ provide the bridge between Augustine and the revival of theological speculation on Purgatory in the twelfth century.

St. Gregory the Great provided the appropriate link between Augustine and what was to occur from the fifth to the eleventh centuries, when the theologians and didacts once again took up their quills with puratorial fervor. St. Gregory's *Dialogues*, as has been noted, incorporated exempla that kept the consideration of Purgatory alive in the sermons of the succeeding centuries, but many other works contributed as well. Most prominent was Bede's "Vision of Drythelm" in his *Ecclesiastical History* (c. 731), recorded under the year 696. Drythelm is a good man, who

⁸ See Le Goff, pp. 100–07.

⁹ See Eileen Gardiner, *Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante*. Professor Gardiner includes excellent commentary with her translations of twelve "visions."

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appears to die; his soul is led to the otherworld by a shining figure, apparently an angel, a characteristic guide for visionaries. Drythelm sees the punishment by fire and ice of diverse sins, a motif that becomes common in subsequent visions. Most importantly, Drythelm sees, between Heaven and Hell, souls whose fate has not yet been decided, who are in an intermediate Purgatory-like state, because they are not so obviously worthy as those who have been certainly saved. Besides raising issues that frequently recur in visions and tracts, the "Vision of Drythelm" reminds us of an especially significant question about the state of souls after death: will they receive their assignment immediately, or will they have to wait until the Last Judgment for permanent disposition? This remarkably clear question remains a matter of controversy in the fourteenth century and beyond.

"The Vision of Drythelm" is not alone in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* as an example of a purgatorial visit. Bede also reports, under the year 633, the "Vision of Fuesus," the first example of a visionary who apparently visited the afterworld physically, since he returns with burn marks on his shoulder, a sign that he himself has suffered, if only slightly, during his visionary journey. And Bede's work is only a part of a continuing vision tradition during the "silence" of the early Middle Ages. There are numerous others, including "Wetti's Vision" (ninth century) and "Charles the Fat's Vision" (late ninth century). These visions seem informal rather than purgatorial, but they do provide later centuries with glimpses of various punishments and much of the furniture that will decorate later, more clearly purgatorial visions and visits. One might even include in this catalogue "The Voyages of St. Brendan" (c. 486–578), a ninth-century legend preserved in an early-tenth-century work, which includes Brendan's journeys to magical, mystical islands. Although still less obviously purgatorial than the previous examples, the journeys of St. Brendan remind us of the Celtic contribution to developing ideas of otherworlds, especially significant because Ireland will become so important in later visions, especially those of "St. Patrick's Purgatory," but many others as well.

That these visions and journeys provide a continuity between the fifth century and the eleventh becomes apparent when one notices that they are not simply folktales that live (and perhaps die) in popular imagination, but are told and retold by chroniclers like Bede, William of Malmesbury (c. 1095–1143) in *Gesta regum Anglorum*, Roger of Wendover (d. 1236) in his *Chronicles*, Vincent of Beauvais (c. 1190–1264) in his *Speculum*, and Jacobus de Voragine (1231–98) in his extraordinarily popular *Legenda aurea*. Two facts make these works especially important. First, multiple versions of the same stories seem to have survived and been passed on. For example, Bede's version of "Drythelm" dates the event in 696, Roger of Wendover places it in 699, and Vincent of Beauvais in 941. Second, the chroniclers wrote well past the time by which theological speculation on Purgatory had resumed in earnest.

Although little new was added to the formation of the doctrine of Purgatory until its resurgence in theological speculation in the twelfth century, the visions and voyages helped to keep the considerations of Purgatory alive. In addition, practical problems, such as the question of the efficacy of suffrages, continue to crop up. Indeed, the Cluniac Benedictines established All Souls'

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Day in the early eleventh century, indicating that prayers for the dead remained a matter of concern. Le Goff, on whom I have relied for much of the chronology of early speculations on Purgatory, argues that, although vague elements and indistinct notions of some kind of purgatorial experience, engendered by early theologies, survived through the second half of the first millennium, it was not until the late twelfth century that Purgatory really achieved the status of a "place," a true geographical location. Although there is no doubt that interest in Purgatory as a physical reality intensified in the late twelfth century, Le Goff may have tried to be more definitive in establishing a precise dating for "the birth of Purgatory" as a place than the facts allow. He cites two concrete pieces of evidence for his strict historical line of demarcation: the use of Purgatory as a noun (*purgatorium*) rather than as an adjective (*purgatoriarum, -a, -am*) by Peter the Chanter in 1170, and the composition of the Latin account of Sir Owain's entry, body and soul, into "St. Patrick's Purgatory" (Lough Derg, County Donegal, Ireland) in the late 1180s. The origins of the idea of Purgatory as a place cannot, I think, be dated so specifically. Certainly there was much attention given to Purgatory as a place at this time, but, as early as the seventh century, Furseus' *burns* suggest that he visited a real place, and, at the other extreme, the Council of Trent (1545–63) was still not dogmatic about "place" in the sixteenth century.

There is no doubt, however, that ideas of Purgatory were being clarified and challenged. Significant contributions were made throughout the twelfth century before Peter the Chanter. Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141) was interested both in the problem of place and in the other very old question of how physical punishments could be applied to incorporeal souls. Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) suggested a three-part division composed of Hell, of some kind of "place" of purification, and of a location on the face of the earth where the just waited in peace for eventual entry into Heaven. Thus, the question of when entry to Heaven was possible had not been resolved, but one can see hints of a drift towards a simplified three-part afterlife consisting of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, despite the retention of some kind of "place of waiting."¹⁰ Gratian of Bologna, in his *Decretum* (1140) reinforced the long-developing idea of an antechamber, or "place of waiting" between death and the resurrection of the body, during which suffrages (once again) were efficacious. And Peter Lombard, in his *Sentences* (1155–57), began more clearly to merge the two middle parts of Augustine's four-part division into a single "middle" place.

¹⁰ The "place of waiting" was sometimes, especially in literary works, transformed into the "terrestrial paradise," a spiritual Garden of Eden at the end of Purgatory, where souls waited in a state of pre-lapsarian bliss for their assured eventual entry into Heaven. See the explanatory note to lines 775 ff. of *Sir Owain*. The idea is most highly elaborated and given the greatest theological significance in Dante's *Purgatorio*, xxix–xxxii.

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In any case, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are replete with commentaries essentially consistent with a three-part afterlife.¹¹ The idea of a single Purgatory was widely promulgated, at first especially by the mendicant orders of Franciscans and Dominicans. One might cynically argue that the doctrine was well suited to the situation of the mendicant friars, who could use gruesome exempla based on the pains (now made more graphic by the visions discussed earlier) of a single, unified Purgatory to encourage repentance and to provide income, because of the now quite firmly established doctrine of suffrages, which usually took the form of almsgiving, memorial masses for a price, and even donation of endowments for perpetual prayers for the deceased. The possibilities for corruption were great and resulted, by the fourteenth century, in many satiric caricatures of fat, greedy friars. The situation was further complicated by the development of the doctrine of Indulgences — remissions in whole (plenary) or part (partial) of the purgatorial punishment required for venial (less serious) sins and for mortal (damnable) sins that had been forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance but not completely satisfied by repentance at the time of death. Moreover, the living could help the dead by securing indulgences on their behalf — a somewhat elaborate way of providing suffrages. In 1300, Pope Boniface VIII offered a plenary indulgence, at considerable cost, for pilgrimages to the Holy Land and later put the indulgences on offer more flexibly simply for the donation to the Church of the cost of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Indulgences have their own history, too lengthy to probe here, but they were clearly related to the enduring question of suffrages found in almsgiving and memorial masses.

The reality, however, cannot be reduced to cynical generalizations. One motive does not necessarily destroy the validity of others. Thus, Franciscans and Dominicans might benefit from doctrines of indulgences and suffrages even while believing devoutly in the doctrine of Purgatory to which especially the Dominicans contributed so much intellectually over the centuries. In fact, it was rather the Cistercians, the austere reformers of Benedictine monasticism, led by the venerable St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who were the first and foremost promulgators of the doctrine as it came to be understood by the beginning of the thirteenth century. Regardless of motives, the eleventh through thirteenth centuries are replete with serious considerations of the doctrine of Purgatory. Theological treatises flourished in the works of commentators such as Peter Damiani, Alberic, Anselm, Gratian, Peter Lombard, and St. Bonaventure, and didactic tracts, such as "St. Patrick's Purgatory" (the story of Sir Owain) and "The Vision of Tundale."

Foremost among thirteenth-century theologians who addressed the doctrine of Purgatory was the great Dominican "angelic doctor," St. Thomas Aquinas. It was Aquinas who most clearly and powerfully asserted the sense of the doctrine for the later Middle Ages, and provided the clarity

¹¹ Two additional places or states were sporadically mentioned in the discussion, although they were not directly relevant to the central problem of organizing Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. They are the *Limbus Patrum*, where Old Testament patriarchs awaited the coming of Christ, and the *Limbo Infanticum*, where unbaptized children were placed. See Le Goff, pp. 220-21.

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and coherence so influential on Dante's ultimate imaginative embodiment of the doctrine at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

While admitting that Scripture says nothing of the location of Purgatory, Aquinas, especially in the *Summa contra Gentiles* (3.140–46) and the *Summa theologiae* (repeatedly), including the "Supplementum" added by his students and doubtlessly Thomistic in its opinions, gave shape and clarity even when simply articulating the significant questions we have seen emerge over and over. Aquinas did not try to resolve all disputes, but he did lay a firm foundation for the doctrine in the idea that Divine Justice requires a place for the purification of souls who have not completed their penance for sins forgiven. In accordance with the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), Aquinas believed that the priest could absolve the "culpa" of mortal sin but the "poena" (pain or punishment) still had to be satisfied by repentance (*ST* 3. qu. 84–90). Aquinas held that such repentance could be achieved in this life, but Divine Justice required a second chance, in Purgatory, if the repentance had begun and the purpose of amendment was firm. He distinguished between contrition, sorrow for sin because it is an offense against God, and attrition, sorrow engendered by the fear of punishment. Attrition was efficacious, but more clearly required purgatorial purification (*ST* Suppl. qu. 1–5, 12–15). Likewise, less serious venial sins could be expiated after death. The foundation of Aquinas' views was in the doctrine of "the Communion of Saints." Following his Dominican colleague, Albertus Magnus, Aquinas saw the Church as composed of three interrelated groups: the "Church Triumphant," those souls who had achieved salvation; the "Church Militant," human beings in the process of working out their salvation, and the "Church Suffering," the dead who need purification before beatitude (*ST* Suppl. 71).

The doctrine does not seem astonishingly innovative, and indeed Aquinas was not the first or only theologian to articulate it, but Aquinas emphasized the essential unity of the three groups, under a just God, and thereby was able to show an interdependence, a community of all Christians at whatever stage in their existence. As a result, the doctrine of the "Communion of Saints" implies a kind of reciprocity among all Christians. The saved souls, all of them saints because they have achieved beatitude, may be invoked through prayer by both living Christians and suffering souls to assist them in their journey to beatitude. Even more striking for the doctrine of Purgatory is the reciprocity between human souls on earth and the suffering souls after death. The living may pray for the dead, one of the few ideas about Purgatory with some scriptural justification, and thereby assist them towards Paradise. Aquinas avoided mathematical calculations about how long various souls would suffer and how much quantitative good human prayer could do, but he was clear that the actions of the living can benefit the undamned dead. Then, of course, when the suffering souls achieve salvation, they can be invoked by members of the "Church Militant." The relationship is not simple *quid pro quo*, but an enduring connection of charity.

Aquinas' formulation has important consequences. First, it implies that souls are judged at the time of their death and therefore begin their purification immediately, not having to await the General Judgment. Second, suffrages are firmly defined as efficacious. The best suffrages, according to Aquinas, are prayer, masses, and almsgiving — and their efficacy is based on the

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fundamental Christian doctrine of charity, the greatest of the theological virtues. Third, the union between the living and the souls in Purgatory implies a connection that, without denying the necessity of personal penance and satisfaction for sin, creates a world in which the living and the dead are not entirely cut off from each other. Although not a wholly new idea, indeed Aquinas often formulates or consolidates earlier ideas, it is a vibrant connection, founded as it is in the doctrine of the "Communion of Saints." The damned are damned and, therefore, beyond consideration. The saved may be invoked, but it is the continuing "conversation" between souls on earth and souls in Purgatory that gives an especially human and humane cast to Aquinas' explication of the doctrine. The dead are not completely lost to us. Suffrages, long an important part of the doctrine especially for Dominicans, are given a human face in that they become not only a financial opportunity for friars and a theological duty for the living, but also a solace to the grief-stricken.

Aquinas had spoken, but, unsurprisingly, controversy did not disappear, not even after the ultimate total rejection of the doctrine by Luther and Calvin. Aquinas did not answer all of the questions, and, as had long been the case, resolved matters became unresolved, earlier opinions were periodically revived, and later versions of literary works often renewed issues from sources centuries earlier. The three poems in this volume provide a good example. Two, *Sir Orfeo* and *The Vision of Tiersdale*, are fourteenth-century works in Middle English that preserve and also put their own imprint on doctrines from twelfth-century Latin sources; one, *The Gest of Gy*, also written in the fourteenth century, seems at least in part a Dominican attempt to dissuade Pope John XXII from his tendency to relegate judgment on all souls until Doomsday, by this time an almost heretical view. Thus, revival and reconsideration and dispute endured. What remains clear is that the doctrine, no matter what the nuances of interpretation, had an enormous appeal and poignancy into the fourteenth century and well beyond. After all, it had everything: adventure and adversity, suffering and excitement, and, most importantly, a profound theological warning wrapped in the joyful solace of communion with the departed and hope for our own sinful selves.

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Standard Abbreviations

CT *Canterbury Tales*

MED *Middle English Dictionary*

OCD *Oxford Classical Dictionary*

OED *Oxford English Dictionary*

PL *Patrologia Latina* (Ed. J.-P. Migne)

TC *Troilus and Criseyde*

The Gast of Gy

Introduction

The Gast of Gy puts a human face on the doctrine of Purgatory, not only in the amiable, logical, and patient person of the *Gast* of *Gy* himself, who is a puratorial spirit whom we hear but do not see, but also in the careful and cautious dialogue between the *Gast* and the *Pryor* who questions him. That informative, didactic exchange, leavened with several sections that emphasize the human and humane ambience of the poem, is not invigorated with gaudescent, pictorial visions of the afterlife designed to terrify the wicked into virtue or frighten us with the fearful details of the punishment that may await sinners even after sins have been confessed and forgiven. Rather, the dialogue, in its concern for the *Gast*'s wife and for the suffering of all souls, presents a rational and compassionate context in which Purgatory emerges as a doctrine of hope rather than of horror. Much of the matter would have been familiar to an audience already fascinated by the torments of Purgatory and consoled by the comfort the doctrine implied in its maintenance of a connection between the living and the dead. They would have heard many other stories of the torments of the dead and would have heard vivid exempla in the preaching of learned if sometimes disingenuous friars, and in the sermons of their parish priests who relied on the teachings of their more learned colleagues. Besides its terrifying fire-and-brimstone side, Purgatory offers a comforting note, a theory of hope revisited both for the living and for their departed loved ones. *The Gast of Gy* shows an awareness of post-mortem tortures, but concentrates its logic and feeling on a more reassuring doctrine, namely the comfort that spiritual reciprocity between the living and the dead can provide.

The Gast of Gy was enormously popular, partly because of its morbidity, partly because of its consolation, and partly because of its historicity. Based roughly on *De Spiritu Guidonis*, a first-person account by the Dominican Jean Gobi of his experiences with the spirit of *Gy* in the Southern French town of Alès, or Alais, from late December 1323 to 12 January 1324, the poem reports strange events. There is controversy about who wrote the original account in Latin; although there does seem to have been a Dominican named Jean Gobi in Alès in the 1320s, and he does identify himself in the original account, there is no evidence that he was a prior. Johannes de Fordun (d. c. 1384), in his *Scotichronicon*, claims to have a letter from Gobi to Pope John XXII explaining the events, but the circumstances are by no means clear. There does exist a letter, sent in 1327 from John de Rouse, later bishop of Carlisle, to Walter Reynolds, bishop of Worcester and later archbishop of Canterbury, attesting to the events. Certainly by the early 1330s, there was a longer, more detailed account in Latin in the third person, which does not mention Gobi by name, but likely was presented to John XXII as a correction to the pope's semi-historical flirtation with

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the idea that souls began neither purgation nor salvation until the Last Judgment. It is probably from this extended version that the narrative exploded into the popularity it enjoyed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. If one includes several fragments, there are extant at least sixty versions of the narrative: thirty-six Latin, nine English, six French, four German, and one each in Italian, Swedish, Irish, Welsh, and Spanish. The popularity was undoubtedly widespread. The English versions include two in four-stress couplets, three in quatrains, three in prose, and a five-stress couplet printed fragment. The present edition is based on the better preserved of the four-stress couplet versions, written in the mid-fourteenth century in a Northern, probably Yorkshire, dialect and preserved in Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson Poet. 175. All of the versions long enough to provide evidence agree on the basic elements of the story, although one English prose version mistakenly states the year as 1333, and both of the four-stress English couplet versions identify Alés (Ales in the Middle English) as thirty miles from Bayonne. This is clearly erroneous, probably influenced by an early Italian version that located the events near Bologna, thus the error. All other versions print some form of Avignon, a much more likely location since it is indeed about thirty miles from Alés and was the seat of John XXIII's papacy during the so-called "Babylonian Captivity" (1309–1417).

The story is a simple narrative even if its theological issues and implications are complex. On 20 November 1323, Gy, a citizen of Alés, dies. Eight days later, strange noises in his home begin to terrify his wife, who, fearing either a demonic spirit or perhaps a malevolent Gy, seeks help from the Dominican convent on 27 December, the Feast of St. John the Evangelist. After proper preparations and precautions, the Dominican Prior goes to Gy's house and engages in an extensive conversation with the disembodied spirit of Gy. The conversation elucidates fourteenth-century, especially Dominican, views on Purgatory. The Prior, much enlightened by the *Gast* and assured that the *Gast* will enter Heaven at Easter, leaves and then returns with a larger clerical entourage on the Feast of the Epiphany for another shorter but significant conversation. The poem then concludes with a report that representatives of the pope visited Gy's house at Easter, found no sign of him, and concluded that the *Gast* had indeed gone to Heaven. The fascination and joy in the poem itself are in the enlightened nature of the dialogue between the *Gast* and the Prior, in the elucidation of many features of puratorial doctrine whose terrors are more than overcome by its consolations, in its gentle but clear moral advice to the living, and perhaps most importantly, in the humane ambience and human context in which the conversation occurs.

The narrative belongs to the genre of the "ghost story," a popular form of moral instruction, in which a spirit returns to guide the living or to seek help for himself. It is to be distinguished from the even more popular "vision literature," which appeared in early Christian times and flourished from the late twelfth through the fifteenth centuries, and in which the "visionary" sees, often quite vividly, or visits the terrifying sights of puratorial punishment. *The Gast of Gy* offers no visit to the horrific worlds of Purgatory or Hell and no graphic representations of the sufferings of the damned or of souls undergoing purgation. Gy rather belongs to the tradition of narratives in which spirits return temporarily to this world for their own benefit or to give salutary advice.

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The early Church had resisted and discouraged such stories and ideas as superstitious or perhaps even demonic in origin. There is a long tradition dating from classical antiquity of damned souls returning for their own purposes, but early Christian commentators discouraged belief in visitors from the next world. St. Augustine (354–430) rejected the possibility of purgatorial spirits returning to earth for any reason, arguing in *De Cura pro Mortuis*, that a "spiritual image" could appear, but not a truly ghostly visitor. There persisted, however, a clerical tradition that there was a distinction between good and bad ghosts, and there was continuing speculation about whether the saved could reappear to help or whether the damned could reappear to beguile or torment. Thus, despite official discouragement by many theologians, ideas of the malevolent damned and the benevolent saved would not entirely disappear. As early as Sulpicius Severus' *Life of St. Martin* (c. 420), Martin is reported to have dispelled the spirit of a robber around whom a cult had developed.

Although a history of such accounts is quite beyond the scope of an introduction to *The Ghost of Gy*, some landmarks may be noted. St. Gregory the Great, in his influential *Dialogi* (593–94), which provided a source of purgatorial exempla for centuries of preachers to come, recounts the story of Geronimus, bishop of Capua, who came upon the spirit of the deceased deacon Paschianus doing penance in the Roman baths at Angulin where Paschianus had committed an unnamed sin. In a few days the prayers of Geronimus deliver Paschianus from his purgatorial duties in the baths. The story establishes, with the eminent authority of St. Gregory, that souls from Purgatory may not only return to earth but also, at least in some cases, be sent to the scene of their sin as a part of their punishment. A few centuries after Gregory, from about the ninth century, there appeared, mostly in monastic circles, stories in which the doctrine of suffrages, the idea that prayers, masses, and almsgiving done or provided by the living could help the dead, is emphasized in narrative examples. It is not, however, until the eleventh and twelfth centuries, that period of renewed interest in Purgatory, that narratives of visits from the dead became more common in the works of chroniclers and clerics such as William of Malmesbury (1096–1142), Geoffrey of Monmouth (c. 1100–1155), Walter Map (c. 1140–1208), Giraldus Cambrensis (c. 1146–1220), and Gervase of Tilbury (d. c. 1235).

In the *Treatise of St. Gregory*, Pope Gregory's disfigured mother appears to him during Mass and admits that she killed an illegitimate child and was embarrassed to confess such a heinous sin. That she should even be in Purgatory is generous, but, after saying a cycle of thirty masses, Gregory sees her beautified and beatified. The value of suffrages is clear and prominent in the especially influential story of "The Ghost of Beaucaire" recounted by Gervase of Tilbury. A dissolute young man is exiled and dies in a brawl. After first appearing to an eleven-year-old virgin, he is questioned by others, including the prior of Terascon, between July and September 1211. The ghost explains that after death good and bad angels fight over the soul; after a period of wandering, souls go to Purgatory and gradually progress to the Beatific Vision. The geography is fuzzy, but it is significant that suffrages help the souls along the way. The form is that of a rigid interrogation and, although much is said of Purgatory, the story lacks the theological complexity, human

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ambience, and charitable disposition of *The Gast of Gy*, though it contains an abundance of controversial details.

Such narratives were disseminated by mendicant preachers and often used as *exempla* in admonitory sermons, especially by Dominicans, but also in the Sunday sermons of less well-educated persons. The idea even appears in secular literature in the appearance of Guenevere's mother from a purgatorial place in *The Awntyrs of Arthur*.¹ Debates abounded and accounts proliferated from the late eleventh century on.

Enter *The Gast of Gy*, now a mid-fourteenth-century version in English. Although most earlier ghost stories had appeared in the form of the "tractatus" or "chronicle," *The Gast of Gy* is a work of imaginative literature as well as a presentation of purportedly authoritative doctrine. In Wells' *Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, the poem had been listed under "Tales"; Francis Lee Utley in Severs and Hartung's revision of the *Manual* includes the poem under "Dialogues, Debates, and Catechisms" and asserts that it is of "no great merit in style or structure," though perhaps deserving of attention for theological and historical reasons.² I would suggest, however, that it is precisely its merit as imaginative literature that sets *Gy* apart and accounts for its extraordinary popularity in the vernacular in its own time. In the Middle English couplet version, *Gy* emerges as more than a report or *exemplum* or even an interrogation in the manner of "The Ghost of Beaucare." It offers fascinating insights into the workings of the world.

Certainly *The Gast of Gy* conveys much of the information of a "tract," providing opinions on many topics of debate. It is, thus, on one level, an exposition of the whole discourse on Purgatory. Purgatory is a place, not just a state; purgatorial pain is by purifying fire; there is a Particular Judgment shortly after death when the soul is assigned its fate and proceeds to experience it; souls are privy to what happens on earth, at least in part, but have no special knowledge of Heaven or Hell; there is a dual Purgatory — a "cornece" Purgatory beneath the earth and a "departable" Purgatory, one set apart for a particular person, where the soul suffers at the place of the sin; souls not only know that they will eventually complete their sufferings and go to Heaven, they even know when; the sentence can be commuted by God after death; suffrages, and this is the dominant theological point of the poem, benefit the dead; nevertheless, repentance in this world is much to be preferred to purgation in the next. This catalogue may seem benign, but most points were subjects of acrimonious debate from the time of the efflorescence of the doctrine of Purgatory in the late twelfth century to the time of *Gy* and well beyond to the Sessions of the Council of Trent (1545–63), despite repeated attempts to settle some of the issues even at the Second Council of Lyons (1274) and the Council of Florence (1438–45).

¹ See *Awntyrs of Arthur in Sir Gawayn: Eleven Romances and Tales*, ed. Thomas Hahn (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 169–226.

² John Edwin Wells, ed., *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050–1400*, pp. 170–72, and Albert E. Hartung, ed., *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050–1300*, 3 698–700.

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The Gast of Gy, however, deserves our attention as more than a catalogue of disputes about Purgatory. As imaginative fiction, it is structured around the dialogue between the *Gast* and the *Pryor*, a searching interlocutor who engages the *Gast* in discussion for his own benefit and for the benefit of the reader. The *Pryor* is neither the grim inquisitor that some would have him, nor an ignorant buffoon in serious need of basic instruction. Thus, it is hard to agree with those who would see his role as a satire on the ignorance of the clergy. Rather, the *Pryor* is a patient questioner, always careful, as he should be, about whether the *Gast* is demonic or benign, as he indicates in his first question: "Whether erlow are ill gast or a god?" (line 235). He is an honest searcher for precise truth with regard to hard questions. The literary interlocutor, as with the narrator in *Pearl* or Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, must, as part of his role, seem to be ignorant or unsure concerning important matters, but genuinely interested in the discovery of the truth from a reliable source. Indeed, his persistent curiosity redounds within the fiction of the poem to the credit of the Dominicans, the main interpreters of Purgatory to the later Middle Ages. Therefore, as a tract, as well as a work of literature, *The Gast of Gy* gives the *Pryor* the opportunity to evoke a doctrine of Purgatory that appears authoritative without being coercive. The popularity of the poem in an age when Chaucer could make his Tale of Melibee a kind of centerpiece of *The Canterbury Tales* should not be surprising. Edification, generously and humanely presented, was a source of literary as well as moral pleasure. The appeal of the poem, however, goes beyond edification by truths of theology to the attraction of a story made richer, fuller, and more humane by a ghost who is logical, articulate, patient, and sympathetic.

Despite the fact that most of the poem is in the form of questions and answers, it is hard to characterize *The Gast of Gy* as a debate (the *Gast* is by definitive experience the best authority, always right), or a dialogue (the development is too catechetical), or a catechism (too much else is going on in the poem). The poem has a narrative energy and a human sympathy that place the conversation in a literary context that not only elucidates doctrine but is a generous representation of the human condition. It is not poetically spectacular: the couplets are efficient, often graceful, but they serve more to expedite the narrative rather than as literary ornaments. Nor does it rely on vividly gruesome images of the suffering souls. It appeals, in its competent verse form, as a clear and rational exposition of matters of profound importance. To this end, the poem is careful to establish its authenticity, by precise dating, locating, and description of ambient circumstances. It is, however, in its tone and content that *Gy* rises above simple exposition.

The questioning is relentless and systematic, but it is inquisitive rather than inquisitory. It is appropriate that the *Pryor* be quite careful to determine that he is speaking to a genuine and reliable soul rather than to a demonic deceiver. The conversation itself is civil, intelligent, and rational. That the *Pryor* should repeatedly begin his queries with an assertion to the effect that the *Gast* has given himself away as ignorant or untruthful is not contentious. For example, the *Pryor* says: "Thou says nocht right, and here now wha" (line 252) and "Me think thou art nocht stabill, / Bot thou art fals and desayvabill, / And in this matere makes thou lyes. / That may I prove thee on this wyse" (lines 443-46). (There are many comparable examples.) The *Pryor*'s objections are not

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offensive, but cautious and presented with some rational justification, not confrontation. The *Gast* of *Gy* is calm, patient, and civil in his responses. There is a dignity in their dialogue. The bulk of the poem is composed of over fifty such exchanges (more if you count minor forays within the main inquiries), and, if they are not arranged in a systematically climactic way, they proceed with the sequential logic of serious conversation.

Thus, it is in context, character, and tone that *The Gast of Gy* achieves its success. The Pryor initially takes on the encounter with the *Gast* not out of ecclesiastical self-importance but out of concern for the condition of *Gy*'s distressed wife, who seeks his assistance. The Pryor is prudent in the way he accepts his mission. He first consults the chapter of friars, because:

... sykerer may it so be tane
Than of a man by him allane. (lines 101-02)

more certainly; accepted
by himself alone

He is accompanied by two learned masters, one of theology and the other of philosophy. He alerts the mayor to his enterprise and secures the accompaniment of two hundred men as witnesses or as protectors in case of trouble (though it is difficult to see what good the men might do if the spirit is infernal). All are shriven and receive the Eucharist before proceeding. The Pryor enters *Gy*'s home with rituals appropriate to the undertaking: he uses both liturgical forms for the sprinkling of holy water and a full recitation of the Office of the Dead. It is in response to these prayers that we first hear the *Gast* as he utters a feeble "Amen" (line 208). The questions that the Pryor then raises, neither stupid nor confrontational, as we have seen, are parallel to the questions raised and discussed by the students of the greatest of the Dominicans, Thomas Aquinas, in the *Supplementum to the Summa theologiae*, such as whether suffrages for individuals benefit all souls in Purgatory and, conversely, what good suffrages for All Souls do for the individual. The *Gast*'s answers to the questions reflect sound Thomism: a Requiem for *Gy* benefits all, and prayers on behalf of all benefit *Gy*. The Pryor and the *Gast* range over many issues, some of them without sure grounding, e.g., the idea of a dual Purgatory, the knowledge of the soul of the time of his release, and the "grace period" for two hours after death during which prayers, like those of *Gy*'s friar friend, are especially helpful. However, it is the question of suffrages that is central and most prominent in the Pryor's examination and the *Gast*'s expositions: what prayers and observances are most efficacious for the dead. This primary issue is extensively explained by the *Gast* in his witnessing that a Requiem Mass, a Mass of the Holy Spirit, or a Marian Mass, is of great benefit, but that the Office of the Dead, based as it is on the scriptural Psalms, and almsgiving, because it is a fundamental manifestation of Christian charity, are also of inestimable value.

Despite the fact that the underlying form of the poem is largely a series of exchanges between the Pryor and the *Gast*, the poem does not degenerate into a list. Even after the long introduction (lines 1-205), which establishes the historicity of the events, the Pryor's concerned responses to the suffering of *Gy*'s wife, and his care in making proper preparations in the event that he will be dealing with a demon, the poem is modulated by variation in the length of the *Gast*'s responses.

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For example, he gives a comprehensive answer (lines 599–766) to the Pryor's question about what helps souls most. The Gast's answer is long, but entirely appropriate to the poem's primary concern with the doctrine of suffrages. He attributes the greatest, indeed essential, assistance to the Incarnation of Christ, which allows for the Redemption without which no soul could achieve salvation. Second, the Gast asserts the importance of the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, entirely appropriate to her special place as the mother of Christ and a sympathetic view because of the special devotion of the Dominicans to Mary. Indeed, the Gast quotes Mary at some length in a speech that validates her power by her assertion that she is "empress of Hell," a clever play on the more familiar epithet of "Regina Coeli" (Queen of Heaven). Third, the Gast explains that the intercession of the saints and the suffrages of the living are also beneficial.

Shortly thereafter, the Gast says that, of all suffrages, the Mass of the Holy Spirit is most helpful. In response the Pryor makes a somewhat contentious defense of the efficacy of the Requiem Mass he had said that morning:

I se, thou erf nocht tree.
Of Requiem I sang, certane,
For Cristen saules, that er in payne.
Therfor thou says nocht so blasty. (lines 812–15)

The Gast's lengthy response (lines 817–997) allows the spirit to expatiate not only on the special importance of the Mass of the Holy Spirit, but also the Marian Mass, and other suffrages provided by both clergy and laity. The concentration on suffrages is directly pertinent and the length of the answer loosens the rhythm of the developing exchanges. Likewise, the Gast's exposition (lines 1098–1208) on the importance of the Office of the Dead, mollifies the Pryor, endorses the power of scriptural prayer (the Office is primarily based on Psalms), and reinforces yet again the help that the living can provide for the suffering souls. This section may seem tedious to a modern audience, and it certainly is repetitious, but it is both pertinent as doctrine and clever in the way that the Gast plays with the symbolic significance of the numbers of Psalms in various parts of the Office of the Dead.

It is not only in these variations in the rhythm of the exchanges, however, that the poem transcends the dangers of formal rigidity. There are, for example, small instances like the insertion, immediately after the Gast first says he will enter Heavens at Easter, of the comment that the Pryor later checked and found the statement to be true (lines 998–1001). Even more consonant with the generosity of spirit in the poem is the concerned hiatus at lines 1212–38, when the Gast says that the Pryor should hurry because his pain is increasing. The response is more than fear that the Pryor will lose his knowledgeable witness. The surrounding company, at the Gast's direction, quickly recite the prayers, probably the joyful mysteries of the rosary, a devotion much promoted by the Dominicans, and the prayers immediately provide temporary relief for Gy. The tone is more

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sympathetic than expedient and is a small but direct suggestion of how the living can improve the condition of puratorial souls.

However, the most important demonstration of the magnanimous tone of the poem comes in lines 1355–1511, where attention is turned to the distress of Gy's wife and the importance of marital love and mutuality. After a long description of the suffering of Gy's wife, the Pryor asks the Gast why she mourns so. The Gast's response is a chivalrous suggestion that the Pryor ask her directly. But she will not, or cannot, respond. The Pryor then asks the Gast again, and he once more directs him to his wife:

Ask hirself, who kan thee say. (line 1404)

The Gast is not evading the issue; rather, he is refusing to invade his wife's spiritual privacy, as later events make clear. So the Pryor tries the Gast again, and the Gast responds only with a broad statement that there are many sins that can be committed between husband and wife. Some commentators have suggested that Gy and his wife are guilty of infanticide, but this seems extreme in view of the tone of the narrative. More likely, it was one of the sexual behaviors proscribed by the Church even between husband and wife, perhaps simply the enjoyment of sex without the primary purpose of procreation. This is highly speculative, but fits the love and mutuality the poem implies. The Gast makes quite clear that it is not the business of the Pryor to inquire into the precise nature of a sin that has already been forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance (lines 1438–46). Repentance and satisfaction must be made, but the confidential "seal of Confession" need not be broken even by the penitent, and the dignity and privacy of the repentant deserve to be respected, another doctrinally orthodox and humanly compassionate insistence that is congruent with the tone of the poem. At this point, however, the Gast's wife, no longer able to restrain herself, asks the Gast the main question:

God Gy, for luf of me,
Say if I shall saved be
Or I shall dwell in dole ever mare
For that syn that thou neverd are.
Wherof, I wate, God was nocht payd. (lines 1467–71)

sorrow
mentioned before
know; regarded

The Gast assures her, though the orthodoxy of his certainty is debatable, that she will be saved if she will give alms in satisfaction for her sin. The best way to avoid Purgatory is, of course, to repent and make amends in this life, but the Gast reinforces the doctrine of suffrages by asking her to remember him in her penitential actions. The doctrine is sound and the mutual love is attractive.

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The Pryor cannot help but ask why the Gast did not come directly to the clergy to make his revelation to his wife, because the clergy are closer to God than any woman. The Gast's answer is movingly appropriate to the tone of the scene:

I haled mare my wylle
Than any other man on lyfe,
And therfor first to har I went. (lines 1493-99)

*loved more
alive*

The questioning resumes at this point, but the scene has formidably given doctrine a powerful human form, and the egalitarian character of the poem is again reinforced by the Gast's statement (lines 1676-82) that no estate or "degree" is preferred over another in this world. And shortly afterwards (lines 1865 ff.) the sympathetic, if stern, Pryor adjures the Gast to cease haunting. The Gast, returning to the doctrine of suffrages fundamental to the poem, appropriately replies that he will comply if his wife lives in chaste widowhood and has three hundred masses said "for us twa" (line 1873). She quickly agrees to do so and the Pryor adds that he will say Mass for her and Gy every day until Easter. The Gast goes away and the Pryor is satisfied.

That his wife is still not easy in her mind is evidenced in her fear to return to her house and her eventual return to the convent for help and assurance at the Epiphany, which results in the much shorter second visit to Gy's house and the culmination of the poem. The Pryor brings with them twenty friars plus a number of parish priests. That the friars include Augustinians and Franciscans suggests that the Pryor intends not only to provide solace for the wife, but also authentication of the events by including clergy beyond the Dominicans. When the Pryor conjures up the Gast again, one of the friars is even allowed to ask some questions. This scene is, however, not so interrogatory as the rest of the poem. After a few questions about Gy's suffering and what they can do to help him at this stage, the Pryor intrudes one of his few "trick" questions, if that is what it is. He asks the Gast for a "mervaille" (line 2007), something that defies the ordinary laws of Nature, so as to persuade the pope of the veracity of the Pryor's account of his experience. The Gast, properly, says he knows no marvels and proceeds to present a strong admonition to the clergy to do better in preaching the doctrine of Purgatory and repentance. This, after all, is why the Gast was allowed to return. True, the primary warning is to his wife and by extension to all of the faithful, but here he focuses on the deficiencies of the clergy and urges them to do better. Consonant with the spirit of the poem, the Gast's indictment is not a diatribe. It is vigorous and pointed and predicts vengeance if there is not reform, but it is tempered with the magnanimity that pervades the poem.

The Pryor tries again to elicit some authenticating information from the Gast by asking how many popes there will be before Doomsday. Earlier, during the first visit, the Pryor had attempted something similar in asking the Gast when the Antichrist would come. But the Gast again refuses to do magic tricks; he does not know the future. Instead he returns to his admonition to the clergy to revive the vigor of the past in preaching and prayer concerning the dead, lest they suffer divine punishment. And then the Gast is gone to continue the suffering that will result in his salvation at

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Easter, that appropriate season of the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. All report the events to the pope, who, perhaps somewhat improbably, sends a delegation to confirm the *Gast's* disappearance and assumed salvation. They are satisfied and the instructive, magnanimous, compassionate story of the *Gast of Gy* concludes.

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The Gast of Gy

	Saint Michael, the aungell clere, And Saint Austyn, the doctour dere, And other maisters mare and myn Says that men gret mede may wyn (And namely clerkes, that kan of lare), If thair contryng will declare Unto lewed men, that kan les, And namely theng, that nedefull es, That whylk may get than seise of syn And help than unto Heven at wyn;	angel bright Augustine masters greater and lesser Say; reward know of learning understanding uneducated; know less needful is which; prepare them <i>frof</i> cause to win
5	And Saint Paule, Godes apostell dere, Says till us on this manere: "All, that clerkes in bokes role, Es wryten all anely for our spode,"	<i>to</i> books read only; benefit example souls more and less books; bear witness because; great people; every <i>Believe</i> ; are
10	15 That we may thareof ensaumple take To save our soules and syn forsake, And lede our lives, both mare and les, Als haly bokes beres witnes. And for that God of His gret grace	death; Judgment earth; shall; reward damned according to; deeds shows various examples earth among
15	20 Will His pople in ilk a place Trow in thinges that er to come, Of ded and of the Day of Domne, And how ilk man shall have his mede, Be saved or dammed after their dede,	To prepare; fidelity <i>frof</i> be steadfast live; deception guide (advise)
20	25 Tharfor He schewes ensaumpels sere On this mold omang us here, To ger us in oure trouth be stabill And lif in faith withouten fabill. And so in world He will us wyse	Miss reason Incarnation be you assured
25	30 To kepe us cleane and com to blys. So it bifell in a sesoun Efter Cristes Incarnacione A thousand wynter, be yhe bald,	

The Gast of Gy

- 35 And thre hundreth, als clerkes talid,
And thareto thre and twenty yhere.
Than bifell on this manere
In Alexty, a noble tounse,
That thretty mylle es fro Bayonne,
The XII kalendes, als clerkes call,
Of Decembre, als it gan fall,
A gret burses, that named was Gy,
In that same ceté gan dy.
And, when the cors in erth was layd,
Than was his gast full smertly grayd.
Unto his wyfe he went ogayne
And suede her with mykell Payne,
And did her dole both day and nyght
Bot of hem myght scho have no sight;
And in his chaumber myght scho here
Mikell noys and hydous bere,
And oft scho was so rugged and rent,
That for sorow scho was mere schent.
Thus was scho torment in that stede
Eightene days after he was dede;
55 And scho ne wist neight witerly
Whether it war the gast of Gy
Or it war fandynge of the fende,
That so had soght her for to schende.
Tharfore soon after on a day
60 Till the freres scho toke the way,
That prechours war of that ceté,
Wele lyfand men of god degré;
And till the Pryor gan scho tell
This ferly all how it bifell
65 On Saint John Day the Evangeliste,
The thred day after the brithe of Criste.
Scho told unto him leſt and maste,
How scho was greved with the gastie,
And how scho was sted in that stede,
70 Sen tyme that hir husband was dede,
And how scho hoped ryght witerly,
It was the gast of hir lord Gy;
- hundred: counted
years
happened
thirty miles: Bayonne
20 November
occurred
citizen
city died
corpse
spirit, sharply troubled
[back] again
afflicted; great pain
caused her suffering
Though, she
chamber might she bear
Great noise; dreadful commotion
distraught and torn
almost overcome
she tormented; place
On the eighth day (i.e., after a week)
she did not know truly
was; spirit
was torment; fiend
neight; destroy
soon after
To the friars she
preachers; city
Good living; status
And to the Prior she proceeded [to] tell
wonder; occurred
St. John's Day; Evangelist
third; birth
She told; least and most (i.e., every detail)
troubled
beset; place
Since [like] time
truly
spirit

The Gast of Gy

	For in that chaumbre oft heud was he, Whare his lord was wont to be,	chamber accustomed
75	To spyll that bed wald he noght blys, That Gy, his lord, and scho lay in. "Tharfor," scho said with symple chere, "That hows dar I no mare com new; Bot hyder I come to ask counsaile, What thing myght in this case availe."	make desolate; would; cause she open manner house brother; counsel
80	When the Pryor herd all this case, Geet mountyng in his hert he mase; Bot, for scho wald noght be affrayd, Unto the woman thus he sayd:	made so she should not
85	"Dame," he said, "ne dred thee noght, For out of bale thou sall be broght; And have na mervail in thi mynde Of cases that fallas omsang mankynde. Forewhy," he said, "als kenes thi clerkes, 90 God is wonderfull in His werkes;	dread you not at all difficulty; shall no marvel
90	And wele I wate, that He will now Ordayn som poynct for our prow To schew omsang His servandes dene Till their helping, als men sall here.	circumstances; among Therefore; as these clerks knew works
95	Tharfor, dame, gyf thee noght ill, Bot be blythe and byde here styl, For to my brother I will a space To ask thair counsaile in this case: For omsang many wytty men	well I know Set some point; testing show among; servants dear For; shall hear do not distress yourself (be troubled)
100	Som gad counsaile may thai ken, And sykerer may it so be tane Than of a man bi him allane. Bot dame," he said, "I sall noght dwell." 105 Then gert he ryng the chapter bell	good advice; know more certainly; accepted by himself alone shall not delay begin; chapter
105	And gedyd his brother all togyder, And hastily when thai come thider, He declared tham all this case, Als the woman said it wase, And prayd tham for to tell him to	gathered; brothers; together there
110	Tharof what best es to do? Unto this tale thai take gad tent	asked listened carefully

The Gost of Gy

- And odaing be thair comon assent,
That the Pryor sone sald ga
And with him other maisters twa,
115 That wyest war in thair degré
Unto the mayre of that cōté
To tell this ilk aventure him tyll
And pray him, if it war his will,
That he wald vouchesave to send
120 Som certaine men with them to wend
To Gy hows, that was newly dede,
To se tha wonders in that stede
And to bere witnes of thaire dede
And mayntene them, if it war nede.
125 And thus thai did with al thaire maistre:
The woman was thareof ful fayne.
When the mayre had herd this thing,
Twa hundred men sone gert he bring
And armed them fra top to ta
130 And bad tham with the Pryor ga
And baynly do, what he will byd.
And, als he bad, ryght twa thai dyd.
The Pryor bad tha men bidene,
That thai sald all be schryven cleene
135 And here Messe with devocyeuse,
And sithen baldly mak tham boone.
Of Requiem he sang a Messe
For Cristen saales both more and lese,
And in his mynde than toke he Gy
140 And prayd for him full specially.
And all that than wald Howsell take
War howsyld sone for Godes sake,
For that the fende suld nocht than fere
Ne in thair dedes do tharn no dere.
145 And than the Pryor fall prevely
In a bost tok Godes body
Under his geve with gad entent,
Bot na man wist, that with him went.
He and his forsayd brother twa
150 Unto Gy hows gon thai ga.
- decided by
soon should go
maisters two
- mayre; city
same occurrence; to
were
would promise
- A number of: them to go
Gy's house, who
place
- bear witness; actions
protect; if it were necessary
strength
glad
mayor
- Two hundred; prepared
from top to toe
- ordered; go
obediently
- as he ordered; so
those; forthwith
- should; shiven clean
- Re Mass; devotion
- then boldly; ready
- Mass
- Christian souls; more and less (fully)
took
- who then wished to receive the Eucharist
Were soon given the Eucharist
So that; fiend should not; frighten
- Nor; actions; harm
- secretly
- pendant; God's body (i.e., the Host)
clothing; purpose
- But no; knew
- aforementioned brothers two
house they were

The Gast of Gy

- The armed men than ordand he
All about the hows to be,
All umsett on ilk a syde
To se what aventure wald betyde:
155 Soes in the windows, som in the dore,
With wapen that war styf and store;
And som in the gardyns gert he lyg,
And som upon the howsies ryg,
And ever in ilk a place bot thre
160 In takessyng of the Trinité;
And, thus, when thai war sett about,
He bad that thai suld have no dout.
Than entred he into that place,
And his twa brether with him gase,
165 And thir wordes he said in hy:
"Pax haic domini!"
That es on Ynglysch thus to say:
"Peace be to this hows allway!"
To chaumber he went withouten rest,
170 And haly water about he kest
With "Vidi aquam" and than said thus:
"Veni, Creator Spiritus"
With the Colett, that sall efter come,
"Deus, qui corda fidelium";
175 And haly water about kest he
Eftsones and said: "Asperges me."
He cald the wyfe withouten mare;
Scho come wepan and wonder sare.
He said: "Dame, teche me unto the stede
180 And to the bed, whare Gy was dede."
The woman was full mased and mad:
Scho trembyld than, scho was so rad.
Unto the bed sone scho him tald;
The care was at hir hert full cold,
185 Bot in hir wa, yhit als scho wan,
Scho said: "Sir Pryor, or yhe pas,
I pray yhow for the luf of me.
And als in dede of charyté,
That yhe wald byd som haly bede
- then arranged
about; house
All set around on every side
event would occur
by; by the door
weapons; sturdy and strong
he caused to lie
house's roof
And always in each place just three
tokens; Trinity
set about
ordered; should

two brothers; went
these; immediately
Peace to this house
is in English
Peace; house always
chamber
holy; about; east
I have seen water
Come, Creator Spirit
Collect; should after
O God, who the hearts of the faithful . . .
holy; about east
Soon after; Sprinkle me
called; without more [delay]
She came weeping very bitterly
show; place
where; died
distraught; beside herself
She trembled, frightened
soon she; took
worry; cold
But; woe, as yet she was
before you leave
you; love
also an act of charity
you would make some holy petition

The Gast of Gy

- 190 And mak prayers in this stode
For Gy saale, that noble man." place
Gy's soul
- 195 And than the Pryor thus began
And said: "Dominus vobiscum";
His brether answereid all and sorn.
The Lord be with you
every one of them
afterwards; at once
- 200 And afterward he said onone
The fyest gospell of Saint Jone
("In principio" clerkes it call). John
When it was said, than satt thai all
Downe on a bunde the bed besyde
in the beginning
sor
- 205 And said the servyee in that tyde,
That for the ded aw for to be:
"Placebo" with the "Dirige."
Down; bench
service of that season
ought to be
- 210 And after the Landes thai said in by
The seven Psalms with the Letany.
"Agnus Dei" than said thai thryse,
I will please (i.e., appease); Guide [me]
And ane than answereid on this wyne:
A febyll voyce than myght thai ken
immediately
- 215 A feble; apprehend
Als a child sayand: "Amen."
Ax; saying
- 220 Thærfor war thai all affraid,
And the Pryor thusgate sayd:
"I conjure thee, thou creature,
In the vertu of our Saveoure,
That as a God of myghties mistic,
Fader and Son and Haly Gaste,
said as follows
command you
- 225 That was and es and sall be ay,
That thou me answer, if thou may,
And tell me, what som I will crave,
Als fer als thou may power have."
And than the voyce with lodder bere
By the power; Saviour
of greatest power
- 230 Said to him on this manere:
"A, Pryor, ask sonc, what thou will,
And I sall tell it thee untyll,
Als fer als I have myght or mynde
Or als I may have leue be kynde."
Father; Holy Ghost
shall; always
- 235 This ilk voyce than herd thai all
(The armed men about the hall),
And in thai come full fast rynand,
Ilk ane with wapen in their hand;
whatever; ask for
As far as
louder tone
in
quickly
shall; unto you
- 240 running
Each one; weapon

The Guest of Gy

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | For wele it was in thair trowyng | opinion |
| 230 | That thai suld se som gastly thing, | should see; ghostly |
| | Bot nevertheless yhit saw thai name, | yet; none |
| | No noght herd bot a voyce all aye, | Nor heard; alone |
| | The Pryor bad than all stand styl, | wise |
| | And thus he spak the voyce untyll: | |
| 235 | "Whether erlow are ill gast or a gad?" | are you an evil spirit or a good |
| | He answerd than with myld mode, | mild manner |
| | "I am a gad gast and name ill, | good spirit; none evil |
| | I may thee prove be proper skyll. | to you; reason |
| | For Haly Wrytt thus beres witnes: | Holy Writ (i.e., Scripture); bears witness |
| 240 | When God had made both more and les, | more and less (i.e., everything) |
| | He loked His werkis in ilk a wane, | works; every one |
| | And thai war wonder gad ilk are. | wonderfully good each one |
| | All war gad, that He gan ma, | made |
| | And, sen that I am are of tha, | since; one of those |
| 245 | A gad gast I am forths. | good spirit; therefore |
| | And, als I am the gast of Gy, | as; spirit |
| | Tharfor may thou have in mynde, | understand |
| | That I am a gad gast be kynde, | by nature |
| | Bot I am evel after my dede, | |
| 250 | And tharfor have I pyne to mede." | evil according to my deeds |
| | The Pryor answerd him in hy: | pain for reward |
| | "Thou says noght right, and here now whi: | quickly |
| | That sall I schew thee here in haste. | say not; bear now why |
| | Thou sais, thou ert a wicked gaste | shall I show you here quickly |
| 255 | For the payn that thou has here. | say; are |
| | I answer thee on this manere: | |
| | All payns er gad (that prove I theer), | pains are; you |
| | That ordaind er in gad degré, | ordained are; degree |
| | That es to say, that punysch syn | punish sin |
| 260 | Of tham that in erth wald noght blyn, | would not stop |
| | For it es gyfen thrugh Godes will. | given by |
| | Tharfor I say, it es noght ill, | |
| | No thou es noght wicked thereby." | Not are you |
| | And than answerd the gast of Gy: | |
| 265 | "Ilk Payne es gad, I graunt wele, | Each |
| | For fra God es gyfen ilk a dele | from; given every bit |
| | Bi jugement and bi reson clere | By; by clear reason |

The Cast of *Gy*

	For evel dedes men has done here. Bot nevertheless yhit es it ill	evil yet given unto
270	For tham, that it es gyfes ustyll. Mi Payne es yvell to me all aye, For me it porysch and other name; And, sen I have swilk evel Payne For my syms, als es sertayne,	My: evil; alone punish; none other since; such evil as is certain
275	Aye evel spiryt thou may call me Unto tyme that I cleasned be Of evel dedes, that I have done." And all thus said the Pryor sone: "Tell me aperately, or thou passe,	An evil Until; cleansed evil
280	Whase man spyrnt that thou wasse." Than answerd the voyce in hy And said: "I am the gast of Gy, That here was husband in this stede And, als yhe wait, newly dede."	plainly, before; go away Which man's; were immediately
285	The Pryor sayd: "Than wele I fynd Be reson, that thou erf noght kynd, That thou makors slyke skaunder and stryf Both to thyself and to thi wyf; For, whils that Gy was lyfand man,	place as you know
290	Ryghtwis was he halden than And trew in fayth, of noble fame And his wif also the same: And for the mervails that thou mise, Now will men say in ilk a place,	By reason; not natural such scandal; strife
295	That Gy was evel in all his lyfe, And tharfor turrentes he his wife, For lawed folk in ilk a land Says evel men er oft walkand, And Gy was halden gad alway.	while; living Righteous; considered then true in faith
300	Tharfor thou erf unkynid, I say." The voyce answerd, als him thought, And said: "Unkynd ne am I noght Nouther to my wyf ne to Gy; And, sir, that shall thou here in hyt	these marvels; make everywhere
305	Be sawes that thou shall noght foesake, For swilk a skyll here I thee make.	unrestrained; every are often walking (after death) considered; always are unnatural (unkind) as it seemed to him Unkind (i.e., unnatural)

The Gast of Gy

- If thou have gyfyn a man to were
Cote or hode or other gare
And he, that so thi cote has tane,
Wald suffer for thi huf all are
In god and ewell to lyf and dy,
War he neght kynd to thee forth?"
The Pryor said: "Yhis, for certayne."
And than answerd the voyce ogayne
310 And said: "Sir, trewly I thee tell,
In Gyes body whil I gan dwell,
Of him I tolke none other thing
Bot his cors to my cleyng.
This cors, that I dedely call,
315 Gert us bath in folyes fall;
And for the wickednes that he wrought,
Am I in all thir bales brought;
And his doyng was it ilk a dele.
Als Haly Wrytt witness full welo
320 And says, that lykyng here of fles
Contrary to the saule es.
And, if I suffer neght this payne,
Both Gy and his saule, for certayne,
Suld suffer payne withouten ende
325 And fyre of Hell with many a fendo.
For ilk a man both more and myn
Sall suffer penance for their syn.
In this erth here, whare thai dwell,
Or els in Purgatori or in Hell.
330 And Gyens body han now na skathe,
And I am pyned to save us bathe
And after, when we com to blys,
What joy sa I have sall be his;
For both togyder sall we be than
335 In body and saule everlik a man.
And, sen I suffer thi payni grym,
I am neght unkynd to him.
And, sir Pryor, also thou says,
That I of Gy suld sklaunder rays.
340 Tharto I answer on this wyse,
345 given; wear
Cote; hood; clothing
taken
Would; your love alone
to live and die
Were; thereby
Tex, for certain
again
while; did dwell
body; clothing
body; mortal
Made us both fall into sin (folkes)
these sufferings
every hit
desire; flesh
soul is
Should
fiend
every man; more and less
Shall
where
else
no harm
passed; took
later; bliss
Whatever joy; shall
then
soul every
since; these; grim
unkind (unnatural)
should scandal raise
manner

The Gast of Gy

- That I ger no sklaunder ryse.
Sklaunder es that kyndely kend
That sownes in evell or base evell end.
Wha som it dose, mon dere aby;
350 For Haly Wryt says openly,
'Wa unto that man shall be,
Tharugh whame sklaunder comes,' sais He.
Tharfor if I answer for Gy,
I do him no velany.
- 355 Mi spekying es all for his spede,
That I may never to yhow his nede;
And als my speche may gretly gayn
Till other soules that suffers payn.
That may thou, syr, thinef se;
- 360 For all folk of this cesté
Comes to this hows full hastily,
And specially thai pray for Gy,
That God delyver him out of his care,
Als thou and thi brether dyd are.
- 365 And in thair prayers that thai ma,
For other soules thai pray alswa;
And prayers that men prayes for ase,
May help unto the other ilk ase;
And also tha that er onylve
- 370 Sall soner of thair syns than schryve
And gyf them unto penance hard.
That thai be nocht pyned afterward.
Thaefor I sklaunder nocht, say I,
Gyes wyf ne his body.
- 375 Bot all the sausves, that I say now,
Es for thair honour and thair prouw."
The Pryor said: "This ask I thee,
How any man may evell be,
When he es ded, sen that he was
- 380 Schryven cleene or he gan pas,
And was in will gad werkes to wifk
And ended in trowth of Haly Kyrk
And toke his sacramentes ilk ase."
The voyce answerec sone onane
- cause no scandal to arise
Scandal: sort of knowledge
leads to; has; invent
Whoever; does, must dearly pay
Haly Wryt (i.e., Scripture); clearly
Woe
whose scandal
- My; well-being
explain to you
also; greatly benefit
For; such
see
- your brothers did already
make
- one
each one
those who are alive
sooner; be shriven
give themselves
pained
scandalize
- words
benefit
- after
Before; past
intended
truth; Holy Church
- at once

The Gast of Gy

- 385 And said, that men may evell be
On twa maners: "That prove I thee,
When thai er dede and schryven clese,
That es on this wise to mene:
Thai er evell, whare so thai wende,
390 That dampned er withouten ende;
And thai er evell for certayne space,
That suffers Payne in any place
For their syns, that es to say,
Till tymse that thai be wasted oway.
395 In myself this same es sene,
For I was schryven in erth full clese,
And I am evell, this es certaine,
Till I have suffered certayne Payne.
For, als men may in bookes rede,
400 Clerkes sais that it es nede
That penance alls for pas,
Als lykyng here in the syn was.
Tharfor I say it suffyce nocht
To schryve a man in will and thought,
405 Bot if he may in dede fullifill
The penance that es gyfes him tyll.
For that at we do nocht or we dy,
Sall be fullifild in Purgatory;
And clerkes proves that a day here
410 May thare releas us of a yher,
And a day thare to suffer Payne
Es als a yhere here thare ogayne.
Tharfor es gad that men than schryve
And suffer payn here in thair lyve."
415 The Pryor than of him gan crave,
If that he wist oght wha war save,
Or whilk men war dampned bidene,
In the stedes whare he had bene.
The voyoie answerd than him tyll
420 And said: "It es nocht Godes will
That I said slyke thing descry.
I sall thee say encheson why:
All that is in Purgatori er dweland,
- two ways
are dead; shrives clear
That is to say accordingly
are; wherever; go
damned are
- washed away
is seen
- as; books read
say; necessary
as far pass
As attachment
- Unless
gives to know
Therefore that which we do not before
Shall
- these release; year
there
in as; year
- desired [to know]
knew any who
which; damned utterly
places
unto
- should such; reveal
shall; reason
are dwelling

The Gast of Gy

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 425 | To blys of Heven er thai oeland. | are they destined |
| | Tharfor than aw nocht for to say, | |
| | Bot at thai may warand allway; ¹ | |
| | And soth hereof may na man tell, | truth; no |
| | Bot thai had bene in Heven and Hell | |
| | And sene what sorow es in the tane, | |
| 430 | And in the tother welth god wane; | <i>the one</i> |
| | Thus, in than both wha son had bene, | <i>the other well-being well earned</i> |
| | Might say the soth, als he had sene. | |
| | And, sen I am the spirit of Gy | |
| | And suffys Payne in Purgatory. | |
| 435 | The saules in Hell may I nocht se. | |
| | I was never thare ne never sall be. | |
| | Ne into Heven may I nocht wyn, | progress |
| | Till I be cleansed clese of syn. | |
| | Tharfor I may nocht sothely say | |
| 440 | Whilk er saved or damned for ay." | truly |
| | Than the Pryor with gret will | |
| | Spak egayne the voyce untyll | |
| | And said: "Me think thou er nocht stabill, | |
| | Bot thou er fals and desayvabill, | |
| 445 | And in this matere makes thou lyes. | |
| | That may I prove thee on this wyse. | |
| | Be Haly Wrytt full wele we know | |
| | How propheteis in the Ald Law | <i>Old Law</i> |
| | Spak and tald in feld and toun | |
| 450 | Of Cristes Incarnacioun, | |
| | And how He said tak flesch and blode | |
| | In Mary, maydes myld of mode; | |
| | And als thai tald in many a stede | |
| | How He in eth said suffer dede. | |
| 455 | And of His ryseynge tald thai ryght, | |
| | And yhit thai saw Him never with sight. | |
| | And sen thai war men bodily | |
| | And tald swik things in prophecy | |
| | | since |
| | | told back |

¹ Lines 425-26: *Therefore it is not at all fitting for them to say. / Unless they can swear to the truth [of it] in every instance*

The Game of Go

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 460 | And kend the folk how thai myght know
Things that tharnself never saw,
Bi this reson, thinketh me,
A cleere spiriit, als thou said be,
Sald have more force swilk thing to tell
Than any that war in flesch and fell. | taught |
| 465 | Tharfor thee aght to witt bi this,
Whilk er in bale and whilk in blys." | By; I think
should |
| | The voyce answerd to him in hast:
"Sir Pryor, thir wordes er all wast,
I may wele prove thee in this place. | Should; more; much
flesh; skin
ought to know by this
Which; misery; which |
| 470 | It es na lyknes, that thou mase,
Betwix prophetes, that standes in story.
And sawles, that er in Purgatory. | wasted (i.e., useless) |
| | The prophetes had, whils thai war here,
Of God and of His angells clere
475 And of gyftes of the Haly Gaste,
All thair maters, leste and maste,
That thai myght tell and preche over all
Before what thing said fall. | soale; are
while; were
bright
gyft: Holy Ghost
mature; leste and maste |
| 480 | Swilk power was gyfen tharn tyll,
And all was for this certayn skyll:
For lawed folk in ilk a land | In advance; should exceed |
| | Bi thair stevens myght understand
And better trow, how Crist was born,
Be sawes that thai had said bifore. | Such; given; to
reason
uneducated |
| 485 | For, sen thair sawes fra God war seest,
Men sal than trow with gude estent.
And I am sett for certayne space, | By sayings
since
believe |
| | Till God will gyf me better grace,
Thus for my syma to suffer Payne. | believe |
| 490 | And, sir, I say thee for certayne,
That I may now name angells se
Bot tharn that has kepeyng of me, | no; see |
| | And to me will thai tell ryght nocht
Till I out of this bale be broght. | Except those who have keeping |
| 495 | Tharfore I may nocht say certayne,
Whilk er in blys or whilk in payne." | misery |
| | The Pryor that said soone onane: | Which are; which
at once |

The Guest of Gy

- "Ryght in thi wordes thou shall be tane.
Thou sais, na spirit may tell me,
500 Wha shall saved or damped be;
And bokes beres witnes, be thou bald,
That fendas somtyme to men has tald
And said the sooth, als thai had sene,
Of than that saved and damped had bene."
505 The voyce answerd and said ogayne:
"That spirit that dwelles in Payne,
Ne na fendas that dwelles in Hell,
Has no power for to tell
Ne unto no man here at neven
510 That towches the pereyse of Heven,
Bot if it be thurgh Godes suffraunce,
Or other wangelis than tell per chasance.
And unto me thai tell nathing.
Tharfor I may nocht have knawynge
515 Of hevenly blys, how it es there,
Ne of Hell, how the fendas fare.
The sawles, that thare shall suffre pyme,
Thair penaunce es wele mare than myne;
For I have hope to be in blys,
520 And tharof shall thai ever myn.
Tharfor es no lyknes to tell
Betwene me and the fendas in Hell."
Than said the Pryor: "I pray thee now,
Tell me in what stede entow?"
525 The voyce answerd and said in by:
"I am here in Purgatory."
Than said the Pryor: "Proved thou hast
That Purgatory es in this place.
For ryght als thou es purged here,
530 So may other sawles in feie,
And, whare sawles may be purged all,
Purgatory men may it call.
Tharfor bi thir sawles that thou says,
Purgatory es here always."
535 The voyce answerd on this manere
And said: "There er Purgatoryes sevele:
- couple
the
assuredly
fiend; have told
true, as
Nor any
to explain (name)
What touches on the hidden mystery
Unless, permission
knowledge
place
mine
similarity
place are you
immediately
in company
these accounts
There; several

The Gast of Gy

	Ane es comon to mare and les, And departabill another es."	One is; to all Anone
540	The Pryor said: "Now wate I wele That thou erl fale in ilk a dele. A saule may noght in a tymga To be ponyst in places twa; For, whil he sal be in the tane, Of the tother he may have nane,	And another is set apart for an individual Anone on every point at one time go punished; two the one the other; none
545	For in a place he suffers Payne." The voice than said: "This es certayne, For I am here, withouten fabyll, In Purgatory departabyll Ilk a day, als God voaches save.	one place fable separate allows
550	Bot other payn behoves me have: For ilk a nyght behoves me In comon Purgatory pyned be For to suffyr paynes sare With other saules that er thare."	must be inflicted upon me (if) behoves me be pained agomizing
555	The Pryor said: "Kan thou me wys, Whare comon Purgatori is, Whare thou of payns has swilk plente?" "In mydes of all the erth," says he, "Thare es that place ordand for us."	Can; explain such plenty the middle established
560	And than the Pryor answerd thus: "Als thou says may it noght be. Be propir skyll that prove I thee. The mydes of the erth a stede es dyght, And Purgatory another es right;	reason in the middle; place is set another
565	And twa stedes may noght be in ane. Tharfor I say thou has mysgane. If Purgatory, whare thou dwelles, War in mydes the erth, whare thou tellis. Twa stedes in ane than baird be thare.	one erred
570	And that shall thou se never mire. Tharfor so es it noght arayd." The voyce answerd sone and sayd: "Stedes er ordand here full rathe, Bodily and gastly bathe.	would arranged
575	The saule es gastly, and forth	Places are assigned; quickly both therefore

The Gast of Gy

- It occupyes na stede bodily.
That es to say, be it all one
When man's body thatfra es tane.
This ilk stede, als thou may se,
580 Haldes both the soule and thee,
And yhit er nocht here stedes twa.
And hereby may thou se allowa
How rayne and slete, haile and snaw,
Er in the ayre, kyndely to know,
585 And ilk one has his cours be kynde.
So es that place where we er pynde." The Pryor said: "Tell us in fere,
Whi that thou art posynt here."
The voyce answerd him in haste:
590 "For in this place I synned maste,
Of whilk syns I gan me schryve
And did na penaunce in my lyve.
Therefore here sal I penaunce have
For that syn, till I be save."
- 595 The Pryor said: "Telle, if thou kan,
What thing noysc mast a man
In tym of ded when he es tane."
The voyce answerd sone orane
And said: "The syght sal mast him dere
600 Of feule fendas, that him wald fere;
For than sal about him be
Defygured all in feule degrē,
And gryselly sal thai gryn and gnayst
Out of his witt him for to wrayst;
- 605 And than befor him sal be broght
All wickednes that ever he wrought,
So will thai fande, with any gyn,
Thurgh wanhope if thai may him wyn." The Pryor said: "Than wald I fayne
610 Wytt what remedy war here ogayne,
And what may help men alther maste
In bandes of ded when thai er brante." The voyce said: "Thare es son man
That tha nocht hope of na help than.
- is taken from there
very place
the soul and yourself
yet are
hereby; also
rain, sleet, hail, snow
naturally to know
each one; according to nature
pained
all together
are punished
- Because, must
- troubles (annoy) mast
death; taken
at once
maste; harm
would take as a companion
- Disfigured
horribly; grimace; gnash (teeth)
wrest
- torment; means
By means of despair
be pleased to
know; against
most of all
In bonds of death; overcome
- there; no

The Guest of Gy

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 615 | For if a man here lede his lyve
In syn and sithen will nocht him schryve,
Na in hert will have no care
For the dedes he has done are,
Than sail his aungell to him tell | afterwards
<i>Nor
in the past</i> |
| 620 | How Crist suffyrd payns so fell,
And how He dyed for his bishope.
And that sail be to his reprove
To schew him how he was unkynde
Here on this mold, whils he had mynde. | deadly
benefit
reproof
unnatural
<i>earth, while
ill-advised</i> |
| 625 | And how that he was mysavysede,
Godes sacramentes when he dispysede,
That wald nocht schryve him of his syn.
Bot lyked it ever and ended tharein.
And, when thir sawes er thusgate sayd, | <i>enjoyed</i>
<i>these accusations are that</i> |
| 630 | Than sail the fendes about him brayd
And manase him with all their myght
And say: 'Com forth, thou wretched wight!'
So sail thaer harl him unto Hell
Withouten end in dole to dwell. | shriek
menace
<i>creature</i>
<i>harl</i>
<i>grief</i> |
| 635 | And, if a man be cleasid cleane,
And schryfen of all his synnes bedene,
And take his sacramentes ilk ane,
And in that tyme with ded be tane,
Yf all his penaunce be nocht done, | akrivis; completely
<i>every one</i>
<i>death: taken</i> |
| 640 | His gad aungell sais to him sone:
'Comfort thee wele, I sail thee were,
That the devels sail thee nocht dere';
And to the fendes than sail he say:
'The wicked fendes, wende heilien oway, | <i>Be well comforted: protect</i>
<i>harm</i> |
| 645 | For yhe have na part in this man.'
And the fendes sail answer than
And say on this wise: 'Oures he es
Be reson and be ryghtwyses,' | <i>You: go hence away</i> |
| 650 | And thare than sail thaer schew fal sone
All evell dedes that he has done,
Bath in ald and als in yhowth,
Sen first he kyndely wittes couth,
And say: 'He synned thus and thus: | <i>justice</i>
<i>Both: age; also in youth</i>
<i>Since; human understanding knew</i> |

The Gast of Gy

- Therefore him aw to wende with us.¹ it is fitting for him to dwell
655 His gode aungell soll mak debate know
And say: 'He synned, wele I wate,
On this wise als yhe have told;
Bot he es borowde, be yhe bald,
For he was schryven and cleßed clene,
660 And toke his sacramentes all bidene,
And sorow he made for his synnyng.
To cleßyng fyre that soll him bring.
And the mercye of Cristes Passyon now
Sall be betwix him and yhow *Passion*
665 And serve him for scheld and spere,
That yhour dartere soll him noȝt dese;
And Cristes hende and als His syde,
That thurled war wth woundes wyde,
Sall be betwix him and yhour hende,
670 And fra yhour fernes him defende;
And Cristes face, that buffett was,
Betwix him and yhour face soll pas,
So that he soll noȝt on yhow se
Ne for nathing abaysed be;
675 All Cristes body spred on the Rode
Sall be unto him armoure gode.
Swi that yhe soll have no powere
Him for to dere on na manere;
All the lymes of Jhesu fre,
680 That for mankynd war pyned on Tre,
Sall cleß him of that foly
He dyd with lymys of his body.
The saule of Crist, als yhe wele ken,
That yholden was for earthly men,
685 Sall purge him now of all the pligȝt
That saule dyd thurgh his awen myght,
So that in him soll leve no gyf
Forwhi he wald with yhow be spyf,
Ne no payn unto him soll stand
690 Bot Purgatory, that es passand.
There soll he suffer certayne space,
Till he be purged in that place.
1. *it is fitting for him to dwell*
know
way as you; told
redeemed, be you assured
fully
skild and spear
your barbs; harm
Christ's hands; also His side
pierced
hands
treachery
buffeted
Between; shall pass
humiliated
Cross
Se
harm
limbs; generous
pained; Tree (i.e., the Cross)
cleanse
limbs
drew
oppressed
guilt
own power
guilt
For which; destroyed
passing (transitory)

The Gant of Gy

	And sithen sail he with us wende And won in welth withouten ende.'	afterwards <i>live</i>
695	And thus es Cristes Passyoun Sett bifor us redy boun For to defend us fra the fende, Out of this world when we sail wende; Tharfor us aw, if we be kynde,	<i>Passion</i> <i>already prepared</i>
700	To have that Passyoun mast in mynde. And als men may have helpyng gode Of Mary, that es myld of mode. If we ought for his here have done, Baldis may we ask his bone,	go <i>it befits us; natural</i> <i>mild</i> <i>also</i> <i>anything</i> <i>Confidently; help</i>
705	And us to help scho will his haste, In ded when our myster es maste. For if a man, or he bethen fare, Be schryven cleene, als I said are, That blyused bryd will be full boun	<i>dear; need; greatest</i> <i>before he travels away</i> <i>before</i> <i>woman; ready</i> <i>successor</i>
710	To socoure him in that sesoun And fende fro the fendies in fire And say to tham on this esasere: 'Mayden and moder both am I Of Jesu, my Son, God almyghty.	<i>protect; friends gathered together</i>
715	And of Heven am I coround quene And lady of all the erth bidene, And I am emperys of Hell, Whare yhe and other devels dwell;	<i>crowned</i> <i>entirely</i> <i>empress</i>
720	And for that I am quene of Heven, Unto my Son thus sail I never That He sail derne for luf of me This man in Purgatory to be Till he be cleasid cleane of syn,	<i>because</i> <i>say</i> <i>judge; love</i>
725	And so to Heven I sail him wyn. In als mykell als I am lady Of all the erth, this ordaine I Thvagh the will of my Son dere, That ilk a bede and ilk a prayore,	<i>Inasmuch as</i>
730	That now in all this world es sayd, Untyll his profett be purvayd. And all the messies and almussede	<i>every petition</i> <i>world</i> <i>To; profit</i> <i>messies; almussede</i>

The Gest of Gy

- May turne this man now unto mede;
And bi tha dedes and be tha messe
Sall his penaunce be made lesse,
That to him es ordaind for his syn.
That yhour falshede gert him fall in.
For I am emperis of Hell,
Tharfor yhour force now sall I fell.
I comand yhow yhe hethen fare,
And at yhe noy this man no mare,
That ended in my Son servyse."
And, when scho has said on this wyse,
All the halows heigh in Heven
Hyes all unto his fall even
And unto Jesu all in fere,
And thus das mak thai thair prayere:
"Lord Jess, God almyghty,
Fader of Heven, Man of Mercy,
Have mercy of this man that es
Our awen brother and als our flesh.
Sen Thou wald com fra Heven on hight
And suffer payn for mans plignt,
Thou meng Thi mercy with this man."
Thus sall man saule be saved than,
And his gad wangell sall him take
To Purgatory aseth to make,
And to him he sall tak tent
Till he have sufferd his tament.
And than the wicked gastes sall ga
Thethen oway with mykeli wa.
On this wyse may gade prayere
And almasededes, that men dose here,
And meryte of Cristes Passyoane
And of halows gad orisoun
May help a man in his dying
And unto clensyng fyre him bring."
The Pryor said unto him than
And asked, if that any man
Of Jesu Crist may here have syght
Or of Mary, His moder bryght,
- reward
by those deeds; those masses
assigned
your; made him fall in
strongly; destroy
you [that] you go away
that you bother; more
saints high
gather; right up to her
together
- own; also; flesh
since; from; high
plight
join
a man's soul
- reparation
pay attention
- go
Thence; great woe
In these ways
almsdeeds; do
- saints' beneficent prayers

The Gast of Gy

	Or als the halows verrailly In thair forme, when thaull dyl	aspects truly shape
	The voyce answerd and said: "Nay, Bot on this wise, als I shall say,	
	Bot if it be so haly a man	Except: as
775	That has na sede of purging, than Ne for to dwell in Purgatory, Thaull se thare openly, And synfull men shall nocht than se."	
780	The Pryor said: "Than think me, That thou says now thyself to skorne Ogayns the sawes thou said before: For thou said, Cristes Passyoun	mock yourself Against; claims
	And also Mary shuld be boun And other halows, that er in Heven, To pray for him with myld steven, Than sermes it that he se than may."	prepared saints mild voice
	The voyce answerd and said: "Nay; Thaull be thare, I grant thee wile, Bot he shall se thare never a delc	
790	In thair lyknes verrailly, And this es the encheson whi: For the grettest blys of Heven it es	not a bit truly reason
	For to se Crist in His lyknes, That es to say, in His Godhede;	in His own image
795	Than thart men have nane other mede Than is their dying Him to se. And in that blys than thaull be	Divinity need; reward
	Sodainly at thair ending,	
800	And that war nocht accordand thing." Than the Pryor of him asked,	Suddenly fixing
	If spirytes, that war bethen passed, May kyndely knaw be morn or none	thicker
	The dedes that here er for tham done, Or prayer that we for tham ma?	by nature; soon
805	The voyce answerd and said: "Yha." The Pryor said: "Than kan thou say, Wharof I sang Mess this day?"	dread make for
	The voyce answerd ogayne full tyte	Of what; Mass quickly

The Gast of Gy

- 810 And said: "Thou sang of Saint Spiryte." *Holy Spirit*
The Pryor answerd, als he knew,
And said: "I se, thou art nocht trew,
Of Requiem I sang, certaine,
For Cristen saules, that er in payne.
815 Thatfor thou says nocht sothfastly." *truthfully*
The voyce answerd to him in hy: *immediately*
"I graunt graythely, or I gang.
Of Requiem full ryght thou sang;
Bot yhir I say thee, neverthelesse,
820 Of Saint Spiryt was the Messe. *readily, before I came*
That sall thou be ensaumple se: *yet; [as] you*
For, custom es, in ilk contré, *the Holy Spirit; Mass*
If any man oother ald or yng
Of aneother suld ask a thing,
825 What thing so lygges his hert most nere.
That in his speche sall fyrt appere
And first be in his wordes always.
For God thus in His gospell says:
828a 'Ex habundancia cordis os loquitur'; *(see note)*
'That of the fulnes of the hert
830 Spekes the nowth woordes smert.' *boldly*
And for the Messe of Saint Spiryte
To my profynt es mast perfytic
And aliof of the Trinité.
Thir messes mykell amendes me;
835 Bot the Mess of the Haly Gast,
In my mynde es althir mast.
And tharfor I say thou sang
Of Saint Spiryt, I say nocht wrang.
And here now the encheson whi:
840 For, whils I lyfed here bodily,
I spended my wyttes and my powerte
Full ofte sythes in synnes sere,
When I suld have them spended ryght
To Godes weoschepe with all my myght
845 And mensaked the Fader with all my mayne;
For of Him comes all power playne
That men has here, whils att thai lyf.
- Mass: [like] the Holy Spirit*
profyt: most perfect
These masses greatly
Holy Ghost
the best of all
wrong
hear: reason
while: lived
spend: waste
Very many times; various
worship
honored; strength
fully
while that they live

The Gast of Gy

- After His grace als He will gyf.
Tharfor, what man so dose unryght
850 Throgh his power or his myght
Or be his strenkith, if that it be,
Ogains the Fader, than synnes he;
For al power He welfes allways,
Als David in the Psalter says:
854a 'Omnia, quecunque voluit, Dominus fecit.'
855 He says: 'The Fader may fullifill
In Heven, in erthe, what sonn He will.'
And to Crist, God Son, es gyfen full ryght
All wysdom both bi day and nyght.
Tharfor God Son thai syn ogayne,
860 That here dispenses thair wites in vayne
And settes them so on worldly gade,
That ryches es mare in thair mode
Than Crist, God Son, that bocht them dere.
I have synned on the same manere.
865 Till the Haly Gast es gyfen all grace
And all bountes in ilk a place.
Ogains Him oft also synned have I,
When that I used in foule foly
The gyftes, that He me gaf of kynde,
870 And wald nocht mensk Him in my mynde.
My god favor and my fairhede
Have I oft used in synfull dede,
And veritas have I turned to vyce.
Thus have I wrought als wryche unwyse.
875 Tharfore aseth now bus me make
To the Thre Persons for my syn sake.
And my god sunzell has me sayd
The prayers that er so purvayd,
And messes of the Trinité,
880 May gretely help now unto me.
And, for that I have synned maste
Ogains the gyftes of the Haly Gast,
Covetand here mare ryches
Than He me gaf of His godnes,
885 Or than He vouches safe me to sende;
- als; give
does
strength
Against; then
worldly
Psalter
(see note)
whatever
against
wiles; ruse
worldly good
mind
bought (i.e., redeemed) them dearly
To
virtues, every
against
in my nature
honor
excellence
virtues, vice
done; wretch
reparation; must
provided
Against
Coveting; more
promised

The Gast of Gy

- And tharfor, thi myss to amende,
Messes sungen of Saint Spiritt
In my Payne may do mast despyt.
And tharfor, sir Pryor, I say,
890 Of Saint Spiritt thou sang this day.
All if thine office ordaind ware
For Cristen saules, als thou said ave,
Thou said with god devocione
Of the Haly Gast are orysoun,
895 And that ilk orysoun, for certayne,
Alegged me more of my Payne
Than all the other, that thou sayd
For tyll all saules that war parvayd.
And, sen that helped me all aye
900 Wele more than the other ilk aye,
Of the Haly Gast, I say, thou sang,
If thou me wytte, thou has the wrang."
The Pryor askes him than this thing:
For how many saules a prest myght syng
905 On a day and in a stede,
Whether than war quyk or dede,
And ilk aye have in lyke gadenes
And in lyke meryte of the Mess.
The voyce answerd and gan say,
910 That a prest anely on a day
For all saules may syng and rede
And ilk aye of his mess have mede
Bli vertu of the Sacrament.
"And tharfor to this tak tent:
915 Jesus Crist with Jewes voyce
Was anely offyrd on the Croyce,
And thare He dyed and gef the gast
Unto His Fader of myghtes trust
For salvacion of all mankyn
920 And nocht anely for a man syn.
Ryght so the prest in ilk a Mess
Offers Criste, ryght als He es
In hale Godbede, als clerkes ken,
In amendement of all Cristen men.
- sin
(the) Holy Spirit
relief
directed
at: earlier
prayer
Believed
so; provided
since; alone
more; each one
understand; wrong
alive
each one; equal value
equal merit
priest once
every aye; reward
power; Sacrament (i.e., the Eucharist)
pay attention
once; Cross
gave the ghost (i.e., died)
greatest power
mankind
one man's sin
each Mass
full Divinity; know
Christians

The Gast of Gy

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 925 | Tharfor in a Messe may be tane
All Cristen sawies als wele als aye,
And better may it part than tyll.
That prove I thee be proper skyll.
For gret difference may men sele | encompassed
as well as one
reason
perceive
temporal |
| 930 | Bitwene spirituall thing and temporele.
Temporell thing, that thou sesse here,
When it es parted in paracels sere,
In the ma parcels it parted es,
Itself leves ay wele the les, | see
various pieces
more
leaves always; less
for [a] portion parts therefore
one apple take
divide; hand
yourself; remain |
| 935 | That es, for porcyoun partyse that fra.
Als if thou aye appell ta
And part it into many hende,
With thiselfe sall lytell lende.
Als wele may thou understand, | always growing
prayer
(i.e., <i>the Lord's Prayer</i>); make known |
| 940 | That spirituall thing es ay waxand.
That may thou se be ryght rescoune,
Als if thou tak this orysoun.
The Pater Noster, and forth it ken
Kynedly to all Cristen men. | negligible |
| 945 | And so when that it teched es,
In itself it es negh't les;
In understanding es it mare,
When ma it kan than couth it are.
So es the Messe and the prayere | more
more; know; knew; before |
| 950 | That ordand er for saules sere,
For ded and quyk, if that it be,
The more it es in it degreee."
The Pryor answers and says:
"Haly Wryt wimes always | intended; various
living |
| 955 | That saules er saved, for certayne,
And oft delyverd of thair payne
Be speciall prayers and speciall dede,
That frendes dose here for thair mede;
And tha frendes dose mare for aye | deeds
friends do; reward
those; do more; one
each one
reward |
| 960 | Than for other saules ilk aye.
Than think me that his mede sall fall
Mare than it war done for all,
And mare alegge him of his payne." | relieve |

The Gart of Gy

- 965 The voyce answerd thus ogayne:
"Ilk a prest, that Messe synges,
Him nedes for to do twa thinges:
First his prayers sall he make
Specially for his frendes sake,
Whilk he es most halden untyll,
That God him help of alkyns ill;
And, when he has so prayed for ane,
Than sall he pray for other ilk ane.
And ilk ane has mede of that Messe.
Bot he, for wham it ordaind es,
Es helped most fro bale tharby.
And on the same manere am I
Delyverd of my penaunce here,
That I suld have sufferd foure yhere,
For myadesdes als it was dert.
980 A lyfand frend thus has it lett:
I have a cosyn, that thou wele knew,
A pore frere, that I fynd trew,
I helped him whils he had nede,
Whils he to the scales yhede;
985 And also sithen, when he was frere,
I fand him fally fyve yhere.
And for myself full wele I wroght:
That godenes now forgetes he nocht.
For in his mynde he has me maste.
990 Tharfor I sall be helped in haste.
I sall have penaunce in this place
No ferror bot fra heben to Passe.
If thou will witt this for certayne,
At Pasch com to this place ogayne.
995 And, if thou here nocht than of me,
Sodly, certayne may thou be,
That I am hest up into Heven."
And, als he bad, he dyd fall even:
At the Pasch after the hows he soght,
1000 And of the voyce he herd ryght nocht.
Tharfor he trowed, als he said are.
Bot in that tym he asked mare
- Whom; most bound to
everything bad
- reward
whom; directed
most; suffering
- years
determined
- living friend; relieved
kinman
- poor friar; food
when
- When; schools were
lauer; friar
- looked after; years
- most
- farther; from now to Easter
understand
- Easter; again
hear
- taken up
- promised; exactly
- Easter; house
- believed; before

The Gast of Gy

- And said: "Kan thou trewly tell,
If thou in that ilk Heven sall dwell,
1005 That for Godes halowes es purwayd?"
The voyce answerd sone and sayd:
"Sire, I tald thee are full even,
That I come never yhit in Heven.
Tharfor I may tell thee no mare
1010 Of orders that er ordaind thare.
Bot of blys may I be full bald,
For thus myne aungell to me tald:
To Pasch I said in penance be,
And thus, he said, that I said se
1015 The Kyng of Heven in His Godhede
With His aungels all on brede
And with His halowes everilk ane.
And than I answerd sone onane
And sayd: 'A, lord, me think full lang,
1020 That meney till I com omening.'
Bot He be loved in ilk a place,
That unto me has gyfes slyke grace!"
The Pryor said: "What helpes mast
Unto Heven a saule to hast
1025 Out of the paync of Purgatory?"
The voyce answerd and said in hy:
"Messes may mast help than then,
That er said of haly men
And namely of myld Mary bne."
1030 The Pryor said: "Than think me
The Office of the Ded, certaine,
Of Requiem, was made in vayne,
Sen other availes than more than it."
The voyce unto him answerd yhit
1035 And said: "Full mykell avail it may,
When any men for all will pray,
And, for that lawed men here in land
Kan nocht graythely understand,
That saules has nede of other messe,
1040 Tharfor that Offyce ordaind es."
The Pryor said: "Sen thou has kende,
- some
saimes; provided
told you before
yet
assured
Easter
far and wide
saketh every one
company
But may He be
given such
in have
generous
I think
Since; benefit
great benefit
uneducated
readily
Since; explained

The Gost of Gy

- That specyall messes may mast amende,
Whilk other prayers withouten tha
May tyttest saales fra penaunce ta?"
Which; besides those
most quickly; from; take
- 1045 The voyce answerd and said in by:
"The seven Psalms with the Letany."
The Pryor said: "That war nocht ryght;
For God the Pater Noster dyght
Als of all prayers pryncipall,
- Litanie [of the Saints]
- established
- 1050 And aungels made the Ave all
Unto myld Mary for our mede,
And twelve apostels made the Crede.
And the seven Psalms er ently werkes
Ordand of byshopes and other clerkes,
- Ave [Maria] (i.e., Hail Mary)
- reward
- the [Apostles'] Creed
- Made by
- 1055 Men for to say that has mysgane,
And David made them everilk anc;
And nouther David, wele we ken,
Ne byshopes ne nane other men
Unto God er nocht at never,
- given astray
- neither; know
- not to be compared
- 1060 Ne yhit unto aungels of Heven,
Ne tyll apostels er thai nocht pers.
Tharfore me think that thair prayere
May nocht of slyke bounte be
Als the Pater Noster and the Ave
- to; equal
- benefit
- 1065 And the Crede, that the apostels purvayde."
The voyce answerd than and sayde:
"Thir prayers er full mykell of mede
And full haly, if we tak heede,
In tharselv, this es certayne.
- These: great of help
- take heed
- 1070 And for thair makers mykell of mayne.
We sall than wirschepe, als worthi es,
Bisfor all the other, cottane the Messe.
Bot nevertheless, sir, certainly,
The seven Psalms with the Letany
- great of power
- worship
- except
- Litanie [of the Saints]
- 1075 For to say es mast suffrayne
Unto saales, that suffers Payne;
For thai er ordaind, mare and trym,
Ever a Psalme for a syn.
And so thai stroy the syms seven.
- beneficial
- destroy
- 1080 Tharfor thai er nedefull to never.
- explain

The Gost of Gy

	The fynt Psalme gadeley grayde Ogayns prydē es parvayde;	well performed <i>Against; offered</i>
	And thus to understand it es: 'Lord, derne us nocht in Thi wodenes,	<i>judge; fury</i>
1085	Als thou dyd Lucifer, that fell For his prydē fro Heven to Hell.'	
	And so the other Psalms on raw	<i>in order</i>
	Ilk one a syn eway will draw	<i>Each one</i>
	Thurgh help of halows in fere,	<i>saints in company</i>
1090	That ordaind er in that prayere."	
	The Pryor effsones him assayls	<i>immediately; attacks</i>
	And said: "Tell me, what it avayls,	<i>avails</i>
	Or if saules the better be, Of 'Placebo' and 'Dirige'	
1095	With the Offyce that for the ded es dyght."	<i>I will please (i.e., appease); Guide [me]</i>
	The voyce answerd him on hyght	<i>prescribed</i>
	(With gret force out gan he bryst)	<i>immediately</i>
	And said: "A, Pryor, and thou wyst	<i>burst</i>
	How gretly that it may than gayne,	<i>(if you knew</i>
1100	Than hope I that thou wald be fayne	
	Oft for to bede that blyssed bede	<i>eager</i>
	For thi brether that er dede.	<i>offer; prayer</i>
	And, for thou sall it better know,	
	The privatese I sall thee schaw.	<i>obscure matters</i>
1105	In 'Placebo' es parvayd	
	Fyve Psalms, that sall be sayd	
	Aneli for the evensing,	<i>Only; evening (i.e., vespers)</i>
	With fyve antens als ormanz.	<i>asthma (i.e., astrophony)</i>
	Tha ten togeder, when tha er mett,	<i>performed</i>
1110	For the saul er thasgat sett,	<i>appointed</i>
	For to restore, wha to than testes,	<i>who; pays attention</i>
	Unto the saule ten comandementes;	
	And makes in mynde, how He than dyd,	
	So that His mede sall nocht be hyde.	
1115	Tha fyve Psalms when tha er mett	<i>performed</i>
	For fyve wittes of the saule er sett,	<i>with (senses); appointed</i>
	Therefor to schew, be reson ryfe,	<i>rigorous</i>
	How he than spended in his lyfe	<i>word</i>
	And that he spended than nocht in vayne	

The Gast of Gy

- 1120 That sall lett parcells of his Payne,
The fyve astens sayd bitwene,
Fyve myghtes of the saule may mene
That sall bere witness on thair wyse
How he thare spended in Godes servyse.
- 1125 Neghen Psalms than sayd sall be
Afterward in the 'Dirige,'¹
And thai sall signify fell ryght
Neghen orders of aungels bryght,
The whilk orders the saule sall be in,
- 1130 When he es purged of his syn;
That order sa he sall fallifyll,
When tha Psalms er sayd him tyll.
The neghen astens next folowand
And thre versikles, thou understand,
- 1135 The twelve poyntes of trouth thai bring ful chere
To him, that thai er sayd fore here.
And telles how he trowed them ryght
Here on this mold, when he had myght,
Als Haly Kyrk him kynsdeley kende.
- 1140 And so thai may him mykell amende.
The neghen lessoun bi tham all are
For the neghen degrese er trewly tane;
For ilk a saule, bus nedes be,
Sone of thi neghen in his degré,
- 1145 That es to say, outher yong or ald
Or pore or of poustre bald,
Outher in cleanness lyfe to lede,
Outher in wedlayke or in wydowhede,
Outher clerk or lawed man—
- 1150 In sone of their sall he be than:
Thir lessoun sall to welth him wye
In whilk degré sa he was in.
And the neghen respons for to rede
Sall mak him tyll have mykell mede.
- 1155 The fyve Psalms of the 'Laudes' all are
For fyve wittes may wele be tane
That ilk a saved saule sall fele.
And thai sall bere witness full wele

remit portions

anthems

powers; means

in their way

used

Nine

which

to

those

nine anthems; following

three versicles

trusted

earth; ability

Holy Church; properly taught

much

nine

accepted

must needs be

these nine

either young or old

poor; power strong

pure

wedlock; widowhood

uneducated

these

These; well-being

to

responses

to have great reward

all together

accepted

avail

The Gast of Gy

- 1160 And fullfyl it with mayn and myght,
That the saule than usod ryght.
The fyve antemes than folowand
In wittes for the saul sall stand
And faythly help for to fullfyl
Pyvo strenthes, that God gyfes saules untyll.
For God gaf, when this world bigan,
Thee strenthes of saules to ilk a man,
The whilk strenthes of myght er slyke,
That unto God man saule es lyke,
And also other strenthes twa
Unto mans bodyse gas he ma,
That to the saule done na socoures,
Bot makes them lyke Godes creatures
First I say, bi strenthe of thought
That saule lyke unto God es wrought,
The secund es strenthe of understanding,
That es lyke Godes Son in that thang,
The third thangh, strenthe of will,
The Haly Gast it es lyke tyll,
And bi myngangynge and awynt
Lyke ase unskyfull best es it.
Forwhi the saule dwelles als a stane
And feles als a best all ase
And lyfes als tres, thus clerkes telles,
And understandes als gad angols
Ther strenthes or thas ryght arrayd,
When this servyse for saules es sayd.
Also the psalme of 'Benedictus'
And of 'Magnificat' helpes thus
For to save the saules fra skathe
Thurgh Godhede and manhede bathe,
Wharof thai sall be certayne
To se, when thai er past thare payne,
And lat than wit, how thai sall wende
And be in blys withouten ende
The twa antemes, that er purvayd
With the Psalms for to be sayd,
May be told the company
- power and might
antemes; following
gives to souls
men's bodies; make
provide no succor
by
third
like unto
swaying; error
non-rational beast
Because; stone
feels; beast
lives; trees
These
from horn
both
know
two antemes; provided
recited [by]

The Gast of Gy

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1200 | Of aangels on the ta party
And of halows on the tother syde,
That with the saules in blys sall byde.
The colettes, that men after mase,
Er demed for dedes of grace,
That saved saules to God sall yeld
With all winschop that tha may weld. | one side
sailes; the other
abide
collects; make (i.e., say)
directed
yield
wield
mō; mō |
| 1205 | And sa when tha er mended of mys,
Than sall tha lende in lastand blys.
Tharfor, sir Pryor, thir prayers
Helpes saules thaſ, als thou heres."
Thus when he had declared this thing, | outside; lasting
these |
| 1210 | All that it herd had gret lykyng.
And mery made he, ilk a man.
Bot than the gast full scene bigan
To nōrme and mak full simple chere,
And sayd to tharn on this manere: | downcast expression |
| 1215 | "Askes of me sone what yhe will;
Mi tyne ex nere neghand me tyll
That me bus gang, als es my grace,
To suffer Payne in other place.
To gretter grevance bus me ga." | approaching to me
must go |
| 1220 | The Pryor said: "Sen it es awa,
This wald I witt, first ar thou wende,
If we may ought to thee ansende."
With symple voyce than answerd he,
And sayd: "If yhe wald say for me | must; go
Since; no
know; before; go away
anything; help |
| 1225 | Fyve sithes specially
The fyve joyes of Our Lady,
That myght help mykell me unstyll."
Thaſ graunted all with full gad will,
And on thair knees thaſ sett them dounse | times
much for me
knows |
| 1230 | And said with gad devocyoune
"Gaude, virgo, mater Christi"
Woth the fyve vers followand fully,
Bowsomly, als he tharn bad,
And tharfor was the gast full glad. | Rejoice, virgin, mother of Christ
verses following
Obediently; bade |
| 1235 | He thanked tharn with wordes fre
And said: "Wele have yhe comforth me; | gracious |

The Gast of Gy

- Mi paync es somdele passed now, somewhat
 That I may better speke with yhow."
- 1240 The Prior said: "Kan thou oght tell horns most the fiends
 What deres mast the fendas of Hell?"
 The gast answerd and said in by:
 "The sacrament of Godes Body;
 For, in what stede Goddes Body wace, place
 And the fendas of Hell war thare,
 1245 Unto it bured thare do honoure, mast
 And so sail ilk a creatoure."
- The Pryor said: "Than think me truly
 That all spirites suld it suthely se, altar set
 When it es on the alter grayed."
- 1250 The voyce answerd sone and sayde, by nature know
 That spirites may it kyndely ken
 Mare vermaily than other men.
 The Pryor asked him this skyll: More truly
 "May devels do any dere tharetyll reason (i.e., question)
 1255 Or disturbe it be any way?" harm thereto
 The voyce answerd and said: "Nay, by
 Bot if that a prest be unclene, Unless: impure
 In dedly syn, that es to mense, say
 Or other syn, what soon it be. whosoever
 1260 In swilk prestes has the fende poust power
 For to mense thare in their Messe, nor
 If thai dwell in their wickednes. remain
 And yhit he comes nocht comonly commonly (i.e., ordinarily)
 To ger thare abayst therby. cause; humiliatid
 1265 Bot, when he wate that thai lyf wrang, knows; live wrong
 The ofter wald he that thai sang, more often
 And that es to encrase their Payne, increase
 For of thare evelle face es he fayne." behavior; pleased
 The Pryor asked withouten lett delay
 1270 And said: "Es thare name aungell sett protect; altar
 To yhem the alter fra evelle thing.
 Whils Godes Body es in makyn.
 And als the prest wisely to wys?" wisely to inform
 He answerd and sayd: "Yhis.
 1275 And gude aungells war nocht before, Yes
 If

The Gast of Gy

- With evyll spirytes myght all be lorne, *lost*
For thai wald sone disturbe the prest
And putt vayne thoughtes into his brest,
So that he said nocht worthily.
- 1280 Have myght for to mak Godes Body
With honoure, als it aw to be, *ought*
So said he think on vanyst." *like to know*
The Pryor said: "I wald witt fayne *against*
What remedy war here ogayne *evil*
1285 For to defende the fendas fell." *know*
Than said the voyce: "I sall thee tell.
If that the prest in Godes presence
Be clene in his awen conscience, *know*
And mak his prayers with clene thought, *harm*
1290 Than the devels may deere him nocht." *these words*
The Pryor said to him ther sawes:
"Es there na prayer that thou knewes,
A prest to say byfore he syng,
That myght fordo swilk evel thing?" *prevent such*
- 1295 The voyce said: "What prest so hadde
The prayer that Saint Austyn made,
That 'Summe Sacerdos' es calde,
And he than with devocyonane walde
Say it ilk day, or he sang." *Augustine*
'Highest Priest' is called
- 1300 To Messe than myght he baldly gang,
For wathes it wald so wele him were,
Unnethes said any devels hire dare." *before*
The Pryor asked him yhit fall ryght,
If he saw oght that solempnise syght, *confidently go*
From persl: protect
- 1305 Of Godes Body the sacrament, *lest; harm*
Out of this world sen that he went. *ever; solemn*
The voyce said: "Yha, I se it yhit, *since*
For on thi breest thou beres it *now; now*
In a box thou has it brought,
- 1310 Als it was on the auter weught." *else*
Hereof the folk awondred ware,
Forwhi thareof wist thai never are.
That the Pryor had Godes Body,
Bot resayved it in his Messe anely. *Because; previously*
received

The Gast of Gy

- 1315 The Pryor said: "Than wald I witt,
Whi that thou noght honours ist,
Sen thou says, ilk a creature
Till Godes Body sall do honoure,
And thou wate wele, that it es here?" *know*
- 1320 The voyce answerd on this manere:
"I have it honoured in my kynde
With all my myght and all my mynde,
Sen first that thou it hyder broght,
All if thou persayved it noght." *according to my nature*
- 1325 The Pryor than with gad entent
Toke the Blyssed Sacrament
Out of his clothes, whare it was layd,
And to the spiryt thus he sayd:
"If thou trow it stedfastly, *believe*"
- 1330 That it is Godes Blyssed Body.
And ilk a spirit, wele wate thou,
Biloves unto Godes Body bow;
And sen it es of swilk pouer,
In vertu thareof I comand thee, *know*
- 1335 Since; such power
- 1335 That thou ga with me playne passe
To the aftermost ghatre of all this place." *go; at a brist powr*
- 1340 The voyce answerd: "I am boane,
Bot noght to folow thi persone.
Bot with my Lord fayne will I wende,
That thou haldes betwix thi hende." *gate*
- 1345 Than the Pryor toke the gate
Fast unto the forsayd ghatre,
And also his bester twa
With him went and many mo. *obligated*
- 1345 That he loked about and saw ryght noght,
Bot in his hercynge wele he thought,
That a noyse after them come
Lyke a besom made of broome, *twisting; broom*
- 1350 That war sweepand a pavement,
Swilk a noyse ay with them went,
And than spak the Prior thus:
"Thou spirytt, schew thee unto us
Witerly als thou er wrought!" *sweeping*
- 1350 Always
- 1355 Show yourself
Truly; are

The Gast of Gy

- Hereto the spiryt answerd nocht.
1355 The Pryor than odayne gan pass
Unto the wydow, whare scho wans
Lygand sare seke in hir bed,
So had scho lang bene evell led.
The voyce followd, als it did aye,
1360 Untyll thai in the chaumbere ware.
Than sene the woman gan bygyn
Grynsely for to grawnt and gryn
And cryed leud, als scho war wode.
All war astoned, that thare stode.
1365 Gret sorow thai had that syght to se,
For of hir payne was gret peté.
Bot nevertheless all men that myght
Assembled for to se that syght
And persued unto that place.
1370 For thai wald witt that wonder case.
The woman lay lyke unto lede
In swoonyng dounse als scho war dede.
The Pryor, when he saw this care,
Him thought full evell that he come thare.
1375 Bot nevertheless yhit stode he stylle,
And thus he said the voyce untyll:
"In the vertu of Cristes Passyonne
Say me the soth in this sesounne,
Whi it es and for what thing,
1380 That thi wife mase slyke morning."
Than said the voyce full sarily:
"Scho wate hirself, als wele als I."
The Pryor than with god entent
Sone unto the woman went,
1385 And till hir thus gan he say:
"In the name of God, dame, I thee pray,
Tell unto me all thi thought."
And scho lay stylle and answerd nocht,
And so about the bed tha stode
1390 To luke, if eight myght mend his mode.
And many for hir wa gan wepe.
And sone than scho bigan to crepe
- Lying sorely sick*
before
Horrifly; grawnt (death); grimace
as [if]. insome
astonished
pity
followed
understand; circumstance
lead
swooning down
at this time (season)
makes such mourning
sorrowfully
knows
look; state of mind
woe

The Gast of Gy

- Upon his knees, so als scho may,
And cryand loud thus gan scho say: *crying*
- 1395 "Lord Jesu, als Thou boght me
Of my Payne. Thou have peté
And graunt me of Thi help in haste." *pity*
- The Prioress than says unto the geste:
"Whi es thi wife thus travaid here?" *troubled*
- 1400 The voyce answerd on this manere:
"I tald ryght now here thee untyll,
That himself wist for what skyll;
And, if thou will witt more alway,
Ask himself, scho kan thee say." *unto*
 knows; reason
 know more
- 1405 Than the Prioress to her gase,
And mykell mane to her he mase
And said: "To save thyselv of sare
Tell me the case of all thi care,
And out of bale I sall thee bring." *want*
 great remonstrance, made
 sorrow
- 1410 Scho lay and answerd him nothing.
And he stode als man amayde,
And till the spyrmy sone he sayde:
"Thou creature, I conjure thee
Bi Godes myght and His pouste, *misery*
- 1415 And bi the vertu of His body,
And of His moder, myld Mary.
And bi the mylk He souake swete,
And bi the teres scho for Him grete
When scho saw his Son be slaine, *amazed*
- 1420 And bi the halows everilk ane,
The certayne sooth that thou me say
Of this mervail, if thou may,
Whi thi wife has all this Payne." *command*
 power
- 1425 And than the voyce answerd ogygne
And said: "His mervaing mare and myn
Was all for ane unkyndely syn,
That we did bfor my ded
Betwix us twa here in this stede,
Of whilk we bath war schryven sone. *sucked*
 wife
 slain
- 1430 Bot the penance was nought done.
Tharfor our Payne us bus fullfyll *saints, one*
 truth
 marvel
- mourning, more and less (i.e., entirely)*
- unnatural*
- death*
- place*
- must*

The Guest of Gy

- Now als ferre als falles tharetyll." *as far as falls there're*
 The Prior said: "Now, er thou pass,
 Say to me, what syn it was,
 1435 That wedded men may warned be
 To do nathing in that degré
 Ne lyke to it in dede ne thought." *before; go away*
 The voyce said: "God will it nocht,
 That I that syn suld tyll yhow say.
 1440 That thurgh schryft es done oway.
 Of that syn we bath war schryven.
 Tharfor of God it es foegyven
 Als to the blame, that be thou bald.
 Bot touchand penance I thee tald,
 1445 Aseth bus us make for that syn,
 Or we any welth may wyn.
 And that, that es done fra Godes syght,
 To tell to men it war nocht ryght,
 Bot if it war, als God forbede,
 1450 Ethsones so done in dede.
 Bot unto wedded men sall thou say
 And warn them that thai kepe alway
 The rewle of wedwyng with thair tryght
 And daryng do both day and nyght.
 1455 For thare er many comon case
 In whilk wedded men may trispase.
 The cases er kyndeli for to ken
 On molde onfang all witty mes.
 This was the suffrayne point," sais he,
 1460 "Whi God lewe me speke with thee,
 That thou suld trow this stedfastly
 And other men be esended thereby,
 So that thai may thair syms forsake
 And in thair lyve amedes make."
 1465 The woman, wepan als scho lay,
 With sary hert than gas scho say:
 "Gud Gy, for luf of me,
 Say if I sall saved be
 Or I sall dwell in dole ever mare
 1470 For that syn that thou nevend are,
- confession; removed
forgiven
- assured
touching; told
- Reparation must
Before; well-being
away from
- daily
instances
trespass
natural to understand
earth; intelligent
make
- believe
- weeping
sorry
- sorrow
mentioned before

The Gast of Gy

- Wharof, I wate, God was noght payd."
The spint answerd sone and sayd:
"For that ded thou dred thee noght;
The penaunce nere tyll end es broght.
1475 Thou sall be saved, for certayne."
And than the woman was full fayne
And sayd thare kneland on hir kne
A Pater Noster and ane Ave.
Scho loved God with word and will.
1480 And than the Pryor said hir tyll:
"Dame, whilis thou this lyf may lede,
Ilk day, lake thou do almsdede,
For almsdede may syn waste."
Unto that word answerd the gast:
1485 "Dame," he said, "par charyté,
When thou dose alms, think on me,
For to alegge son of my paynt."
And the Pryor than gan him frayne,
Whi he come noght in that sesoun.
1490 Unto men of religioun
For to tell to tham his lyfe
Titter than unto his wyfe,
Sen that he wist thau war mare nere
To God than any wemen were.
1495 And mare wisely thau coust him wys.
The voyce answerd than unto this
And sayd: "I lufed mare my wyfe
Than any other man on lyfe,
And tharfor first to hir I went;
1500 And when me was gyfen the iagement
To suffyr penaunce in this place,
I asked God of His gret grace
That my wife myght warned be
For to amend hir mys bi me.
1505 And of His grace He gef me leve
On this wise hir for to greve
And for to torment hir bisome,
So that scho suld noght be lorne,
Ne that scho suld noght suffyr pyne
- know; required
glad
meaning
almsdeed
take away
for charity
do alms
alleviate
ask
More readily
earlier
women
could understand him
loved more
alive
sin
grace
lost

The Gost of Gy

- 1510 For hir syns, als I do for myne,
Bot do it here in hir lyf days." living days
All sone than the Pryor says:
"Can thou ought tell me how lang
That thou sall thole tha payns strang?" endure; strong
- 1515 The spirit sayd: "I understand,
To Pasch, that now es next command.
Than sall my Payne be broght till ende,
And unto welth than sall I wende."
The Pryor said: "I servail me Easter; coming
- well-being
I am amazed
- 1520 How thou to speke has swilk pouste
And has na tong ne other thing
That instrument es of spekynge."
The voyce answerd on this manere:
"Ne sese thou nocht, a carpentere, Do you not see
- times
- 1525 That diverse werkes oft synthes has wrought,
Whousen ax may he do nocht?
The ax ay will redy be always
With him to hew on ilk a tré,
And it may nouther styr me stand another move nor
- you among
- 1530 Whousen help of marn hand.
Ryght swa a man here yhow onell
Whousen tong may nathing tell.
And with his tong yhit spekes he nocht,
Bot thurgh the ordenance of the thought: guidance
- 1535 That es, of the soule allways,
That ordans all that the tong says.
And forthi be this tale tak tent,
The body es bot one instrument
Of the soule, als thou may se, guides
- therefore; pay attention
- 1540 And the soule in himself has fre freely
Alkyns vertuse, myght and mynde.
Swilk gyftes er gyfen to him be kynde.
Tharfor he may speke properly
Whousen help of the body. All powers of strength and thought by nature
- 1545 And whare thou says a man may nocht
Speke the thing that comes of thought.
Bot he have mouth and tong als,
In that, I say, thi sawes er fals. mouth; tongue
sayings are false

The Gast of Gy

- For Haly Wryt wites full ryght
1550 That God and all his aangels bryght
Spekes wisely to als and yuong.
And thai ne have nouther mowth ne tong.
Ryght so may I and ilk spiryte
Fourme voyces full perfyte
1555 And wirk the wordes, how so we will,
And spek withouten tong yhow tyll."
The Pryor askes him in what stede
The saules dwelles when thai er dede
Unto tyme that the dome be done:
1560 "For than thou says thai sall witt sone
Whether thai sall to joy or Payne."
The gast than answerd sone ogayne
And said: "A lytell while before
Or that the earthly lyf be lone,
1565 The saule sall se and here unhyd
All the dedes that ever he dyd.
The ugly devels and aangels bryght
And after the poreyon of his plignt
In that same tyme sall he se,
1570 Whider that he sall jagged be
To comen Purgatory, that es stabyll,
Or unto Purgatory departabyll
Or els unto the payns of Hell
Or unto Heven in blys to dwell."
1575 The Prior than with wordes hende
Asked how sone a saule myght wende,
When it es past fra the body,
To Heven or Hell or Purgatory.
The voyce answerd and sayd: "It may
1580 In a lytell space wend all that way.
Sone es it brought whare it sall be,
Als thou may be ensaumple se.
Thou sesse, when the son es rysand,
The lyght gase sone over ilk a land;
1585 It passes over all the world full playne,
Bot if thare stand oght thareogayne.
Right swa the saules, when men er ded,
- old and young*
- judgment*
- Because*
- less*
- hear unhidden*
- afterwards; affliction*
- stable (i.e., permanent)*
- separated*
- courteous*
- sun is rising*
- goes quickly*
- Unless; anything in the way*

The Gost of Gy

- At sone er in thair certaine stede,
To Heven or Hell thai wend in hy. quickly
- 1590 And, if thai pass to Purgatory,
Som tyme wende thai nocht so sone,
And that es for thair profett done:
If thai have any faythfull frende
In this world here, when thai wende, profite
- 1595 That for tham will ger syng or rede
Or els do any almasdede.
Thai may so do for tham that tyde,
That in the ayre the saule sall byde. prepare to; read
- Untyll it have the medes tane
At that time
Of thair prayers everilk ane. bide
- 1600 And so bi help of thair gadenes
May his penaunce be made les.
The dedes that er so done in haste
Unto the saule es helpyng maste, benefits taken
- 1605 On the same manere als I say
In this cetē was done this day. city
- A thare dyed and demed he was.
Till comon Purgatory at pas, to pass
- 1610 Bot in the tyme of his transyng, passing over
- Of his brether he asked this thing.
That thai wald do in dede and saw word
- For him als thai war bon bi law.
And the messes that tham aghit for to say. bound by
- Pur charytē he gan them pray, ougle
- 1615 That thai wald be said in hy For charity
- And everilk ane of Our Lady.
And, als he bad, ryght so thai dyd, occurred
- And afterward thanas bityd:
When he was dede in flesch and fell, flesh; skin
- 1620 His aungell demed his saule to dwell ordered
- In comon Purgatory playne.
Thee monethes to suffer Payne, As
- Als worthy was efter his dede.
Bot than Our Lady Mary yhede, wore
- 1625 And tyll his Son scho prayd that tyde,
That the saule in the ayre might byde at that time
- 47

The Gast of Gy

- Untyll it had the mertyc clere
Of dedes that war done for it here.
And twa oyres than bayde it stylle
In the ayre, als was Godes wylle,
And swilk mercy of God had he
Thurgh prayer of his moder fe
And thurgh the dedes that here was done,
That he sall be in blys full sone.
- 1630 *blessed*
- 1635 In payne he has no lengar tyme
Bot fra now unto to morne at pryme." *gracious*
Than sayd the Prior till him sone:
"Whilk dedes of all, that here er done,
May tyttest help a soule to Heven?" *prime (about 6:00 a.m.)*
- 1640 The voyce answerd and said full even:
"Parfyte werkes of charyte
That er done als than aw to be,
That es to say, to Godes bihove,
And our evencrestion if we love.
- 1645 Than of our werkes will God be payd."
The Pryor answerd sone and sayd:
"If that thou kan, tell us in hante
What maner of men that now er maste
In Purgatory to suffyr Payne."
- 1650 The gaste answerd sone oghtyne:
"Na man comes that place within
Bot anely thai that has done syn;
And all that syns and saved sall be.
Er gyned thare of ilk degré
- 1655 After the dedes that thai have done."
And than the Pryor asked sone,
What manere of folk that he here fande,
That in thair lyves war best lyfande.
The voyce said: "Sir, soth it es
- 1660 And Haly Wryt wele beres wytnes,
That na man aw other to prayns.
Whether he do wele or evell always,
For manys lyfis es to prayse nathing.
Bot if he may have god ending.
- 1665 For na man in this world here wate,
- most quickly*
- Perfect*
before them
according to God's will
fellow Christians
be requited (satisfied)
- pained*
- According to*
- found*
living
- sought; praise*
- knows*

The Gast of Gy

- Whether he be worthi to luf or hate,
Ne whether his werkes war evell or wele,
Unto the domē be done ilk deile.
Than sall he se himself, certayne,
1670 Whether he be worthi joy or Payne." *judgment; every hit*
The Pryor said: "This ask I thee:
Whilk es maste parfyte degré
Of all that in this ground es grayde?" *arranged*
The gast answerd sone and sayde:
1675 "I se in ilk state," he says, *sack*
"Som thinges to lak and som to praye.
Thatfor I will prayse na degré,
Ne nase sall be disprayed for me.
Bot nevertheless this wald I rede, *advise*
1680 To ilk a man in ilk a stede
To serve God with all thair myght
In what degré so thai be dyght." *assigned*
The Pryor asked with wordes stabyll,
If that God war oght mercyalill *resolute*
1685 To saules that war in Purgatory.
The gast said: "Yha, sir, sykerly.
For unto som, this es certayne,
Relese He forth part of thair Payne,
Of som the thred part He relesest,
1690 Of som the secund part He seses.
And that es for gude prayers sake,
That frendes here for tham will make.
If any dedes be for tham done,
Than may thai pass fra payns sone.
1695 Lyliard frendes thus may tham lett
Of payn that thai suld dregh be dett,
And als the prayers of aangels
And of halows, that in Heven dwelles." *Living; relieve*
The Pryor said: "This wald I crave:
1700 Whakyn payn thiself sall have,
In Purgatory whils thou sall dwell?" *suffer by obligation*
The voyce said: "I sall thee tell.
In flawme of fyre thus bus me stand,
That alther hattest es brynd.
*flame; most
hottest of all; burning*

The Gast of Gy

- 1705 And have na comfort me to kele." cool
 The Pryor said: "Now se I wele,
 That thou ert no sothfast gaste.
 That shall I prove thee here in haste.
 This wate thou wele, if thou have mynde,
 God dose nathing agayns kynde. true spirit
- 1710 For, if He dyd, this dar I say,
 His werken wald none be wast away.
 And bodily thing the fyre I call,
 And thou a gast spirynall;
 And bodily thing may have no myght contrary to the laws of nature
- 1715 In gastly thing bath day and nyght.
 Than be ensaumple may thou se.
 That fyre may have no myght in thee,
 All if thou tharein graythely gang." properly
- 1720 The voyce answerd: "Sire, thou has the wrang,
 That thou me calles sa dyssayvabyll.
 Sen thou has foun in me no fabyll.
 Bot nevertheless, sire, whare thou says
 That bodily thing be nakyn ways deceitful
- 1725 In gastly thing may have powere,
 I answer thee on this manere.
 Thou wate wele that the devels sail lende
 In fyre of Hell withouten ende.
 And that fyre es als bodily caught, fable
- 1730 Als the fyre of Purgatory,
 And yhat pysses it the devels in Hell.
 Als God says in His awen Gospell,
 And als He to the fendes sail say
 And to the damped on Domesday: paine
- 1735 'Vhe weryed gastes, I byd yhow wende
 To fyre that lastes withouten ende,
 That ordand es for nathing oþer.
 Bot to the devell and his angells.' own
- 1740 And, whare thou says, that God does noȝt
 Ogayns kynde in thinges He wrought,
 I say, He dose, als folk may fynde,
 Bi miracle ogayns kynde,
 Als whilom fell of childre thre, damned: Judgment Day
 troubled spirits
 ordained
 once befell

The Gast of Gy

	That ordand war beynt to be.	<i>ordered; burn</i>
1745	In Italy Wrytt er thai named so: Sydrac, Misasac, and Abdenago.	
	Thai war done with full greet ire Intyll a chymne full of fyre;	<i>put furnace</i>
	And, als it was Our Lordes will,	
1750	The fyre dyd nusekyn harme than tyll, Bot hale and sounde thai satt and sang. Lovan the myght of God omang. Thus war thai saved in that stede Fra fyre and fra that kyndely dede.	<i>no kind of healthy Loving place natural death</i>
1755	Ryght so has God ordand in me That the fyre has no pouste To wast me, if I stand tharein, Bot for to pyne me for my syn."	<i>power destroy pain</i>
	Than sayd the Pryor: "Se thou says,	
1760	That fyre about the bryns always, Than think me that this hows and we Seld bryn all for the fyre of thee, Sen that it es so hate and kene." The voyce sayd: "Now es wele sene	<i>burns</i>
	That in thee es full lytell skyll,	<i>hot; sharp</i>
1765	For ryght now tald I thee usyill That God may withdraw thurgh His myght The stearthe of fyre both day and nyght So that it no harme may do	<i>ix; rational power</i>
1770	In thing that it es putt unto, Als He dyd of the childre thre, Of whame before I tald to thee. Also thou sese, fyre of levernyng Wendes about be alkyn thing	<i>see; lightning all kinds of</i>
1775	Kyndely, als clerkes declare it kan, And nother bryns it hows ne man. And als thou sese, the son may passe Thurgh wyndows that er made of glasse, And the glass nocht enpayred thanby.	<i>fire</i>
1780	So may a spiryt, sikerly, In ilk a place com in and out And bryn nocht that es him obout.	<i>burned (inspired) surely</i>

The Gart of Gy

	Howses ne clothes ne other atyre, All if himself be flaxmound in fyre.	attire Even if receive burned
1785	And so this hows may resayve me And itself neght empayred be. Bot, certes, this sall thou understand: If all howses in ilk a land In a sted war brymound schire,	taking hot
	It myght neght be so hate a fyre Als I now saffyr nyght and day."	At once; burning entirely
1790	And than the Pryor to him gan say, Askand of him this reson, If he trowed the Incarnacyoune,	believed
1795	How Jesu Crist toke flesh and blode. The voyce answerd with eger mode Till that questyon all with envy, And full loud thus gan he cry:	sharp manner
	"A, my Pryor, whilk er tha men,	which
1800	That the Incarnacyoune will neght ken? Whilk er tha, that will neght knaw, How angells sayd it in thair saw? And devels trowes it wonder wele,	those teaching accept
	And saules in Payne thai may it fele.	wile
1805	Full mykell wa thai er worthy, That will neght trow it stedfastly. To ask me yit, it war no need;	
	In Haly Wryt thyselv may rede	
	That thus says in the Gosspell of Cryste:	
1810	"Wha trewly trowes and es baptyst, Till endeles blys tha sall be broght,"	Who; believer; baptized
	And also: "Who so trowes neght, How Crist on mold toke our manhede,	earth assumed a human nature
	Thai sall be damned withoutes drede	damned without doubt
1815	And ever have bale withoutens blys."	
	Than said the Pryor: "Tell me this: Sen the Sarzyns and the Jewes	
	And the payens it neght trowes,	pagan; believe
	Whi God lates them dwell so lang	let; remain
1820	In thair thought, sen thai trow wrang, And sen thai will for na rescouse	believe strongly argument

The Guest of Gy

- Trow Cristes Incarnacyoune." *Believe*
Than the voyce answerd him tyll:
"It es na questyoun of Godes will;
1825 And tharfor neven it nocht me to *mystere*
To ask whi God dose so or so
Of thing that touches to His Godhede,
Bot fande to do His will in dede.
I wate nocht whi than lyf es lent.
1830 Bot if it be to this entent: *Unless*
That Cristen men may on than fyght
In the fayth for to defend thair ryght;
For, on than bataile for to bede,
May Cristen men encres thair mede,
1835 If faith be fally in thair fare." *Increase; reward*
And than the Pryor asked mare:
"Kan thou ought tell me, whilk manere of syn
Er used must omang mankyn?" *mankind*
The voyce answerd on this wise:
1840 "Pryde and lychory and covatyse *lechery; covetousness*
And usury, thir fourre in seve *these; together*
With thair braunches many and serte *diverse*
That er fall wlatson day and nyght *disputing*
Bifor God and His aungela bryght.
1845 And thre syns er, if thai be done,
For whilk God will tak vengeance sonc:
Ane es, if man and woman here *Live together*
Wos samen, als thai wedded were,
And wandes nocht thair will to wirk *fear*
1850 Withouten the sacrament of Haly Kyrk, *Holy Church*
Or if thai be wedded that tyde
And outher syn on outher syde
To breke thair spousage in that space:
To God this es a gret trispase.
1855 The tother syn es nocht to say,
Bot clerkes full kyndely knew it may.
The thred syn es fall evel thing,
That es manslaughter with maynsaweryng." *Sword*
Thus when all thir sawes war sayd
1860 The woman to the Prior prayd. *manslaughter; perjury*
these teachings

The Gast of Gy

- That he wald spek the gast untyll,
 So that he dyd hir no more ill
 For the luf of God of myghtes mast.
 The Pryor than said to the gast:
- 1865 "I conjure thee be God all ase
 And bi His halows everlik ase,
 If thou may schot, that thou sese
 And lat thi wylf now lyf in pese
 And persue hir no more with Payne." *command*
- 1870 Than the gast unswerd egayne:
 "That may I nocht for nanekyn ned,
 Bot scho lyf chaste in wydowhede
 And aliswa ger syng for us twa
 Thre hundredeth messes withouten ma:
 1875 A hundredth of the Haly Gast sall be
 Or els of the Haly Trinité,
 And a hundredth of Our Lady
 And of Requiem fyfty
 And other fyfty als in fere *no kind of*
 1880 Of Saint Peter, the apostell dere."
 The woman herd thir wordes wele
 And graunted to do ilk a dele,
 And went with gad devocyonne
 Till all the feres of the toane *Except if*
 1885 And prestes and monkis of ilk abbay
 And gerti tham syng all on a day
 Thre hundredth messes gadeley grayde
 On the covand before sayde,
 And so when that thai songen ware, *also has sung*
 1890 The gast of Gy greved hir no mare.
 Bot yhit the Pryor in that place
 Unto the gast twa resonas mase
 And asked, if he wist on what wyse
 Ov in whilk tyme Anterist suld ryse *hundred; more*
 1895 And tak egyptrew Cristen men.
 The gast on tha wise answerd then
 And said: "It falles nocht unto me
 To tell nocht of Godes preveté,
 It es na question us unto *hundred*
- together*
- everything*
- abbey*
- had them*
- performed*
- promise*
- inquierer makes*
- knew in what way*
- assaf*
- secret things*

The Gast of Gy

- 1900 What so His will es for to do."
The Prior said: "Me think ryght wele
Thou heres my spekyng ilk a dele."
The gast said: "Yha, for certayne."
And sone the Pryor sayd egayne:
1905 "That has thou eres to thi hereyng,
Feewhi thou ert a bodily thing
And nocht gaudy, als thou has taid."
The voyce answerd with wordes bald:
"Haly Wryt schewes us this skyll:
1910 The Spirit empis whare it will,
And His voyce wele may thos here.
Bot thou may nocht on sa manere
Witt what place that it coes fra
Ne unto what place it sal ga."
1915 And, ryght als he thir wordes gan say.
Sodainly he went oway,
So that that herd of him no mare
In that tyme, whils that war thare.
And be than was tyme of evensange,
1920 And the Prior had ilk man gang.
In the name of God, whare tha wald be:
"And, whare ybe com, in ilk contré,
If ybe be askid of this case,
Says the sooth, ryght als it wase
1925 And als it es here proved in dede."
And hastily than barse tha yhede.
The Pryor than withouten faille
The woman thus he gan counsaile,
That scho suld kepe hir clene and chaste,
1930 Als scho was warned with the gaste.
And als he bad aneother thinge,
That ilk day a prest suld syng
Contynuely there in that place
For Gy saule fro thethen to Pase.
1935 With full god will the woman dyd
Als the Pryor gan hir byd.
A prest sho gat with full god chere.
Bot hir bows durst scho nocht com nere;
- confident explanation
- these
- by; evensong (vespers) bade
- home; went
- At
- then to Easter

The Gast of Gy

- 1940 Scho was so dredard ay for dole.
And on the twelft day after Yhole,
That clerkes callis Epiphany.
Untyll the freres scho went in hy,
And tyll the Prior sone scho yhode,
That had done him so mykell gade.
1945 And he ordaind with all his mayne
Untyll him hows to wend ogayne
For to here and herken mare,
If thai myght fynd that ferly fare.
He toke of other orders twa,
1950 Of Austinians and Menours aliaua,
So that thai war twenty freres
All samen outane seculeres.
And samen so ogayne thai went
To Gyes hows with gud entent,
1955 And in that hows said thai and he
"Placebo" with the "Diryge"
For his saule, that was husband thare,
Als he and his brother did are.
When thai had sayd in gud degrē
1960 Till "Requiescant in pace,"
Thai herd a voyce com than besyde,
Als it did at that other tyde.
Lyke a besom bi than it went
That war sweepand on a pavement.
1965 Tharfor son of the folk war flayd,
Bot till it sone the Pryor sayd:
"I conjure thee with mayn and mode
In the vertu of Cristes blode,
In this stede at thou stand stylle
1970 And answer, what we say thee tyll."
And than the voyce with wordes meke,
Als a man that had bene sekke,
Untyll the Pryor than gan say:
"Whi deres thou me thus ilk a day?
1975 It es nocht lang sen I tald thee
What thing so thou wald ask of me,
What said I now say to yhow here?"
- dreading always
Tale (Christmas)
- went
such great
determined; power
- hear; listen once more
wonder done
- Augustinians; Franciscans also
- together nor counting diocesan priests
- some
broom
sweeping
frightened
- strength and courage
- sick
Unto
trouble

The Gast of Gy

- And than answerd another frere,
A divynour of gret clergy. *wise man*
- 1980 And said: "Tell here till us in hy,
Whether that thou of payn be quyt,
Or els what Payne thou suffers yhit." *grace*
The voyce answerd sone orane
And said: "Love God all His lane!" *conveyed*
- 1985 For swilk grace unto me es grayde
Thurgh messes, that war for me sayde,
That fra this tyme now afterward
Am I past fra the payn haed
In coron Purgatory thare I was ass.*passed*
- 1990 In that place sall I com no mare."
Untyll that voyce than said the frere:
"Tell us what penance has thou here,
Sen thou fra Purgatory es paste."*flame; hot*
The voyce answerd at the laste:
"I suffer flawme of fyre full hate."*know*
- 1995 The frere said: "Tell us, if thou wate,
If anything amend thee may."
The voyce answerd and sayd: "Nay.
Me bus it suffer certaine days."*I must*
- 2000 Yhit than the Prior to him says:
"Lo, how have I gedred here
Freres and other folk in fere
Of thi wordes to bere witnes*gathered*
And of thi mervayl mare and les,*together*
- 2005 That we may all this case declare
Bifor the pope, when we com thare.
And tharfor tell us som mervaile
That we may trou withouten fayle."*pope*
- 2010 The voyce answerd to thi sawes:
"I am nocht God, that wele thou knowes,
And mervayl falles to na man els
Bot unto Him and His aungels.
And nevertheless thus I yhow teche:*believe*
- 2015 Bot if yhe better the pople preche
Than yhe have done this tyme beforne,
Lightly may yhe be forlorne;*these requests;*
Delect; people
lost

The Gast of Gy

- And speke yhe sali mast specyally
Ogayns the syn of symony,
Usur and manslaughter and maynsweryng.
simony
2020 Avoutry and fals witnes beryng.
Ther syna, bot if the folk forsake,
I wan yhow God will vengeance take.
And wan it, whar for the prayere
Of myld Mary, His moder dere.
Usury; manslaughter; perjury
Adultery; lying
- 2025 And of His halows overilk are
Grevousc vengeance mond be tase
Full many tymes omang maskyn,
When thai use swilk outrage syn.
And yhe sali suffer the same Payne,
Grievous; might; takes
commit such outrageous sin
- 2030 Bot if yhe preche fast thareogayne.
For syn es used now wele mare
Than any werkes of Godes lare.
That sali thai seem tyme full sare rew."
Than asked the Pryor, if he knew,
Unless; hard theragainst
- 2035 How many papes suld be of Rome
Fra that tyme till the Day of Dome.
The voyce said: "I kan tell nathing
What sali fall in tyme coming.
Tharfor thou may nocht wit for me
Judgment
- 2040 How many papes of Rome sali be
Ne what sali com ne what es gane.
And tharfor may yhe now ilk ase,
Whare so yhe will, wende forth yhour way.
Bot for me luke fast that yhe pray
gone
- 2045 And for all saules, that suffers Payne.
For this I say yhow for certayne:
Haly Kyrk prayis nocht so fast
For Cristen saules, that hethen er past.
Als thai war won, ryght wele I ken
hence; passed
used to
- 2050 Ne no mare dose religiouse men.
Tharfor I rede thai mend than sonc,
Or any evell be to than done."
Thir tales when he had tald than tyll,
He sayd no mare, bot held him styl,
advise
Before
These
- 2055 And of him herd thai than no mare.

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- Therfor all men that thare ware
Went and tald thir thingys ilk one *those*
Playnly unto the Pape John
The twa and twenty, I understand.
- 2060 And at the Pasch next folowand *following*
That same pape sent men of his
For to seke the sooth of this. *truth*
The hows of Gy oft sythes thai soght,
Bot of the gast ne fand he nocht. *many times*
2065 And thereby myght men witt fall even *inve*
That he was went up intyll Heven,
Whare comfort es withouten care.
Als himself had said than are.
- 2070 Untyll that comfort Crist us ken *before*
Tharugh prayer of His moder! Amen.

Explanatory Notes to The Gast of Gy

Abbreviations: see Textual Notes.

- 1 *Saint Michael*. One of the three archangels (Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael), who were the special messengers of God. In Scripture he is the leader of the angels who will fight the dragon in the last days (*Apocalypse* 12.7), and, although not mentioned by name, he is traditionally considered the angel who stood guard at the gate of Eden to prevent Adam and Eve's return (*Genesis* 3.24). He is the guide in the tour of Hell in the *Apocalypse of St Paul*, a late fourth-century non-canonical book which was influential in medieval vision literature.
- 2 *Saint Augustyn*. St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo (354–430), is a Doctor of the Church — a learned teacher distinguished for interpretation of doctrine. He is also a Father of the Church, along with St. Gregory the Great, St. Ambrose, and St. Jerome — the most influential early Doctors. A prolific writer whose works include *Confessions*, *City of God*, *Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Charity*, and much more, he shaped the thinking of the Church for centuries, and was especially influential in the fourteenth century, when he is frequently cited by vernacular writers (Chaucer, Langland, Trevisa, Usk, Gower) as well as theologians like Bradwardine and Wyclif.
- 5 *clerkes*. Although "clerk" usually refers specifically to clerics in minor orders, it here refers to all learned men in religious life.
- 11 *Saint Paul*. St. Paul, author of the Epistles that comprise the largest segment of Christian Scripture, influenced Christian thought throughout the Middle Ages. His Epistles are frequently cited by St. Augustine and other Doctors of the Church as sound doctrine and reliable commentary on the rest of Scripture.
- 13–14 A loose translation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans 15.4. The idea that all writing, if properly interpreted, works for our spiritual instruction is a commonplace in the Middle Ages: see Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* 10, for example. Chaucer, at the conclusion of *The Nun's Priest Tale*, says:

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For Seint Paul seith that al that written is,
To oure doctrine it is ywritte, ywrit. (CT VII[87]3441-42)

Or, again, in the Retraction: "For oure book seith, 'Al that is written is written for oure doctrine,' and that is myn entente" (CT X[1]1089).

- 28 *writowsten fabill?* Despite the proposition that all writing was, or could be, for our instruction, "fabill" is a particularly charged word. It was often used to identify fictions or illusory stories considered spiritually dangerous or misleading. Chaucer's Parson makes the distinction, explicitly referring to 1 Timothy 1:4, 4:7 and 2 Timothy 4:4:
- Thou gettest fable noon ytauld for me,
For Paul, that wryteth unto Thymothee,
Reprevest hem that weyven soothfastnesse
And telles fables and swich wrechednesse. (CT X[1]31-34)
- Although a fable can mean "a short fictitious narrative meant to carry a moral" (*MED*), it is much more often "a false statement intended to deceive; a fiction, untruth, falsehood, lie"; or "a fictitious or imaginative narrative or statement, especially one based on legend or myth" (*MED*).
- 31-42 These lines attempt to establish historicity by specific identification of time and place. In R, Gy dies on 20 November (*XII kalendas*, line 39) 1323. There are differences in other manuscripts, though all agree on the year except Q, which, erroneously, has 1333. In R, the *Gast of Gy* begins his haunting on the eighth day after his death (27 November). All MSS agree that his wife seeks out the Prior three days after Christmas: 27 December, the feast of St. John the Evangelist.
- 37 *Alexty.* The name of the town, Alexty, is variable and confusing in the manuscripts. Alais (or Aleis), in the Department of Gard, seems most likely.
- 38 *Bayouse.* I.e., Bayonne, though the city intended is almost certainly Avignon, which John XXII had made the seat of the Papacy in 1316. Avignon is, indeed, about thirty miles from Alais (Alexty).
- 48 The *Gast of Gy*'s voice can be heard, but he is invisible. A pictorial representation of the scene found in MS Getty 31 shows the observers gathered around an empty space. Although some revenants appeared as spectral images, invisibility was more common, because of the incorporeality of the soul.

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- 51 *rugged and rent*. It is unlikely that the body of Gy's wife is "distraught and torn," though she may have done herself some damage in her distress. More likely, *rugged* refers to her mental state, while *rent* suggests that she has torn her clothes ("rent her garments") in the classical manifestation of grief and perturbation.
- 54 *Eighthene*. The sense is "the eighth day in order," i.e., after a week.
- 56-57 The distinction between "good ghosts" and "fiends" was the object of much learned and popular speculation.
- 60-61 *freves . . . prechours*. I.e., Dominicans. Founded by St. Dominic in 1220, the Dominicans were one of the mendicant orders that propagated the doctrine of Purgatory most vigorously in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A notably intellectual order, the order of both Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, they particularly opposed Pope John XXII's dubious position that the soul would remain in Purgatory until the Last Judgment.
- 63 *Prior*. A prior is the chief officer, spiritual and administrative, of a Dominican establishment called a convent.
- 65 Gy died on 20 November and the "haunting" began on the eighth day (i.e., seven days later). Three days after Christmas, 27 December, she sought out the Dominican prior for help. (Medieval counting of duration, like the classical, included the first day in the numeration.)
- 75 *spylf*. The sense is that the ghost returns to that former place of rest to give audience to his agitated message. The bed is now "spoiled," "made desolate," "subverted," "deprived of its intended use" (MED).
- 97 *brother*. Friars were referred to as "brothers," emphasizing the communal basis of the mendicant orders.
- 104 *chapter bell*. The chapter bell summoned the friars to meet as a group, "in chapter."
- 114 After this line, other versions of the poem variously identify the disciplines of the two masters. See textual note.

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- 134–36 It is essential that everyone involved, friars and mayor's men, receive the sacrament of Penance and receive the Eucharist before embarking on the mission, because the Prior could not be sure whether they were about to encounter a benevolent spirit, as the *Gast* of Gy turns out to be, or a false or evil spirit, a fiend.
- 137 *Requiem*. I.e., Mass for the Dead. The name comes from the sentence *Requiem aeternam dona eis. Domine* (Eternal rest grant unto them, Lord.) This sentence also occurs throughout the *Officium defunctorum* (the Office of the Dead), which was part of the *Breviarium romanum* (the Roman Breviary), the compendium of prayers, mostly Psalms, required for daily recitation by members of mendicant orders and adapted to the liturgical season or a specific purpose, e.g., funerary. The use of the plural *eis* (them) in both the Requiem and the Office of the Dead is important in view of the later discussion in the poem about whether masses said for an individual also benefitted all the faithful departed.
- 141–42 *Howselī... hewyld*. The sacrament of the Eucharist (Holy Communion), the reception of the consecrated body and blood of Christ in the form of bread and wine.
- 146 *bost*. Any box or receptacle; here applied to a pyx, a vessel for carrying a consecrated Communion host, usually to the sick or dying.
- 155 The balanced construction in this line is a noteworthy feature of R. N usually provides a coordinating conjunction.
- 166 As the Prior enters, he says *Pax huic domui* ("Peace be to this house"), the words that Jesus told the seventy-two disciples to say as they entered each house on their evangelical mission (Luke 10:5). The Latin is translated in the next two lines though alway is, strictly speaking, superfluous. The Prior continues (lines 169–205) to say prayers appropriate to entering the house of one recently deceased.
- 171 *Fidi aquæ*. The first words of the rite of sprinkling with holy water before Mass during Eastertide (from Easter Sunday to Pentecost). The prayer, a responsorial between priest and choir, is based on Ezekiel 47:1, where Ezekiel has a vision of waters pouring from under the Temple. Although the *Fidi aquæ*, with its sprinkling of holy water, is an appropriate introductory prayer, it is out of season on December 27. The Prior seems to be mounting a powerful introduction to the ceremonial prayers that follow.

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- 172 *Veni, Creator Spiritus.* The first words of one of the most popular hymns of the Middle Ages. It is an invocation of the Holy Spirit sung at the beginning of the Mass of the Holy Spirit and on other special occasions. The emphasis on the Holy Spirit is especially significant in view of the later discussion between the *Gast* of Gy and the Prior about the special efficacy of the Mass of the Holy Spirit for souls in Purgatory (lines 817–902). It was included in various places in the recitation of the *Breviarium romanum* at the canonical hours, and dates from the ninth century.
- 173–74 *Colet⁹ . . . fidelium.* A Collect, or *Oratio*, is a short prayer consisting of an invocation, a petition, and a glorification of Christ or God. This Collect, *Déus, qui corda fidelium Sancti Spiritus illustracione docuisti* (O God, who didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit), was assigned to the Mass of the Holy Spirit and fits well after the recitation of *Veni, Creator Spiritus.* The Holy Spirit remains prominent in the sequence of prayers.
- 176 *Asperges me.* The first words of the rite of sprinkling the congregation with holy water, usually before Mass, outside of Easter tide (when the *Vid Aquam* was used). Like the *Vid Aquam* it is a responsorial between priest and choir. The prayer is based in the Vulgate on Psalm 50:9. By using both the *Vid Aquam* and the *Asperges*, the Prior seems to be attempting an especially powerful invocation.
- 193 *Dominus vobiscum.* "The Lord be with you." A frequent phrase in many liturgies. The usual response, not given here, is *Et cum spiritu tuo* (And with your spirit).
- 197 *In principio.* "In the beginning," the first words of the Gospel according to St. John. The whole verse is: *In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum* (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.) Traditionally, John 1:1–14 was recited at the end of the "Post-Communion," the last part of the Mass. The lines are an affirmation of Christ's Incarnation, which, like the Mass of the Holy Spirit, becomes prominent later in the poem (lines 447–56). The use of John 1:1 is also appropriate because it is the Evangelist's feast day.
- 202–05 These lines indicate that the Prior recites the Office of the Dead (*Officium defunctorum*) from the Roman Breviary (*Breviarium romanum*). This liturgy was composed primarily of psalms, antiphons (short interspersed prayers from Psalms or elsewhere in Scripture), Collects (see explanatory note to lines 173–74), and responses appropriate to the canonical hours of Vespers, Matins, and Lauds. The canonical hours were prescribed times throughout the day: Matins (during the night), Lauds (just before

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dawn), Prime (sunrise), Terce (mid-morning), Sext (noon), Nones (mid-afternoon), Vespers (sundown), and Compline (bedtime). They were required of all clergy and recited communally by religious orders of monks and friars. The prescribed prayers varied according to the liturgical season or some special purpose, such as prayers for the dead.

The Office of the Dead included the prayers and readings associated with Vespers (*Placebo* is the first word of the first antiphon for Vespers), Matins (*Dirige* is the first word in the prescribed Matins), and Lauds, followed by the seven Penitential Psalms (6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142 in the Vulgate), a recitation of the Litany of the Saints, and concluding with the threefold invocation: *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis* ("Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us"). The first half of this line is based on John 1:29, which itself is based on Isaia 53:7. In the Requiem Mass and in the Office of the Dead the second half of the line could be *dono eis requiem* (grant them rest). Some other variations were allowable. Thus, the Prior and his two brothers effectively recite the Office of the Dead when they enter Gy's house.

- 208 *Als a child sayyd:* "Amen." N expands to *als of so* as to mean "as of a child saying 'Amen.'" But R. *als* is clear: "Like a child saying 'Amen.'"
- 215 *wax and' es and shall be ay.* A thanksgiving (doxological) response common in Christian liturgy (*sicut erat in principio et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum*) that follows the priest's *Gloria Patri, et Fili, et Spiritui Sancto* (compare line 214). Here it serves as a precautionary warning against evil spirits. The English phrase is sometimes used by writers to indicate duration (e.g., Chaucer's *TC* 1.236–37).
- 224 *lynde.* A complex word that refers most generally to "the aggregate of inherent qualities or properties of persons" (MED). It can also refer to the "natural disposition or temperament of a person or animal," or even clan, parentage, or lineage (MED). Here, and in most places in the poem, it seems to indicate "intrinsic nature" or "natural capacity," that which is within the capacity of human nature.
- 235 *ill gast or a gud.* The poem returns to the familiar medieval distinction between good ghosts and demonic fiends or phantasms.
- 239–50 The *Gast of Gy* argues that, since Scripture says (Genesis 1:31) that all of God's creation is good, he is therefore a good ghost by nature (lynde, line 248) and only evil according to sinful deeds performed in life for which he is now making satisfaction.

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- 297-98 *For lawed folk . . . oft walkonf.* The Pryor refers to the sightings by *lawed* (i.e., "uneducated") folk of evil men walking the land after death. Popular speculation and theological controversy both considered the question of whether the damned (as well as puratorial spirits) had the power to return to earth. The orthodox answer was that it could occur only with God's permission for the instruction and benefit of the living.
- 331-34 *For ilk a man . . . or in Hell.* The Gast of Gy explains that penance for sins must be done on earth, in Purgatory, or in the endless pains of Hell. This section of the poem expounds an especially Dominican view on a controversial subject.
- 351-52 *Wō wort that man . . . whome shlownder comes.* To give scandal is to perform an action that leads another towards spiritual destruction (Matthew 18.6-7).
- 377-83 *This ask I thee . . . sacramentes ilk one.* The Pryor asks the crucial puratorial question: how is it possible for a person to receive the last sacraments and still be evil after death. The Gast explains that, although the spirit is not evil by nature, there is a residue of guilt for which satisfaction must be made, even after sins have been forgiven, through penitential acts on earth or temporary suffering in Purgatory. Theologians distinguished between *culpă*, the guilt that could be absolved in the Sacrament of Penance, and *poena*, the retribution or satisfaction that still had to be made.
- 409-10 *And clerkes proves . . . releis us of a yher.* Although it is stated somewhat confusingly, the idea is that a day of penance done on earth will release the sinner from a year of suffering in Purgatory. Arithmetical correspondences came late in the development of the doctrine of Purgatory and were never universally agreed upon.
- 447-52 *Be Holy Wryt! . . . mayden eyld of mose!* The Gast of Gy refers to statements by the Hebrew prophets that were taken by Christians to foretell the Incarnation of Christ (e.g., Isaiah 7:14-15 and 9:6-7). A good source for a systematic cataloguing of such passages would be *The Bible of the Poor (Biblia Pauperum): A Facsimile and Edition of the British Library Blockbook C.9.d.2*, trans. with commentary by Albert C. Labriola and John W. Selsitz (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1990). See the Latin transcription and English translation of the dozens of passages from the Hebrew Bible that are used as prefigurations of New Testament verses (pp. 55-139).
- 470-78 *It ex na lyknes . . . what thing suld fall.* The Gast of Gy explains that prophets could speak of things they never saw because of a special gift of God to instruct the people. The question and answer are not compatible. The Pryor had asked whether the Gast knew who would be saved and who would be damned, and used the foreknowledge of

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the prophets as a reason why souls in Purgatory should know. The Pryor's analogy is weak, but the Gast simply responds to the question of the knowledge possessed by the prophets. The Gast does profess ignorance about the fate of other souls. Just what souls in Purgatory knew was a matter of disputatious conjecture.

- 473 *gofles of the Holy Spente*. The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are *sapientia* ("wisdom"), *intellecitus* ("understanding"), *counselum* ("counsel"), *fortitudo* ("might"), *scientia* ("knowledge"), *tremor Domini* ("fear of God"), and *pietas* ("piety"). See Isaías 11:2 for the first six, to which the Vulgate added piety. According to Frère Lorens, in his *Somme le roi*, the gifts of the Holy Spirit "doth away and destroseth the seven deadly sins" (see Jeffrey, p. 307).
- 498–504 *Ryght in thi woldes . . . damnyed had bene*. The Pryor objects that fiends (devils) sometimes have had knowledge of who has been saved and who has been damned. The Gast responds that souls in Purgatory do not know such things unless God or an angel tells them (quite a common view). The Pryor has switched his attention from previous knowledge, as in the example of the prophets, to present knowledge of who is saved and who is damned.
- 536–58 *There er Purgatoryes sere . . . aneother er*. The distinction between "common" Purgatory (see line 556) and *deportabilis* (line 538) Purgatory was not universally accepted. Gregory the Great in his *Dialogues* has an exemption involving a soul doing his purgation on earth. One common view was that Purgatory was experienced in two places — a common location, usually beneath the earth, and the place where the sin was committed. In such views, the soul generally was in common Purgatory by day and *deportabilis* Purgatory by night — just the reverse of the Gast's situation.
- 556–58 *common Purgatori . . . In mydes of all the erth*. The location of a "common" Purgatory in the middle of the earth was an ancient tradition, perhaps borrowing from classical antiquity. That is where Dante places it, though he adds the mountain, another frequent image of Purgatory, and he has no "deportabilis" Purgatory. In Sir *Owain* and the whole tradition of St. Patrick's Purgatory, it is below ground and can be entered at Saint's Island (later at Station Island), Lough Derg, County Donegal. The important matter is that Purgatory was a place, not just a "state."
- 595–97 *Telle, if thou kan . . . when he is tame*. The experience of the soul immediately after death was a source of much controversy. The Gast proceeds to summarize how the saved are protected, the evil are condemned, and the middling are assigned to Purgatory, while angels and fiends hover. The roles of the angels and fiends vary in

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vision literature. There is no indication of gradations of punishment, merely various lengths of time. Views on these issues differed widely.

- 662 *clynsyng fyre*. The Gaſt here distinguishes between "cleansing fire," which purifies the soul of the residuum of guilt for sins properly forgiven in the sacrament of Penance, and the "retributive fire" of Hell, reserved for the unrepentant. The distinction between purification and retribution was not definitively established until the Second Council of Lyons (1274).
- 663 *Crates Passyon*. Christ's Passion is His suffering and death, recounted by all four Evangelists. His Passion made salvation possible after the Fall of Man, and it is through the merits of His Passion that man is redeemed, empowered to cooperate with Divine Grace. (See Matthew 26-27; Mark 14-15; Luke 22-23; John 18-19.)
- 676 *armourey gaſte*. See Ephesians 6:11-13: "Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect."
- 713 *Moyden and moder*. A reference to the Virgin Birth, i.e., the idea that Mary conceived and bore Jesus without losing her virginity. The phrase is prominent in the hundreds of lyric poems on Mary. See, for example, *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, ed. Karen Sasse (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), Poem 3.49, 8.3, 9.2-3, 10.1, 11.2, 12.22, 13.17, 15.4, 16.19, 18.27, 29.26, 48.1, 50.50, 51.17, 55.2, 59.5, 61.1, 69.6, 70.1, 72.31, 73.5, 78.28, 87.1, 89.33-34, 90.1, 91.22. Compare Chaucer's *ABC*, line 49, and the prologue to The Prioress' Tale, *CT* VII(B)²467.
- 717 *emperys of Hell*. The idea of Mary as "empress of Hell," i.e., having dominion even over Hell, is probably derived from her traditional role as *Regina Coeli* ("Queen of Heaven"), the opening words of the Easter tide antiphon. In traditional iconography Mary was frequently portrayed trampling the serpent, probably based on a disputed reading in Jerome's Vulgate of Genesis 3:15. Medieval church authorities would have accepted Jerome's Marian interpretation of the verse.
- 728 *bede*. A word for prayer in that a true prayer makes a petition, i.e., asks for something (*beden*; MED). It is unlikely that this is a reference to a "bead," the means of counting prayers in the rosary, although there is a tradition that Mary gave the rosary to St.

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Dominic to combat the Albigensian heresy, thus providing a special connection between Dominicans and the rosary.

- 731 *almsdale*. Almsgiving for the help of the poor and infirm was a common penitential act assigned as a means for a penitent to remove some of the guilt that remained after absolution. The practice of almsgiving as an act of charity has its source in Judaic tradition, but in the Middle Ages it had special prominence as a form of expiation for sin.
- 761–66 *On this wyse may gyde prayere . . . unto clearyng foye him bring*. The prayers of the saved have intercessory power with God on behalf of the souls in Purgatory. Thus, there is a reciprocal relationship between the living and the dead: to pray for the dead speeds their way to heaven where they can act as intercessors for the living and the souls in Purgatory. This doctrine depends upon the notion of the Communion of Saints, strongly espoused by St. Thomas Aquinas, according to which saved souls, souls in Purgatory, and the living are joined in a mutually beneficial union.
- 793–800 *For the grettest blyt . . . war nocht accordand theng*. The greatest joy of Heaven is the Beatific Vision, seeing God without intermediary in His "Godhead," that is, His Divine Essence. God, as the *Summum Bonum* (Greatest Good), is the goal of human existence, thus to see Him "face to face," as it were, is the ultimate gift of His grace.
- 828a "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." (Matthew 12:34; Luke 6:45). The line is translated in lines 829–30 of the poem. See textual note.
- 854a "Whithoever the Lord pleased, He hath done." (Psalm 134:6 in the Vulgate). The line is translated in lines 855–56 of the poem, see textual note. The latter half of the verse reads: "in Heaven, in earth, in the sea, and in all the deeps," which would include, presumably, Purgatory.
- 890–902 *Of Saue Spyrte thou sang . . . thou hast the wrong*. That prayers for an individual are efficacious for all the departed is attested by the use of the plural *dono eis requiem* (grant them rest) in the Requiem Mass, the Mass of the Holy Spirit, and the Office of the Dead.
- 915–16 *with Jewes uoyce / Was anely offyrd on the Croyce*. See Mark 15:34 and Matthew 27:46. The Gast's declaration of the details of the Mass declared "anely on a day" by priests (line 910) evokes St. Paul's observations that in the Eucharist the Passion is made present and plain in the eyes and hearts of all worshipers (see Galatians 3:1).

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That the doctrine lives in the heart of the Gast of Gy is eloquently evident as he tells how Christ died and gave His spirit unto the Father for the salvation of humankind (lines 914–20). The point seems to be that the spirit of God dwells in the Gast of Gy even in Purgatory, regardless of whether the Pryor asks the right questions or not. His faith keeps him whole despite his trials.

- 921–22 *Ryght so the prest in ilk a Messe / Offers Criste.* The Gast of Gy's knowledge of the Bible, given his layman's status, seems almost proto-Wyclifite in its several allusions to the Gospels and the Epistles. But it is clear here that he values the sacraments of a conscientious priesthood, albeit in a kind of primitive way. The Pryor may be more subtle and academic in his inquisition into questions of Purgatory and who gets saved, but the Gast is the one guided by faith and its fundamental sensibilities.
- 941 *ryght resonne.* Right reason does not mean simply "correct" reason. It is the use of the ratiocinative power, under the direction of the will, to choose higher goals rather than lower. This distinction is made by many Doctors of the Church, notably St. Thomas Aquinas (*ST* 1–2 qu 76–77; 81–85; 94).
- 943 *Pater Noster.* The *Pater Noster* ("Our Father") has special importance as the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples (Matthew 6:9–13; Luke 11:3–4) and is incorporated into the Mass (the liturgy of the Eucharist).
- 954–58 *Holy Wryt witness . . . dose here for thair mode.* The "speciall prayers and speciall dode" (line 957) are "suffrages," which could include masses, almsgiving, and penitential acts of all kinds. The doctrine, though pervasive and supported by St. Thomas Aquinas, only received definitive formulation at the Second Council of Lyons (1274) and more precisely by the Council of Trent (1545, 1563). It is tenaciously based in Scripture (2 Machabees 12:46 and 1 Corinthians 3:13). See explanatory note to lines 447–52.
- 978 *suffred fourre yhere.* The Gast's statement that he had been assigned four years in Purgatory has an arithmetical specificity that is usually avoided in writings on Purgatory. The important point (lines 981–90) is that his sentence will be lessened by the "suffrages" of his cousin, the friar.
- 991–92 *I shall have penance in this place / No ferrer bot fra hether to Pass.* That the Gast should know when he will be released from Purgatory is unusual if not unorthodox, though the correctness of his statement within the poem is soon validated in lines

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999–1001, where we are told that the Pryor returned at Easter and found no sign of the Gast. See the explanatory note on "Pasch" for line 1013.

- 1008–09 *come never yhit in Heven. / Tharfor I may tell thee no more.* The Gast's empirical response ("I can't talk about that since I haven't been there yet") reflects current philosophical investigations in England during the fourteenth century, particularly at Oxford. That the poet juxtaposes the Gast's empiricism with his Augustinian notion of seeing through faith locates him in a very English way within the culture for which the poem is written.
- 1012 *thus myne angell to me told.* After this line there is an interpolation in R of about 384 lines from *Cursor Mundi*, a compendious "history" from Creation to Doomsday. It was probably composed c. 1300 by an anonymous parish priest. Extremely popular, it survived in many versions of varying lengths. See textual note to this line.
- 1013 *To Pasch I suld in pencece be.* The Gast restates what he said in line 992, that he will be in Purgatory until Easter. The repetition may be the result of scribal confusion because of the insertion of the long section from *Cursor Mundi* after line 1012.
- Pasch. "Pasch," sometimes "Passe," was used to refer both to Passover and Easter (MED). The use of the word for the two feasts derives from their proximity in the calendar and correspondences fashioned between the Old Law (Hebrew) and the New Law (Christian). The Gast here clearly means Easter.
- 1031 *The Office of the Ded.* See explanatory note to lines 202–05.
- 1046 *The seven Psalms with the Litany.* The seven Penitential Psalms (Psalms 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142 in the Vulgate), followed by the Litany of the Saints, a Collect, and the *Agnus Dei*, conclude the Office of the Dead. See explanatory note to lines 202–05.
- 1050 *Ave.* The "Hail Mary," based on Elizabeth's words to Mary (Luke 1:42), achieved enormous importance with the increasing popularity of the cult of Mary in the fourteenth century.
- 1062–65 *me think that thair prayers . . . And the Crede, that the apostels purvayle.* To the *Pater Noster* and *Ave*, which have the authority of Scripture, the Pryor adds "The Apostles' Creed," which has limited Scriptural authority (Matthew 28:19) and is not found until St. Ambrose in the late fourth century. It is curious that the Psalms of David

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do not seem to have this kind of authority for the Pryor. It may be that their prescription as part of the Office of the Dead is already sufficient validation.

- 1092-95 *Tell me, what it availeth . . . for the dead es dyght.* When the Pryor questions the special efficacy of the Office of the Dead, the Gast gives an elaborate explanation of the value of each part of the Office with many numerological applications to other religious phenomena.
- 1094 *Placebo* includes five Psalms (114, 119, 120, 129, and 137 in the Vulgate); see line 1106. *Divege* includes nine Psalms (5, 6, 7, 22, 24, 26, 39, 40, and 41 in the Vulgate), which correspond nicely with the nine orders of angels in the Gast's exposition.
- 1108 *antem.* An Anglicization of "antiphons," prayers said or sung between the Psalms.
- 1128 *Neghen orders.* Although throughout Scripture there are many references to angels (messengers of God), the idea of nine "choirs" of angels standing before the throne of God singing His praises is derived from Psalms 96:7, 102:20, 148:2, 5 in the Vulgate, and, especially, Daniel 7:9-10 and Matthew 18:10. The nine choirs, named by the Pseudo-Dionysius, are angels, archangels, virtues, powers, principalities, dominions, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim. The orthodox view is also expressed in St. Gregory the Great's (c. 540-604) *Dialogues* and by St. Thomas Aquinas (ST I, qu 108).
- 1155 *Laudes.* Lauds in the Office of the Dead includes four true "Psalms": 50, 64, 62, 150. Between Psalms 62 and 150 is the "Canticle of Ezechias" (Isaiah 38:10-14, 17-20). Canticles are frequently included in place of a true psalm in the five items under one of the canonical hours. Thus, in a loose sense, Lauds contains five so-called psalms to correspond to the five wits in line 1156.
- 1181-84 *Forwile the soule dwelles ab a stane . . . understandes ab god an engel.* These lines are a brief exposition of where man fits in the hierarchy of creation. He has existence like a stone, life like plants, sentience like a beast, and understanding like angels. The first Christian expression of this "chain of being" is in St. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 2.3.7. See textual note.
- 1187 *Benedictr.* The "Canticle of Zachary" (Luke 1:68-79). The Benedictus always concludes Lauds, and in Lauds for the Office of the Dead it follows Psalm 150.
- 1188 *Magnificat.* In Vespers in the Office of the Dead, after Psalm 137, the "Magnificat" is said. It is not a psalm but Mary's statement to Elizabeth concerning bearing Jesus.

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(Luke 1:46–55). The “Magnificat” was widely honored in the fourteenth century as a statement of how God would humble the mighty and exalt the humble. It was extended into secular romance, as a moral lesson, in poems like *Robert of Coyle*.

- 1216–18 *Mo tyme art nere negh and me . . . To suffer Payne in other place.* The Gast’s need to return to common Purgatory at this point is not rationalized in the poem. Ordinarily, ghosts inhabited common Purgatory by day and “departable” Purgatory by night, though in this poem the pattern seems reversed.
- 1226 *fyve joyes.* In Marian hymns, sometimes sung at the end of Compline, the five joys of Mary are the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Assumption. The hymn “*Gaudie, virgo, mater Christi*” appears in Trinity College, Cambridge MS 323, where the Latin alternates with an English translation stanza by stanza. In the Thornton Manuscript (Lincoln Cathedral MS 91) the hymn is headed: “*Another salutacione all our lady of her fyve Joyes.*” See Karen Saage, *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, Poem 87.
- 1242 *sacrament of Godes Body.* The sacrament of God’s Body, also called the Blessed Sacrament (line 1326), is the Eucharist, the reception of Christ’s body and blood in the form of consecrated bread and wine, the central event of the Mass (the liturgy of the Eucharist).
- 1275–90 *And gyde onrigels war nought byforne . . . the devils may dene him nought.* The advice to priests in these lines echoes the subject of the 384 lines from *Cursor Abovii* intruded into this poem after line 1012.
- 1297 *Sancte Sacerdos.* Here attributed to St. Augustine, this was more commonly identified as the “Prayer of St. Ambrose” (*P*. 17.751–64) and said before the beginning of Mass. In fact, it was more probably composed by John of Fecamp (d. 1076).
- 1382 *Scho wate himself, alre wele alre I.* The Gast makes clear that he cannot confess for someone else, a point that the Prior is slow to understand, perhaps because of his bias against women. But when, after the third attempt to get her to speak, the Prior finally convinces her in the name of all that is holy (lines 1413–23), and, when the Gast explains further the circumstances, she finds her voice and asks of her husband whether there is hope for her salvation (lines 1467–71), whereupon he reassures her (lines 1473–75). She then voluntarily offers her prayers of gratitude to Jesus and Mary. Meanwhile, the Prior suggests she give almsdeeds.

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- 1426–29 *ane unkyndely syn . . . Of whilk we bath war schryver sun.* The Gast refers to a sin committed by him and his wife. The location of the commission of the sin is their bedroom, the appropriate place for a spirit to go when outside common Purgatory. The mutuality of the transgression suggests a sexual sin. The ascetic tradition that grew out of St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome condemned sexuality even between husband and wife except when the primary intention was procreation. Compare Chaucer's Parson's Tale (CT X[1]858–59, 903–05), which is based in part on St. Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum*, though the Parson grants the body its privileges and makes allowances for paying the debt and moderation. The Gast refers to the sin as unnatural, but that could include anything from infanticide to recreational sex.
- 1438–41 *God wiff it noȝt . . . we bath war schryveron.* A sin confessed and forgiven in the sacrament of Penance need not be revealed to anyone else. The Gast's statement is an orthodox affirmation of absolute privacy with regard to absolved sins. Auricular confession, common in the early Church, revived in the twelfth century, and the obligation of secrecy was enjoined on the priest at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), although it certainly was practiced long before.
- 1475 *Thou sal be saved.* The Gast's assertion that his wife will be saved is not presumptuous in that the sin in question has been forgiven. His mission merely relates to the penance necessary to satisfy for the guilt of the sin, preferably in this life, in order to avoid or minimize purgation.
- 1488 the *Pryor* than gave him *frayne*. The Pryor would have the Gast confide in the priest before speaking to his wife, since, he says, the priest is nearer to God than a woman is (lines 1493–94). But the Gast's answer that he loves his wife more, and that that is why he has gained permission from God to return to earth to warn his wife, is an authoritative response that gives precedence to personal relationships.
- 1541 *verthe.* The plural of *vertu*, "a particular mental faculty or power of the soul necessary for thought, imagination" (MED).
- 1620–36 *His ouergell demed his soule to dwel . . . fro now unto to morwe or pyme.* The arithmetic of the passage is doubtful. The assignment of specific terms for purgatorial suffering was a matter of debate, and the two-hour delay, while prayers are offered to reduce the sentence, is idiosyncratic if not unique.
- 1623 *after his deale.* "After his death" is the obvious sense, though the phrase might also mean "according to his deeds," which would be an applicable reading as well. Compare

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lines 1632–34 and 1638–39, where the Pauline notion of the efficacy of deeds is stressed.

- 1673 *grayde*. From *greithow*, "to arrange . . . salvation" (MED). Earthly time is seen as a preparation for the ultimate goal, salvation.
- 1675–78 *I se in ilk state . . . nane sail be dispayzed for me*. The *Gast*'s assertion that no state of life is superior to any other fits the spiritual equality of all Christians, but is a peculiarly egalitarian point to make in view of ecclesiastical preference of virginity to marriage.
- 1710 God dose nothing agayns kynde. The Prior asserts that God does nothing against the law of Nature. In the subsequent lines the *Gast* explains that, as Creator, God has the power to suspend the laws of Nature as ordinarily observed, that is, to perform miracles. Thus, souls in Purgatory may experience the corporeal pain of fire as well as the spiritual pain of loss. The idea is traditional and expounded by St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa contra Gentiles* 3.102).
- 1735–38 *The weryed gastes . . . to the devell and his angels*. Matthew 25:41: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels."
- 1742–54 *By miracle agayns kynde . . . Fra fyre and fra that kyndely deke*. The story of the three young men in the fiery furnace is related in Daniel 3: Sedrach, Misach, and Abdenago, refusing to bow down to Nebuchadonosor's golden idol, were cast into a fire, but walked around within it, praising God, without being consumed. The example is to prove the point that it is possible to dwell with fire but not be incinerated. Compare Chaucer's Second Nun's Tale (CT VIII[G]514–22). The motif is common in saints' lives.
- 1794 *trowed*. *Trow* means "believe," but may include the more fundamental sense of "have trust, be trustful, place one's confidence" (MED).
- 1810–11 *Who trowely trower . . . sail be brought*. Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." These lines provide perhaps the clearest example of the scribe's tendency to be inconsistent in number and/or tense from clause to clause. He rarely is inconsistent within a clause and, in such instances, I have corrected the text.
- 1812–15 *Who so trower nocht . . . have hale withoaton hys*. Probably John 3:36: "He that believeth in the Son hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see

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life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." The paraphrase, however, might also refer to John 5:34 or 6:40. The idea is recurrent in John's presentation of the importance of belief in Christ the Son.

- 1817-22 *See the Saracyns and the Jewes . . . Cristes Incarnacyonew*. The Jews, in rejecting Christ, put themselves beyond the possibility of salvation from that point on, though some descriptions of the afterlife provide a place for the patriarchs of the Old Testament (the *Limbo Patrum*). Saracins can refer to Arabs, Turks, or Moslems, especially with regard to the Crusades (*MED*). Whoever is not encompassed by the above is incorporated into the most general term *pagans* (line 1818). Thus, the reference is to all those outside the Christian world who have rejected (or been unaware of) the divinity of Christ. It does not, of course, include Christian heretics who have denied the divinity of Christ, another category altogether.
- 1829-34 *whi thame lyfes leut . . . encres their mede*. The Guest cannot see why God endures Jews, Muslims, and pagans except as an opportunity for Christians to win merit by fighting in the Crusades. Indulgences, remissions of time spent in Purgatory, were granted for participation in Crusades
- 1840-58 *Pryde . . . maynysyng*. The identification of the four most common sins and the three for which God will take vengeance quickly is odd in the way that it partially uses the seven deadly sins and partially diverges from them. Among the four most common sins are the deadly sins listed in line 1840 of *pryde* ("pride"), *lychory* ("lust"), and *covatyse* ("greed"), but *usury* (line 1841) is not one of the "deadly," or root, sins, but rather a form of covatyse. Among the three provoking vengeance, the first includes fornication and adultery (forms of lust); the second, the unspeakable sin, probably sodomy (a form of lust), may be a satirical jibe at clerics; the third is manslaughter with perjury (a form of anger combined with pride, since perjury involved pride). The more common way to generalize sin was according to the seven deadly sins as in Dante's *Purgatorio* and Chaucer's Parson's Tale (*CT* X[I]386-957). This poet clearly has special concerns, which his arrangement reflects.
- 1841 *usury*. Usury was the charging of any interest whatsoever on borrowed money. The doctrine was affirmed by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) though it was civilly permitted to Jews since they were beyond the Christian community anyway.
- 1894 *Anticrist*. The Antichrist is the chief of God's enemies, referred to by this name in 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7. He has also been taken to be the inherent sin in the beasts

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of the Apocalypse. 2 John 7 specifically identifies the Antichrist with those who deny the Incarnation, a doctrine particularly important in this poem.

- 1898 *Godles prevert*. Those things that are known to God into which human beings should not inquire. There are some kinds of knowledge appropriate only to God, such as the underlying meaning of spiritual mysteries and Divine Providence, which it would be prideful for human beings to try to fathom.
- 1905–07 *ever to thi hereyng . . . als thou has tolde*. The Pryor, in addressing the *Gast*'s power to hear, is returning to an issue similar to the matter of the *Gast*'s power to speak (lines 1519–22). It seems that the Pryor still wants to be sure that he is speaking to a true purgatorial spirit, not a demonic apparition.
- 1943 *Tholre*. I.e., Yule. Of Old English derivation, the word was used for Christmas as early as 900 (*The Old English Martyrology*) and 901 (*The Life of Alfred*).
- 1941 *Epiphany*. The Feast of the Epiphany (January 6), sometimes called Little Christmas, was the day on which the three wise men honored the infant Jesus, signifying the incorporation of the Gentile world into the mission of the Messiah.
- 1949 *ordres*. Religious orders were foundations of men or women who lived communally according to a rule, such as the Rule of St. Augustine or the Rule of St. Benedict. In general, orders were either monastic (monks) or mendicant (friars). Although communities of women (nuns) were formed, women could not be mendicants since this involved going out into the world to beg and preach.
- 1950 *Austyns*. Augustinian monks (or Canons Regular), who lived according to a rule attributed to St. Augustine of Hippo after his death.
- Moneys*. Franciscan friars; i.e., the Order of Friars Minor.
- 1952 *secularves*. Ordained priests in the service of the diocese, not members of any religious order.
- 1960 *Requiescant in pace* ("May they rest in peace") is repeated throughout the Office of the Dead.

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- 2018 *simony*. Simony is the purchase of any religious office or privilege, strictly and repeatedly forbidden by Church Councils. The name comes from Simon Magus, who attempted to buy office (Acts 8:18–24).
- 2035–36 *How many popes . . . till the Day of Doom*. The Prior wants to know how many popes there will be before Judgment Day. At least since Apocalypse, the most popular kind of prophecy had to do with when the end of the world would come; early Christianity tended towards chiliasm. In the Middle Ages, questions about the “end times” were frequently posed in terms of how many popes there would be. The most famous prophecy on the subject was by St. Malachy (b. c. 1094 in Armagh) during the reign of Innocent II (d. 1143). St. Malachy predicted 112 subsequent popes. John Paul II, by the way, is the 110th.
- 2058–59 *Pope John . . . The two and twenty*. After the death of Clement V in 1314, the College of Cardinals could not agree on a successor. In 1316, John XXII was elected. He moved the seat of the Papacy to Avignon, thus beginning the so-called “Babylonian Captivity,” which lasted until 1367 under the reign of Urban V. John XXII died in 1334. The communication of the experiences of the Prior to John XXII would have been very important to the Dominican Jean Gobi. John XXII had expressed the opinion, though not in a formal papal declaration, that souls were not assigned to Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory until the General Judgment at the end of the world. John’s view was unusual to Dominicans and other mendicant orders, who preached that souls were assigned their place at the time of death or a few hours thereafter. Thus, according to their view, suffrages offered by the living could be immediately efficacious. This teaching may have been self-serving, since the mendicants derived income from suffrages. Nevertheless, even the monastic orders and diocesan authorities would have thought, by the early fourteenth century, that Pope John’s opinions bordered on heresy.

Textual Notes to The Gast of Gy

I have based my text on the complete version in Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson Poet. 175 (R). Schleich's edition (S) uses R as a basis but is truly comparative and freely incorporates variations from Horstmann's edition (H) of British Library MS Cotton Tiberius E. vii (N). S also includes a Latin text (L) based on British Library MS Cotton Vespasian E. i (D) with variants from British Library MS Cotton Vespasian A. vi (C) and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz MS Dietz C (A). Except for a few illustrative examples, I have noted and incorporated only instances where S clearly improves R. I have noted Horstmann readings of N as H, N.

There are also three prose versions, one in Bodleian Library MS Eng. poet. A. 1 (SC 2939), the Vernon Manuscript (V), printed in the H edition of N, one in Oxford, Queen's College MS 383 (Q), edited by R. H. Bowers (*The Gast of Gy*. Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1938), and one in Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge MS 175 (fragmentary). One quatrain version exists, edited by Ed Eleazer (Ph.D. Dissertation. Florida State University, 1984) (E). The most significant manuscript of the quatrain version is Magdalene College, Cambridge MS Pepys 2125 (P).

I have expanded abbreviations and corrected obvious scribal errors without comment. In the notes as in the text, I have replaced Middle English graphemes with modern orthography unless the original grapheme is relevant to the explanation. Further manuscript and bibliographical information precedes the text of the poems.

- 17 *lede our lives*. R: *Trewly trow*; N: *lede their lives*; S: *lede our lives*. I have accepted S because R rarely uses double formulas (*Trewly trow, more and les*) in the same line and the sense of S fits line 18. S' modification of N: *their to our* fits the surrounding use of the first person.
- 22 *Of ded and of the Day*. S, following H, N: *All in ded and the day*. Although I have not accepted this change, I mention it because R is much clumsier.
- 27-28 These lines are supplied by S, from H, N. Although perhaps not absolutely necessary, they gracefully complement the thought in lines 25-26 and 29-30, and may well have been a scribal omission in R.
- 29 *And so in world He will so wyr*. So R, S, following H, N: *And so he will as wisely wyr*. I have retained R, but note this variant to exemplify the kind of change S often makes based on H, N even though R is perfectly satisfactory.
- 30 After this line H, N has four additional lines, printed in S as a footnote:

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*Therefore who so will lyke to here
A outh ensampill tolle here:
How it befell byfor this day
And therefore beret it wel away.*

S notes many such additional lines from H, N, but they are not necessary to R so I have not noted them subsequently.

- 38 *Bayosse*. So R. H correctly reads *N* as he with the rest of the word obscured. V: *Bayon*; Q: *Bayone*; P: *aynon*; L: *avynon*. Avynon is certainly correct. The introduction of variants of Bayonne may have resulted from an earlier Latin version that may attempt to place the story in Italy and confused identification of the city with Bologna.
- 46 *meade*. R: *pounde*, but there are two dots beneath the *p* to indicate deletion.
- 49 *And*. R: *bot*; S, following H, N: *and*. *And* makes more sense since it indicates a continuation rather than a movement away from the action. The R scribe may have been distracted by the *bot* that begins line 48.
- 51 *hur*. So R. S, following H, N: *hir* makes sense by pluralizing the pronoun, but R: *hir* highlights that the room is Gy's, perhaps a better emphasis at this point.
- 53 *chamber*. R: *chamber*, N: *chamber*; S: *chamber*. I have accepted S. The MED does not list *chamber* as a possible variant.
- 55 *oft*. So S, H, N. The *f*'s are unclear in R, but *oft* is certainly correct in context.
- 73 *For*. R: *ffor*. R frequently doubles *f* at the beginning of a line.
- 106 *that*. R: *he*; S, following H, N: *that*. The plural pronoun is required by the grammar of the lines.
- 114 After this line S inserts two lines from H, N:
- The tene master of geometri
And the teacher of philosophie*
- 120 *men*. R: *man*, but the narrative needs the S, H, N plural: *men*. The mayor clearly does not send one man with the Pryor, and R does not characteristically use *man* as an unchanged plural.
- 122-23 These lines are supplied by S, from H, N. I have printed them because they fill out the sense without doing violence to the verse.
- 125-26 See textual note to lines 122-23.
- 129 *armed*. R: *arne*; S, H, N: *armed*. The grammar requires the past tense.
- 138 This line is difficult to read. I have accepted S.
- 149 *He and his forsayd brother twe*. R: *and his forsayd brother twe*; S, H, N: *he and the men and the masters twe*. I have done less violence to R by simply inserting *He* at the beginning of the line.

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- 150 *Unto*. R begins the line with *and*. I have followed S in removing *and*, because it is not clear what *and* is linking line 150 to.
- 166 Full lines of Latin that rhyme with adjacent English lines are numbered (see also lines 201–02, 1093–94, 1125–26). The Latin is translated in the immediately following lines.
- 178 *wonder*. R: *wonder*. The word is hard to read but undoubtedly correct in context.
- 191 *Gy*. So R, S, H, N: *his*. I have retained R because there are many examples in R of unchanged genitives: "God Son" (lines 857, 859, 863); "man saule" (line 754); "Son servyse" (line 741); "man syn" (line 920).
- 235–39 Here and at many subsequent places, the corresponding lines in N are unintelligible, thus reinforcing the selection of R as a base text.
- 236 *myld*. So R, S, H, N: *eager*. The mildness, patience, even compassion of the Gast's response suggests that *myld* is preferable to *eager* ("eager," but with a sense of sharpness and censure).
- 280 *Whene ever*. So R, S, H, N: *Whilomore*. I have retained R because the genitive in the relative adjective is grammatical.
- 285 *Than*. R: *thor*; S, H, N: *than*. This change from R is necessary because the prior is indicating that his discourse follows on from what the Gast has just said.
- 303 *Gy*. Although the reference to "Gy" by the Gast of Gy himself seems odd, I have retained R and not substituted S, H, N: *me book*.
- 321 *he*. So R, S, H, N: *it*. S apparently prefers to think of the body as impersonal, but the Gast's discussion of it seems to prefer the personal *he*.
- 328 *Gy*. So R, S, H, N: *Gy's book*. There is some merit in S, but I think the distinction between body and self is clear enough without the change.
- 375 *the sawles*. R: *the sawles*. S misreads R as *thr sawles*, but the change to S, H, N: *sawles* (sayings, truths) is necessary to the sense of the line.
- 428 *that*. S, H, N: *he is*, strictly, correct, but I have retained R: *that*, which is loosely correct. R is sometimes inconsistent in switching between singular and plural pronouns, but not to the point where they need to be "fixed."
- 446 *That*. R: *thor*, but I have accepted S, H, N: *that*. The demonstrative makes more sense than the conjunction.
- 455 *told that*. R: *told he*, but I have accepted S, H, N: *told that*, which is necessary to agree with "prophetes" (line 448).
- 461 *thinketh me*. R: *think me*, S, H, N: *thinkes me* is better, but I have preferred to change to the more common *thinketh*.
- 473 *The*. R: *and*; S, H, N: *the* is better because it makes clear that the Gast is proceeding to the *prophetes* as distinguished from the "sawles" (line 472). In addition, *and* makes an odd linkage with the preceding sentence.

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- 497 *The Pryor than said*. So R, S, H, N: *than said the prior*. This phrase occurs and S almost always changes R to N, apparently for metrical reasons; I see no material advantage. The *P* in *Pryor* is capitalized in R in this line only.
- 567 *If*. R: *of*, but S, H, N: *if* provides the necessary conditional.
- 574 *gantil*. R: *gantil*, but I prefer S, H, N: *gantil* for consistency with line 575.
- 609 *fayne*. So R, S, H, N: *fayne*. *Fayne* makes sense: "to inquire about or ask something" (*MED*), but I have retained *fayne*: "desirous of, or eager for something" (*MED*).
- 653 *synned*. R: *synner*; H, N: *sinned*; S: *synned*. I have accepted S because it provides the necessary past tense without otherwise changing R.
- 666 *darter*. So R, S, H, N: *desaytes*. *desaytes* is possible: "deceit or treachery" (*MED*), but *slarter* seems more to the point in context: "an attack or assault, as of the Devil, of death, of hunger, etc." (*MED*).
- 674 *aboyed*. R: *aboysted*; H, N: *abair*; S: *aboyed*. I have accepted S because it retains the meter while getting rid of the intrusive *t* in R, for which there is no precedent.
- 713 *Mayden and moder both am I*. R: *both mayden and moder am I*; H, N: *moder and mayden both am I*; S: *mayden and moder both am I*. The selective use of N by S (moving both) is a case in which the improvement is so marked as to be acceptable while retaining the R order of *mayden* and *moder*.
- 734 *pensance*. R: *pensane*, but the *c* in S, following H, N: *pensance* is clearly necessary.
- 735 *es*. R: *er*, but S, H, N: *es* is necessary to agree with *pensance*.
- 740 *or*. So R, S, H, N: *that* is tempting, but the *MED* notes *or* as a variant for *thor* and R uses the variant often.
- 750 *flinch*. So R, S changes to *flicx* without explanation but apparently for rhyme. *MED* lists *flicx* as a possible variant, but the imperfect rhyme at lines 801–02 inclines me to retain R.
- 758 *hes*. R: *This*, but I prefer S, following H, N: *his*, because there is no previous reference to a specific *harment*.
- 759 *gaster*. R: *gast*; but I prefer S, following H, N: *gaster*, because there are multiple fiends in the scene.
- 801–02 Not a perfect rhyme in R, but see explanatory note to line 750.
- 828a The line is clear in N. It is written in red ink in R and translated in lines 829–30. It appears in L, but not in V, P, Q, though all include a translation. The line is a quotation, with minor variations, of Vulgate Matthew 12:34 and Luke 6:45: *Ex abundanter ente cordis os loquatur*.
- 837–38 S, following H, N omits these lines from R, but they are consistent with the *Gast's* explanation even if awkward in construction.
- 842 *oyfr*. R, S: *of*; H, N: *oyf*. I have changed to *oyfr*, which makes sense of the sentence and fits the meter.
- 851 *it*. R: *he*, but I have preferred S, H, N: *it* because the neuter is required for sense.

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- 854a Like line 828a, the Latin line is written in red ink; it is translated in lines 855–56. Its treatment in the other versions of the narrative is the same as line 828a. It is a quotation, with a minor variation, of Vulgate Psalm 134:6: *Omnis quae vocat Dominum fecit.* S is clearly right in placing the line after line 854 rather than two lines earlier as it is in R.
- 868 *used in finale.* S, H, N insertion of *iv* is necessary to make sense with line 869.
- 876 *To the Thre.* S insertion of *the* before the mention of the Trinity is necessary even though it is present in neither R nor N.
- 887 *mogen.* R: *syngeng*, but I have accepted S, H, N: *usungen*, which corrects the grammar.
- 919 *For.* R: *in* is odd; I have accepted S, H, N: *for*.
- 922 *Criste.* R: God; S, H, N: *Criste*. I have accepted the change to *Criste* as more accurate to the liturgy.
- 1012 This line is from R, fol. 101va, line 40. As S noted, there follows in R an interpolation of approximately 384 lines from another poem. S transcribed, perfectly accurately, the first six lines:
- How oft sythe and on what manere
This aw the prest to ken all clere
With this wood wha tham may thou syn
What man it es at done the syn
That es whether it kar man be
Woman or barn thrall or fr.
- The 384 lines do not correspond to anything in N, L, V, Q, P. Max Kaluza (p. 34) identified them as corresponding to *Cursor Mundi* (ed. Richard Morris, EETS o.s. 101), lines 27162–67. Indeed, the whole interpolation, with some variations and a few omissions, is from the "Book of Penance" in *Cursor Mundi*, lines 27162–521 (directions to priests on how to hear confessions) and lines 28614–59 (a section on the importance of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving by the penitent). I have not included the lines because they intrude on the narrative of the Gast, even though they deal with a closely related subject. Oddly, the lines are certainly written by the R scribe in "hand," with linguistic characteristics such as *at* or *off* for *that* and the system of abbreviations. Although there are occasional large red capitals and some paragraph indications (none of either particularly significant) in R, there is no indication whatsoever of the beginning of the interpolation. The narrative of the Gast resumes in R at fol. 103vb, 29 (line 1013 of this edition).
- 1021 *be loved.* R lacks the *be*, which S, following H, N, properly inserts.
- 1033 *thare more than.* R lacks the *more*, which S, following H, N, properly inserts.
- 1039 *That.* R: *the*; S, following H, N, supplies the necessary conjunction *that*.
- 1084 *ur.* R lacks the *ur*, which S, following H, N, properly inserts.

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- 1108–09 These lines are inserted by S from H, N. They help make arithmetical sense of the devotions.
- 1115–24 S does not include these lines from R, probably because they are repetitive. They are, however, a continued application of the five psalms from the *Placito*. (See explanatory note to lines 202–05.)
- 1126 At the end of this line in R there is a space and *Dirige*, capitalized, is repeated.
- 1159 *he*. R lacks *he*, which S, following H, N, properly inserts.
- 1165 *world*. R, S: *word*; H, N: *world*. I have changed to *world*. It is clear from the rest of the line that the beginning of the *world* is intended, so I have simply supplied the *world* that R lacks.
- 1183 *tres*. R: *mar*; S: *tres*. The substitution of *tres* (trees) for *mar* makes sense in the presentation of the scale of being (see St. Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio* 2.3.7) presented in lines 1181–84. Man shares "existence" with a "stone" (line 1181), "sentience" with a "beast" (line 1182), "life" (i.e., plant life) with "*tres*" (line 1183), and "understanding" with "angels" (line 1184). The use of *ad tres* corresponds to the use of "cum arboribus" in L, which retains the more traditional hierarchical order of stone, tree, beast, angel. I have not tried to rearrange the lines in R to reflect this movement upward.
- 1227 *help*. R: *hel* is properly filled out to *help* by S, following H, N.
- 1261 *For*. S properly deletes the initial word in R: *and*.
- 1285 *fondes*. R: *fondre*; S, H, N: *fondes*. The plural is necessary.
- 1329 *thou*. R: *thot*; S, H, N: *thou*. The second person pronoun is necessary.
- 1334 *In*. Initial R: *thot* is deleted by S, following H, N. It was probably miscopied by R from the beginning of line 1335.
- 1359 *The*. R: *Thee*.
- 1460 *me*. R: *men*, but S, following H, N: *me* must be correct because the *Gast* is explaining why God let him come to speak to the Prioress.
- 1526 *Withouten*. R: *with*; but S, following H, N: *withouten*, must be correct since the *Gast* is referring to the idea that a carpenter cannot work without his axe (his instrument of work).
- 1567 *The*. R: *that*; but S, following H, N: *the*, is better because the sentence does not call for a demonstrative.
- 1629 *eyres*. So R, S, H, N: *owres*. I have found no attestation elsewhere of *eyres*. The variants *owres* and *owryx* appear in the *OED* and *MED*. Still, the meaning is clear, so I have let the oddity stand.
- 1858 *That er*. R: *ffor* (common doubling of initial *f*); S: *that er*. I have accepted S, even though it is based on a problematic reading of an initial *b* in N.
- 1925 *proved*. R: *psued*; H, N: *proved*. Following S, I have assumed that the abbreviation mark for *ro* is missing and have printed *proved* as it is in N.

Textual Notes

- 1943-44 The lines do not rhyme perfectly, but the same is true of lines 749-50 and 801-02, so there seems no reason to "improve" R.
- 2008 we, R: *ther*; but S, following H, N: *we*, is necessary for consistency of person.
- 2026 *Grevouwe*. The first four letters are rubbed out, but the reading, as S agrees, is correct.
- 2030 *preche*. R: *prest*, but S, following H, N: *preche*, is necessary for the sense of the line.
- 2045 *for all sander*. R: *for all payns*; but S, following H, N: *sander*, must be accepted or the line is nonsense.

Sir Owain

Introduction

Sir Owain is the story of the successful penitential visit of the sinful knight Sir Owain to Purgatory and the Earthly Paradise by way of "St. Patrick's Purgatory" on Lough Derg, County Donegal, Ireland. Although much is obscure about the origins of St. Patrick's Purgatory as a place of entry into the next world, and much is debatable about the emergence of St. Patrick's Purgatory as a place of pilgrimage, this poem is a clear and vigorous version of Owain's journey, presented more in the form and manner of medieval metrical romance than of a didactic treatise or tract. The moral lessons remain clear, but that is not foreign to the medieval romances, which characteristically represent and celebrate an idea or ideal.

Ancient Irish legends associated the existence of an entry into the next world with the mission of St. Patrick (c. 389–c. 461) to convert the pagan Irish.¹ In those legends, the Irish would not accept St. Patrick's teachings unless a man was able to enter the next world and return again. Providentially, God appeared to St. Patrick on an island in Lough Derg, by means of a vision or a dream, led him into a wilderness, or barren place, pointed out a pit that was the entry to Purgatory, and assured St. Patrick that anyone who stayed a day and a night in the next world would be cleansed of his sins. Apparently, as a gesture of authenticating good faith, God left behind a book and a staff. The book was often taken to be the Book of Armagh, which was thought to be a relic of St. Patrick. Legend here conflicts with reality, since the clearly ninth-century Book of Armagh, preserved in Trinity College Dublin, is too late for the fifth-century saint, and does not contain the information about "Godes perwest," divine knowledge not available to or appropriate for human beings, which the legend mentions.² The staff may simply be a symbol of St. Patrick's

¹ See Michael Haren and Yolande de Pontfarcy, *The Medieval Pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory*, pp. 7–43; Jean-Michel Picard, trans., *Saint Patrick's Purgatory: A Twelfth-Century Tale of a Journey to the Other World*, intro. Yolande de Pontfarcy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1985), pp. 18–21; Shane Leslie, *St. Patrick's Purgatory: A Record from History and Literature*, pp. 66–97.

² The Book of Armagh, compiled by a ninth-century scribe, contains the first surviving versions of two seventh-century Irish "Lives" of St. Patrick, one by Muirchu Macca Machtheni and one by Tircchan, documents in Latin and English concerning the life of St. Patrick and the prerogatives of the See of Armagh, a Vulgate New Testament with various commentaries, and the "Life of St. Martin of Tours" (c. 316–67) by Sulpicius Severus (c. 360–420/425).

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episcopal authority, but Geraldus Cambrensis (c. 1147–1216/20) associated it with St. Patrick's driving the snakes out of Ireland, and many legends assign the staff mysterious magical powers.

A second version of the origins of the entry says that St. Patrick drew a circle on the ground and cast a staff, already in his possession, into the middle of it, and a deep chasm opened up. A third version, apparently a more modest rationalization of the second, held that St. Patrick came upon a cave and experienced a vision of the next world within it. The first version, with its wealth of imaginative detail, was the most prominent down through the Middle Ages. In all versions, St. Patrick orders a church to be built over the site and gives it to the care of Augustinian Canons Regular (perhaps an anachronism, depending upon which dating of the origins of the Canons Regular one accepts).

The precise location of St. Patrick's Purgatory is unclear. There are two islands in Lough Derg: Station Island, the larger of the two, and Saints Island. Both comprised the site of a single Celtic monastic community and may have been located on the site of a still earlier pagan magical place. The location of the entry in legend seems to have been on Saints Island, though confusion of the two islands became common, and Saints Island seems to have been the preferred location through the Middle Ages. St. Malachy, archbishop of Armagh, did set up in the early 1130s on Saints Island a dependency of the Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul, Armagh, under the control of the Augustinians Canons Regular, who certainly had been established, by St. Norbert, by 1100. Eventually the Canons assumed authority over both islands until the site was taken over by the Franciscans in 1632.

It is at about the time of the arrival of the Augustinians in the early 1130s, despite the suggestions of Irish legends, that St. Patrick's Purgatory truly became a destination of pilgrimage and penitence. It remained so until its suppression by Pope Alexander VI in 1497. So powerful, however, had the site become that pilgrimages resumed in the sixteenth century, with Station Island assuming primacy, maybe because it did in fact have a likely cave. The attraction of the site has been enduring. The church on Station Island was destroyed, and later rebuilt, in 1632, 1701, and 1727. In 1931, an enormous new church was built and pilgrimages to the site continue to this day. Such was, and is, the power of St. Patrick's Purgatory.

Regardless of what one makes of Irish legends, the first recorded pilgrimage was in 1152. The tradition had been so firmly established by that time that the "Purgatory" became a ubiquitous object of theological and literary attention in the second half of the twelfth century, though the experiences of the pilgrims were probably less like that of Owain than that of Antonio Manzini in 1411, who recounts the bureaucracy of the necessary permissions and a penitential experience of a more familiar, mundane kind. Nevertheless, it is important to remember the mysterious potency of the story of St. Patrick's Purgatory in the mid to late twelfth century, when the religious reality of Purgatory far surpassed any question of geographical actuality.

The seminal literary document associated with the rebirth of Purgatory at this special place, and the document that first gives an account of Owain's journey, is the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* by H. of Sawtry. Here we are on firmer historical ground, at least in the origins and

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transmission of the narrative, because the text exists and its genesis can be reconstructed from contemporary ecclesiastical sources, even if they are not always precise. What seems probable is that a Cistercian monk, Gilbert, was sent with several other monks in the late 1150s to establish a Benedictine dependency in Ireland, probably at Baltinglas. Unable to speak Irish, Gilbert was given the assistance of an interpreter, Owain, either a Cistercian monk or an assistant to the Cistercians. Owain, in the course of a two-and-a-half-year association with Gilbert, told him of his own marvelous visit to Purgatory at Lough Derg. Gilbert returned to England by 1159 to become abbot of Basingwerk and repeatedly recounted Owain's story. Gilbert told H. of Sawtre (the H was expanded to Henricus by Matthew of Paris in the thirteenth century) the story of Owain's journey. Among those to whom Gilbert recounted the story was another H., Henry, abbot of Sartis, who urged Sawtre (or Saltrey) to commit the narrative to writing. The *Tractatus* itself merely identifies the author, the first H., as a monk of Salterea, but there was a Cistercian monastery at Saltrey in Huntingdonshire. The person addressed in the *Tractatus*, the second H., is identified as the abbot of Sartis, probably Henry of Warden.

Although the *Tractatus* does not specify, the visit of Owain to Purgatory occurred, according to various sources, some time between 1146 and 1154: 1154 according to the *Chronicles of Roger of Wendover* (d. 1236), 1153 according to Matthew of Paris, or 1146–47 according to probabilities established by Robert Easting from the monastic records of abbeys. Henry of Saltrey did not in fact commit Gilbert's account of Owain's story to writing until some time later, perhaps 1179–81, or even later in 1189–90. The latter is the more traditional date; the former is persuasively argued by Easting, the most distinguished scholar on the subject.

The *Tractatus* is a serious Latin prose work which begins by establishing the authenticity of purgatorial doctrine by referring to St. Gregory the Great and St. Augustine, even citing Augustine's division of the afterlife into four parts: the *sani* (the saved), the *mali* (the damned), the *non valde mali* (the "not completely evil" in a middle state), and the *honi non valde* (the "not completely good" in another intermediate state). The invocation of the authority of St. Augustine is especially odd in that St. Augustine believed Purgatory to be a "state," and the *Tractatus*, by its very nature, identifies Purgatory as a place, with a very specific location. The tendency of commentators between St. Augustine and the *Tractatus* had been towards a "place," though the Church was not definitive on the topic even at the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century. Moreover, in the *Tractatus*, Purgatory seems in many ways to be the abode of the *non valde mali* and the Earthly Paradise seems to be the abode of the *honi non valde*. This is at odds with the idea in the *Tractatus* that souls, after purgation, move to the Earthly Paradise for an undetermined period of time before being allowed entry into Heaven. (The very idea of the Earthly Paradise as part of the afterlife was eventually rejected at the Second Council of Lyons in 1274, even as that council affirmed the doctrine of Purgatory as a matter of dogma.) Thus, the *Tractatus* is not here entirely self-consistent, but it remains a serious, generally orthodox didactic treatise.

Soundly, it draws on Hugh of St. Victor (c. 1078–1141) for much of its preface and many of the torments. More fancifully, it relies heavily on the apocalyptic, late-fourth-century *Apocalypse of*

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St. Paul for its visions of the sufferings of the souls and the idea of the bridge over the river of Hell. The *Tractatus* did transmit important doctrinal opinions, among them that souls in Purgatory did not know how long they would be there, nor, indeed, did they know that they would eventually be saved. This is quite different from the Guest's certainty in *The Guest of Gy* (early fourteenth century) that he would be delivered from suffering at Easter; it is likewise different from the appealing comfort that some of the souls in Dante's *Purgatorio* take in knowing that they will eventually see the Beatific Vision.

Some of the opinions in the *Tractatus* are debatable, but much about Purgatory was debatable in the twelfth century. It does not assign souls to especially appropriate punishments as was so gloriously accomplished later in the *Divine Comedy*; it does not even consider specific sins at all in its presentation of Purgatory. It does, however, intersperse homilies and appeals to authority which embed the legend of Owain in a context that gives it greater theological weight. What is most important is that the *Tractatus*, in particular its central engaging account of the journey of Sir Owain, was an enormous hit. It survives, in whole or in part, in over one hundred and fifty manuscripts in Latin alone, including the *Chronicles* of Roger of Wendover, the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais (d. 1264), and an account by Henricus Salteriensis of *Purgatorium Sancti Patricii* in the *Patrologia Latina*, as collected and edited by Migne (PL 180.977–1004), and in over three hundred translations and adaptations in almost every European vernacular, ranging from a Sicilian version that adds King Arthur and transforms the mountain described in the *Tractatus* into Mount Etna to a lively version by Marie de France (fl. 1175–90), *Expurgatoire S. Patrizi*. In addition, there are countless references to the story such as the description in the *Legenda aurea* of St. Patrick being led to the gates of Hell.

Four versions survive in Middle English: the stanzaic version printed here from the Auchinleck Manuscript, two fifteenth-century manuscripts of a version in couplets, the earliest English version in ten manuscripts of the *South English Legendary* (ranging up to 714 lines in length); and a quatrain fragment transcribed by Thomas Hearn from a fragment in MS Harley 4012, itself based on a *South English Legendary* version. Two other pieces, not connected to Owain, complete the Middle English corpus of works on St. Patrick's Purgatory: a short narrative of the journey of a certain Nicholas in the *Legenda aurea* and a prose account of the 1409 *Vision of William Staunton*, preserved in two fifteenth-century manuscripts. Nicholas' vision is rather more like Owain's; Staunton's is a more eclectic account.

To anyone who knows anything of the Middle English literature of St. Patrick's Purgatory, it may seem odd to give the title *Sir Owain* to an edition of this poem. Ordinarily it has been known simply as *St. Patrick's Purgatory* or *Owaine Afller*. However, the former seems too general and the latter is adopted from the running headings of the couplet version in MS Cotton Caligula A. ii. The title *Sir Owain* seems to me more precise, and consistent with what is by far the most common spelling of the knight's name in the Auchinleck stanzaic version.

The Middle English stanzaic poem is largely consistent with the narrative in the *Tractatus*, even though the English version probably derived from an Anglo-Norman intermediary rather than

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directly from any of the Latin versions. It does omit prefatory material and much of the interspersed didactic material, as is so often the case with fourteenth-century English adaptations of works from Latin and French. However, the structure of *Sir Owain* is essentially that of the *Tractatus*, especially with regard to the geography of Purgatory. In the English version, Sir Owain is changed from an Irish knight into an Englishman, a Northumbrian who has been in the service of King Stephen (r. 1135–54), and he is, probably following Roger of Wendover's version, guilty of serious sins. His visit to St. Patrick's Purgatory is to do penance for the evils in the life he has led.

Still, the overall structure does mirror the *Tractatus*. After securing the reluctant permission of the bishop and the prior, Owain undertakes fifteen days of prayer and fasting before beginning his journey. These are prescribed rituals before entry into the Purgatory common to virtually all versions and practiced in fact at the shrine. Owain is directed by the prior through a door towards a hall without walls where he will meet and receive instruction from thirteen, rather than the fifteen of the *Tractatus*, white-robed men, who look remarkably like otherworldly Augustinian Canons Regular, who normally wore a white habit. They remind Owain that he is in grave danger and that he must resist the temptations of the fiends, especially not to return without completing the journey, which would be disastrous. They do, however, give him the comfort that, if he is in serious difficulty, he need only repeat the name of God to be preserved. Owain proceeds and is quickly greeted by loud and gruesome fiends who immediately urge him to go back to the upper world.

The geography of the Purgatory proper follows the pattern of the *Tractatus*, despite a few differences in detail. First the fiends make a fire and throw Owain in, but he calls upon the Lord and the fire is put out. Then the fiends lead him to the first true scene of purification, a field in a valley where wounded naked souls of both sexes are fastened face down with iron nails. Unlike the *Tractatus*, which does not associate souls with specific sins, *Sir Owain* identifies these souls as guilty of sloth, one of the seven deadly sins — not just laziness, but a slowness to a full commitment to the laws of God and the precepts of charity. Conversely, in the next area, the souls are bound face up and are tormented by dragons, newts, and snakes, and the hooks of the devils. *Sir Owain* adds to the *Tractatus* that these souls are guilty of gluttony, another of the seven deadly sins, and they rightly, in a detail unique to *Sir Owain*, accuse the knight of having committed this sin. They tempt him to return, but he calls upon God and proceeds.

In the next field, souls are hanging by various body parts, some immersed in fire, some on grillobars. These are thieves, backbiters, false swearers, and false witnesses; Owain may be guilty of such sins because he recognizes acquaintances in the group (a detail not in the *Tractatus*). Some notion of the punishment fitting the crime, also unique to *Sir Owain*, is apparent in the false swearers and witnesses hanging by their tongues, but the punishments are not consistently condign even within this field.

Owain next confronts the "wheel of fire," to which sinners are affixed, spinning rapidly. The sin here is identified as covetousness, and Owain is accused of such greed by the demons and bound to the wheel. While other souls are rotating in and out of fire and being burnt to powder, Owain utters the name of God and is again delivered. The fiends then bring Owain to a great mountain

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from which souls, some rising like sparks, are blasted by a cold wind into a hot and stinking river. He suffers this punishment, pointedly identified as the penalty for malice and spite, more completely than any other, but is again restored by calling God's name. The next torment is the house of fire and smoke. In a recurring motif, the devils tempt Owain to go back, but he perseveres and observes souls in molten baths up to various heights on their bodies. They are guilty of usury, not a deadly sin but a fundamental violation of charity. Though unnamed other sins also seem to be punished here, the demons accuse Owain of "mosay-lending," that is, usury. The poet of the English version seems to be drawing up a "bill of particulars" against the knight. Again he survives.

Then a blast of fire makes Owain think that he must be at the true pit of Hell. The demons throw him in, but he again is saved by saying the name of God, though he is somewhat the worse for purgatorial wear. The *Tractatus* identifies this pit as not really the true pit of Hell, but a demonic deceit, in that the true location of Hell will come later. *Sir Owain* makes no mention of this deceit, and true Hell does come later, but in some sense it is potentially a true Hell for Owain because it would have been permanent if he had not been rescued by calling upon God and, indeed, it is the place of those guilty of the most fundamental of all the deadly sins — pride. That Owain shows signs of suffering associates him with the sin and reminds us that he is, after all, not there like a distanced visionary, but flesh and blood, in a real place.

The horrors continue as beasts with sixty eyes and sixty hands, apparently significant of an indeterminately large number, seize the knight and threaten to throw him into a stinking, burning river — the most terrifying sight yet seen. Although the punishments so far have been loosely borrowed, through the *Tractatus*, from the *Apocalypse of St. Paul*, the bridge over this foul river is especially reminiscent of the *Apocalypse*. The bridge crosses the boiling river that covers true Hell. The poem emphasizes the source and the horror by referring to the "domenical" of St. Paul, apparently an admonitory Sunday reading, of uncertain substance, but likely based on the *Apocalypse*. Owain must cross the bridge as demons throw stones at him and fiends in the river wait to snatch him. The daunting bridge is high, narrow, and sharp as a razor. The devils again tempt him to give up and go back, but Owain proceeds and astonishingly does not find the bridge sharp or the crossing as perilous as he had feared. The bridge does not gradually become a broader road to salvation as in the *Tractatus*, but Owain's success is noteworthy and his purgation is complete.

At this point Owain reaches the Earthly Paradise and is given a cloth of gold that he puts on and is healed of the wounds he has incurred. It is striking that so gruesome are the purgatorial scenes that it easily goes unnoticed that almost all of the rest of the poem is devoted to the Earthly Paradise, an amount roughly equal to the number of lines devoted to the torments. It is important to keep in mind that the poet, like the author of the *Tractatus*, seems equally interested in Owain's ultimate visions of the glories of the fully purged. After great fear and suffering, consolation and celebration come. Owain enters a glittering world of flowers, gems, choirs, and birdsong and he beholds a procession of the saved who have not yet been admitted to their ultimate bliss in Heaven.

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He is in the Garden of Eden, a place where we would all have lived were it not for the sin of Adam, which is emphasized during the tour that Owain is given by two archbishops. The knight sees "the tree of life," oddly described as the means of Adam's temptation, though scripturally Adam and Eve ate of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," and it was to keep them from "the tree of life" that God placed Michael at the gates to keep them out after their expulsion.

As the two archbishops explain the Earthly Paradise, a place of complete natural fulfillment where all of the senses are gratified, there is the only mention in the whole poem of the doctrine of suffrages — that the living can help the dead with prayers, masses, and almsgiving — a doctrine that became central to Dominican preaching on Purgatory from the thirteenth century. Although *Sir Owain* is a fourteenth-century poem it is here true to its twelfth-century Cistercian source which naturally emphasized personal penance more than suffrages. Nevertheless, the foregoing summary of the structure of the whole poem suggests that *Sir Owain* gradually becomes its own poem, especially in references to specific sins and accusations of Owain of particular offenses. The result is not entirely systematic, but it is significantly different and almost transforms the poem into a metrical romance.

It has become, in its abbreviation and its vitality, very much an English poem and *Sir Owain* is very much a doughty English knight who has been in the service of King Stephen. When he sets out on his journey, and more clearly as he proceeds, he is much more like a romance hero than a religious visionary. As in so many Arthurian romances, Owain is on a quest, he sets out to do something that is dangerous, difficult, and worthwhile in an encompassing world that would have him, despite adversity, succeed.

That this version of St. Patrick's Purgatory should take on rather the form of romance than of vision should not be surprising. It appears in the Auchinleck Manuscript, which was produced in a commercial London scriptorium between 1330 and 1340, for a popular audience. The dialect seems to be that of London, certainly of the East Midlands. True, *Sir Owain* is, in the manuscript, sandwiched between two religious works (*The Life of St. Catherine* and "The Desputacoun betwix the Bodil and the Soul"), and the Auchinleck Manuscript has many religious pieces, but the manuscript is better known for its abundant inclusion of romances suited to a popular taste, many of them excellent, such as *Guy of Warwick*, *Floris and Blauncheflur*, *Boris of Hamtoun*, *Amis and Amadace*, and *Sir Orfeo*.

It is not, however, just the company the poem keeps that suggests that it is a didactic religious poem struggling to become a romance. The focus in *Sir Owain* is very much the knight and the adventures he experiences, even though the adventures are fashioned out of the stuff of religious tract. It is true that Sir Owain starts out as a sinful man, but that is not a disqualification for a romance hero; think only of *Sir Amadace*, whose hero must painstakingly regain his kingdom because he has been negligent in his religious life, or *Sir Gowther*, who has raped nuns, incinerated a convent, abducted wives, and murdered men, women, and children by the score, only, after extended penance, to become a saint. Sir Owain is faced with the fundamental religious challenge to reform his life and achieve salvation. That his desire to undertake the rigors of St. Patrick's

Sir Owain

Purgatory is unmetamorphosed within the poem is quite like the kind of "vertical motivation" characteristic of romance: the hero is moved to action not as much by psychological or religious introspection as by what the narrative needs in order to demonstrate its courtly or moral ideals.

Perhaps most persuasively, the story has a happy ending, a prime requisite of romance, and the narrator, though he allows, even insists, that we be frightened for Owain's sake, as well as our own, never lets us believe that Owain will be anything but successful. The trials may be difficult but the happy outcome is assured. Visions all, in some way, have a happy ending, but they tend to be admonitory. *Sir Owain* is decidedly a narrative in which the questing hero, because of his innate characteristics and the way in which those characteristics suit the values of the world in which he lives, is tested, but ultimately successful. When Owain undertakes his adventures, it is less a matter of the blinding insight of the visionary than the recovery of that from which he has been dispossessed. In this case, of course, it is the ultimate dispossession and consequently the ultimate recovery — Christian redemption — but the circumstances are reminiscent of romance losses and recoveries as early as *Havelok*. Havelok's recovery is primarily secular, while Owain's is spiritual, and even the magic talisman with which Owain is provided, firmly in the tradition of romance, is appropriately spiritual — the name of God.

It is not that Owain's success is necessarily permanent or secure; he is not guaranteed a long and happy life issuing in assured salvation as some romance heroes are. In some respects, *Sir Owain* is more like Redcrosse in Book I of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Not that Redcrosse was a sinner, except in the sense that everyone is a sinner, but he does have to return to the fray after slaying the dragon; even after purificatory and enlightening tests, Christian life must still be lived, and this is very much the situation of Owain; but, for reasons that make sense best in the world of romance, Owain, like Redcrosse, will live out his life in a world that is ultimately on his side. He is not given the assurance, or rather we are not given it, of a long and happy life like Sir Orfeo or Sir Cleves, but the familiar "reprise of romance" puts him in a morally privileged and optimistic position.

Much else about *Sir Owain* suggests that it is at least on the borderline of romance. As a man of flesh and blood, who suffers during his journey, Owain experiences formidable trials, but we are not truly worried. We almost rejoice in them because the narrator will not let us suspect anything other than eventual success. The structure of the narrative makes it unthinkable that Owain actually will be destroyed or fall into the pit of Hell. The narrator ensures that this is a possibility we never entertain even as we observe pain and trial. It just does not feel like a story that will end in anything but eventual vindication and triumph.

The poem feels like a romance in other ways, besides its presentation of a struggling hero within a universe that rewards the kind of person he is or wishes to be. On a very basic level, the verse form is of the tail-rhyme stanza: six lines comprised of two tetrameters, a trimeter, two tetrameters, and a trimeter, rhyming AABCCB. The form was so commonly used in popular romance that Chaucer employed a version of it to parody romances gone bad in his Tale of Sir Thopas. In *Sir Owain* this familiar romance verse form is well-managed; the narrator's willingness to let the story flow beyond the ends of individual stanzas allows for a fluidity if not felicity. Moreover, the

Introduction

narrator's relationship with the audience is very much like the "confidential" relationship that is characteristic of romance. We are, we feel, all in this together. The narrator, for example, often reminds us that his story is based on antecedents, not in the ponderous citations of tract, but in the relatively informal manner of romance: "As it seyt [says] in the storie" (line 144), or "As it seyt in this tyme" (line 174). Similarly, the narrator addresses us with direct exhortations: "These ons thider bring!" ("May Jesus bring us there," line 156); "For Godes love, bewar therbi!" (line 425); and "Ich man bewar therbi!" (line 570). The narrator even calls for our attention in the manner of romance:

Now herknes to mi talking	<i>harken</i>
Schil thou tel of other thing,	<i>I will</i>
Yif ye it wil yhore. (lines 166-68)	<i>If, hear</i>

Although the opening lines are missing, it would not be hard to imagine it beginning: "Listeth, lorde, in good entent . . ." (CTVIII[B']712).

In addition, the demons in Purgatory, though they are gruesome, threatening, and continually putting Owain in danger of damnation, often express themselves with a grim but amusing irony that relieves the unrelenting gloom and fire of orthodox Purgatory:

And seyd he was comen with flesche and fel	<i>said they; flesh and skin</i>
To fetchen him the joste of Helle	<i>fetch him to</i>
Withouten ani ending. (lines 322-24)	

and

Hem schal sone com a bewerthe,	<i>To them, drest</i>
That schal nought thenche bern gode. (lines 545-46)	<i>think</i>

and:

This ben our fowles in our cage,	<i>birds, cage</i>
And this is our courteage	<i>garden</i>
And our vavel tour. (lines 643-45)	

All of this rings of romance rather than tract.

Even the bridge over the river of Hell that Owain must cross to reach the Earthly Paradise, firmly based though it is in the *Tractatus*, seems more like the bridge that Lancelot crosses in *Christien de Troyes* than it does like a passage over the infernal. Though unscathed, unlike Lancelot, Owain faces a romance-like challenge. And when he arrives in the Earthly Paradise,

Sir Owain

although the doctrine is, again, directly from the *Tractatus*, the world bears similarities to the unearthly otherworlds that are entered by Orfeo and Sir Cleges. He sees a procession, not of maidens, but of all human estates (though a heavy emphasis is, perhaps appropriately, placed on the clergy). More striking even are the catalogues of flowers and gems, which are appropriate to the terrestrial paradise, but sound more like the catalogues in the Alliterative and Stanzaic *Mortes* and in countless other romance descriptions of ideal beauty.

The archbishops who instruct Owain do explain matters of doctrine concerning the nature of the fate of the souls in Purgatory and the Earthly Paradise, but their affirmation of suffrages — sound doctrine, though rather an odd Dominican concession in this essentially Cistercian view of the afterlife — is rather in the mode of romance guidance to the hero than doctrinal exegesis. Even when true in substance to his ultimate source, this narrator has the capacity to make us feel that we are in a romance.

It is, however, in the shape of Owain's whole experience that the poem seems to have transformed Owain from a visionary or pilgrim. A good, if misguided, English knight sets out, body and soul, to face dangers that his world presents but he is prepared for. The ideals in *Sir Owain* seem, quite appropriately, the four cardinal moral virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. These are the virtues in which he has found himself lacking and these are the virtues he embodies as he suffers and triumphs in a world that will not let him fail in his quest for Redemption. The job is not complete; that comes only with eternal salvation, but Owain has brought himself into accord with the ideals, and is armed with the virtues, that are rewarded in the world in which he lives. Tract has become romance.

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Sir Owain

[The first thirty-two lines of the poem are lost. They would have probably called for the attention of the audience and given a brief introduction of St. Patrick and his mission to the pagan Irish.]

1

And lived in dedeli sinne.

deadly

Sevn Patrike hadde rewthe

St. Patrick, pity

Of his misbileve and untrewhthe,

their false belief, error

That thai woren inne.

they were in

2

Oft he proved sarmon to make,
That thai schuld to God take
And do after his rede.

attempted sermon
should take to God
follow; advise
full of crime

10 Thai were fulfild of felonie;
Thai ne held it bot ribaudie
Of nothing that he sede.

They held it but foolishness
Everything he said

3

And al thai seyd commounliche,
That non of hem wold sikerliche
15 Do bi his techeing.
Bot yif he dede that sum man
Into Helle went than,
To bring hem tiding

they all said commonly
none of them would surely
abide by his teaching
Unless; caused some man
than
them tidings

4

Of the pain and of the wo
20 The soulen suffri evermo,
Thai that ben therinne;
And elles thai seyd, that nolden hye

soul's suffer forever
They who are therein
Otherwise; would not quickly (i.e., soon)

Sir Owain

Of her misdeeds nought repents,
No her folies blinnes.

*their sins not repeat
Nor their follies (i.e., sins) cease*

5

- 25 When Sein Patrike herd this,
Michel he card forsothe, ywis,
And sore he gan desmay.
Off he was in affliccion,
In fasting and in orisoun,
30 Jhesu Crist to pray,

*Saint
Greatly he cared truly, indeed
sorely; became dismayed
suffering
prayer*

6

- That He him schuld grace sende,
Hou he might rathest wende
Out of the fenes bond,
And do hem com to amendement
35 And leve on God omnipotent,
The folk of Yrland.

*most quickly lead
fiend's control
cause them to
believe*

7

- And als he was in holy chirche,
Godes werkes for to wirche,
And made his praiser,
40 And bad for that ich thing.
Sone he fel on sleping
Toform his auter.

*while
work*

*prayed, very long
fell asleep
Before, after*

8

- In his chapel he slepe wel swete.
Of fele thinges him gan mete
45 That was in Heven blis.
As he slepe, forsothe him thought
That Ihesu, that ous dere bought,
To him com, ywis,

*slept quite sweetly (i.e., comfortably)
many; began to dream
Paradise
asleep, truly it seemed to him
as dearly bought (i.e., redeemed)
came, indeed*

9

- And gaf him a bok that nas nought lite:
50 Ther nis no clerk that swiche can write,
No never no schal be;

*gave; book; was not little
is no learned man; such*

Sir Owain

It speketh of al maner godispelle,
Of Heven and erthe and of Helle,
Of Godes priveti.

*It spoke of all manner [of] gospel's
secret knowledge*

10

- 55 More him thought, that God him gaf
In his bond a wel feir staf,
In slepe ther he lay;
And Godes Staf, ich understand,
Men clepeth that staf in Yrloend
60 Yete to this ich day.

*Further he thought: gave
beautiful staff
sleep where
God's Staff
call
Tet: very*

11

- When God him this gif hadde,
Him thought that He him laddle
Thennes be the way ful right
Into an gret desert;
65 Ther was an hole michel apert,
That griseliche was of sight.

*had given
He thought: led
Thence by
great open space
Where: quite open
gruesome*

12

- Rounde it was about and blak;
In alle the world no was his mack,
So griselich entring.
70 When that Patrike yseye that sight,
Swithe sore he was affligh
In his sleeping.

*black
world; its mark
gruesome to enter
now
full surely; afflicted
sleep*

13

- The God almighty him schewed and seyd,
Who that hadde don sinfal dede
75 Ogaines Godes lawe,
And wold hem therof repenti,
And take penaunce hastily,
And his folis withdrawe,

*Then: almighty; explained; said
Whoever: deeds
Against
would: repent
sins (follic) withdraw from*

14

- 80 So schuld in this ich hole
A parti of penaunce thele

*very [same] hole
portion; endure*

Sir Owain

For his misdede;
 A night and a day be herinne,
 And al him schuld be forgive his sinne,
 And the better spedē.

fare

15

- 85 And yif he ben of gode creaunce,
 Gode and poure withouten dotaunce,
 And stedfast of bileve.
 He ne schuld nought be therin ful long,
 That he ne schal se the paines strong
 90 Ac non so schal him greve

(f. *faith*)

Good; blameless without uncertainty
steadfast; belief

see

but none shall; trouble

16

- In wiche the soales ben ydo,
 That have deserved to com thereto,
 In this world ywys;
 And also than sen he may
 95 That ich joie that lasteth ay.
 That is in Paradis.

what [do] the souls is done

Indeed

then are

very jay; forever

17

- When Jhesu had yseyd al out,
 And yschewed al about
 With wel milde chere,
 100 God, that bought ous dere in Heven,
 Fran Him he went with milde steven,
 And Patrike billeft there.

explained

showed

full gracious manner

bought us dearly (i.e., redeemed)

sound

left

18

- Whan Seyn Patrike o slepe he woke,
 Gode token he fond and up hem toke
 105 Of his swevering.
 Bok and staf ther he fond,
 And tok hem up in his hand,
 And thonked Heven king.

of

Good signs he found; them took

dreaming

Book; staff; found

took them; hand

thanked

19

- He kneld and held up his hand,
 110 And thonked Ihesu Cristes sond
 That He him hadde ysent,
 Wherhurh he might understand
 To turn that folk of Yrlond
 To com to amendment.
- knelf; hand
Ihesu Cristes messenger
him had sent
Through which
{How} to

20

- 115 In that stede withouten lett
 A fair abbay he lete sett
 Withouten ani dueling.
 In the name of Godes glorie,
 Seyn Peter and Our Levedy,
 120 For to rede and sing.
- place without delay
abbey; had built
Without any delay
Saint; Lady
To chaste and sing [praises]

21

- Seyn Patrike maked the abbay:
 That wite wele men of the cuntry,
 That non is that yliche.
 Regles is that abbay name;
 125 Ther is solas, gle, and game
 With pover and eke with riche.
- made; abbey
know; country
none; like
abbey's
solace, joy; delight
poor; also

22

- White chansoures he sett therate
 To serve God, arliche and late,
 And holy men to be.
 That ich boke and that staf,
 130 That God Seyn Patrike gaf,
 Yeto ther man may se.
- canons; established there
early
very book; staff
gave
Still; see

23

- In the est ende of the abbay
 Ther is that hole, forsothe to say,
 135 That griseliche is of sight,
 With gode ston wal al abouten,
 With locke and keye the gate to louken,
 Patrike lete it dighte.
- east
truth to say
grisly
good stone walls all around
lock
had it built

24

- That ich stede, siker ye be,
 140 Is ycleped the right ent're
 Of Patrikes Purgatorie:
 For in that time that this befelle,
 Man a man went into Helle,
 As it seyt in the storie,

*same place, sure be you
 called; very entrance*

occurred.

says

25

- 145 And suffred pain for her trespass,
 And com again thurh Godes gras,
 And seyd alle and some,
 That thai hadde sen sikerliche
 The paines of Helle aperliche,
 150 When thai were out ycomme.

*pain; their trespasses
 returned again through; grace
 said every one of them
 seen surely
 clearly
 had come out*

26

- And also thai seyd wth heye,
 Apertliche the joies thai seye
 Of angels singing
 To God almighty and to His:
 155 That is the joye of Paradys;
 Ihesu ous thider bring!

*said with haste
 Clearly; joy; saw
 joy; Paradise
 May Jesus bring us there!*

27

- When alle the folk of Yrland
 The joies gan understand,
 That Seyn Patrike hem sede,
 160 To him thai com everichon,
 And were yrystised in fonsdon,
 And leten her misedele.

*began to
 them told
 they came every one
 baptized; baptismal font
 forgiven; sins*

28

- And thus thai bicon, lasse and more,
 Ceisten men thurh Godes lore,
 165 Thurh Patrikes priet.
 Now herknes to mi talking:
 Ichil thou tel of other thing.
 Yif ye it wil yhere.

*became, all of them
 Christian; through; teaching
 prayers
 lass
 I will
 if, hear*

Sir Owain

29

Bi Stevenes day, the king ful right,
 That Ingliod stabled and dight
 Wel wiselich in his time,
 In Northumberland was a knight,
 A doughty man and swithe wight,
 As it seyt in this time.

In the time of Stephen
stabilized; ordered
wisely

doughty; mighty person
says; poem (rhyme)

30

175 Owelyn he hight, withouten les,
 In contré ther he born wes,
 As ye may yhere.
 Wel michel he couthe of batayle,
 And swithe sinful he was saundayle
 180 Ogain his Creatour.

was named, without less
country where; was
born
Very much; understood; battle
quite; without doubt
against; Creator

31

On a day he him bithought
 Of the sinne he hadde ywrought,
 And sore him gan adrede,
 And thought he wold thurh Godes grace
 185 Ben yschrive of his trispas,
 And leten his misedede.

One day; thought to himself
sins; done
sorely; began to dread
would through
be driven; trespass
leave; misdeeds

32

And when he hadde thus gode creassance,
 He com, as it bifel a chaunce,
 To the bischop of Yrland,
 Ther he lay in that abbay,
 Ther was that hole, forsothe to say,
 190 Penaunce to take an hond.

good faith
came, as it happened
bishop
Where
Where; truth to tell
To undertake Penance

33

To the bischop he biknewe his sinne,
 And prayd him, for Godes winne,
 195 That he him schuld schrive,
 And legge on him penaunce sore.
 He wold sinne, he seyd, no more,
 Never eft in his life.

revealed
salvation
should strive
lay; severe
would
again; life

Sir Owain

34

- The bischop therof was ful blithe.
 200 And for his sinne blamed him swithe,
 That he him hadde ybold,
 And seyd he most penaunce take,
 Yif he wald his sinne foesake,
 Hard and manifold.
- happy
rebuked; at once

meat
if; would
Serious; many kinds

35

- Than answerd the knight Owain,
 "Den ichil," he seyd, "ful feyn,
 What God me wil sende.
 Then thou me wost comandy
 Into Patrikes Purgatori,
 210 Thider ichil wende."
- I will do; quite eagerly*
Even if; would command
Thither I will go.

36

- The bischop seyd, "Nay, Owain, frende!
 That ich way schaltes nought wende,"
 And told him of the pine,
 And bede him lete be that mischaunce.
 215 And "Take," he seyd, "sum other penaunce,
 To amende thee of sinnes thine."
- friend
shall you not go
pine
bade; avend; adversity

37

- For nought the bischop couthe say.
 The knight nold nought leten his way,
 His soule to amende.
 220 Than laddhe he him into holy chirche,
 Godes werkes for to wirche,
 And the right lawe him kende.
- could
would not give up

Then led
to work
true law; teach

38

- Fiften days in affliccion,
 In fasting and in orisoun
 225 He was, withouten lesing.
 Than the priour with processioune,
 With croice and with gonfanooun,
 To the hole he gan him bring.
- Fifteen; suffering
prayer
lying
Ther; prior
cross; banner

39

The priour seyd, "Knight Oweyn,
Her is thi gate to go fal gain,
Wende right even forth;
And when thou a while ygon hast,
Light of day thou al forlast,
Ac hold thee even north.

*Go directly forward
have gone
completely lost
But, directly*

40

235 "Thus thou schalt under erthe gon;
Than thou schalt finde sone anon
A wel gret feld aplight,
And therin an halle of ston,
Swache in world no wot Y non;
240 Sundele ther is of light.

*earth go
soon
field assuredly
a hall of stone
Such: I know of none
a little bit*

41

"Namore lightnesse nis ther yfounde
Than the sonne goth to grunde
In winter sikerly.
Into the halle thou schalt go,
245 And duelle ther tille ther com mo,
That schul thee solaci.

*No more; is not; found
Than when the sun moves low
surely
remain; until, more
Who shall you comfort*

42

"Thirteen men ther schul come,
Oodes seruante alle and some,
As it seyt in the stori;
250 And byc thee schul conseily
Hou thou schul thee conteyni
The way thurh Purgatori."

*Thirteen; shall
servants every one
says
quickly [key] shall counsel you
sustain yourself
through*

43

Than the prior and his covent
Bitaught him God, and forth hy went;
255 The gate tha schet anon.
The knight his way hath sone ycome,
That into the feld he was ycome
Ther was the halle of ston.

*covent
Commended him to; he
schet
taken
[Sey] that; field; come
Where*

44

- 260 The halle was ful selly dight,
 Swiche can make no ertheliche wight;
 The pilers stode wide.
 The knight wonderd that he fond
 Swiche an halle in that leed,
 And open in ich side.

wondrously constructed
Sack; earthly creature
 pillars stood far apart
 found
Sack
 on each

45

- 265 And when he hadde long stond therout,
 And devised al about,
 In he went thare.
 Thirteen men ther come,
 Wisemen tha'i war of dome,
 270 And white abite tha'i bere,

stood outside
 examined
there
 Thirteen men
 judgment
habit they wore

46

- And al her crouses wer newe schorn;
 Her most maister yede bifore
 And salud the knaig.
 Adoun he sat, so seyt the boke,
 275 And knight Owain to him he toke,
 And told him reson right.

crowns [of their heads] were newly shorn
Their chief master went in front
 greeted
Down, says
 reson true

47

- "Ichil thee conseyl, leve brother,
 As ichave done mani another
 That has ywent this way,
 280 That thou ben of gode creunce,
 Certeyn and poure withouten dotrance
 To God thi trewe fay,

I will counsel you, dear brother
I have done
have gone
faith
true; uncertainty
true source of doctrine

48

- "For thou schalt se, when we ben ago,
 A thousand fendes and wele mo,
 285 To bring thee into pine.
 Ac luke wele, bise thee so,
 And thou anithing bi hem do,
 Thi soule thou schalt tire.

are gone
fiends; many more
pain
But look well, ponder you so
If; with them
lose

49

"Have God in thine hert,

- 290 And thesk opon His woundes smert,
That He suffred thee fore.
And bot thou do as Y thee tell,
Bodi and soole thou gos to Helle,
And eversore forloere.

*think; painful
for you
unless
you go
And fare[] lost forever*

50

"Nempse Godes heighe name,
And thai may do thee no schame,
For nought that may bifalle."

And when thai hadde conseylid the knight,
No lenge believe he no might,

- 300 Bot went out of the halle.

*Call out; high
disgrace
occur
counselled
No longer remain*

51

He and alle his felloweood
Bitraught him God, and forth thai yede
With ful mild chere.
Owein baleft ther in drede,
To God he gan to clepi and grede,
And maked his preier.

*company
Entreated him to God: went
gracious manner
left
call, cry out
prayers*

52

And sone therafter sikerly
He gan to here a rewful cri;
He was affred ful sore:
310 Thei alle the wold falle schold,
Fram the firmament to the mold,
No might have ben no more.

*certainly
began to hear; rueful cry
frightened; keenly
Though; world
earth*

53

And when of the cri was passed the drede,
Ther com in a grete ferrede
315 Of fendes fifti score
About the knight into the halle.
Lothly thinges thai weren alle,
Behinde and eke before.

*cry: dread
company
frends fifty
Loathsome
also*

54

- And the knight thai yeden abouten,
 320 And gremmed on him her soule tosten,
 And drof him to hetheing.
 And seyd he was comen with flesche and fel
 To fechen him the jise of Helle
 Withouten ani ending.

*went about
 growled; their foul arses
 pursued; with abuse
 said they; flesh and skin
 fetch him [so]*

55

- 325 The most maister fende of alle
 Adoun on knes he gan to falle,
 And seyd, "Welcomme, Owain!
 Thou art ycomen to suffri pine
 To amende thee of sinnes tine,
 330 Ac alle gett thee no gain,

*master fiend
 knees
 suffer pain
 damnable
*But; get you no profit**

56

- "For thou schalt have pine enough,
 Hard, strong, and ful tough,
 For thi dedli sinne.
 No haddestow never more meschaunce
 335 Than thou schal have in our daunce,
 When we schul play biginne."

*pain enough
 deadly
*Never had you; bad experience**

57

- "Ac no for than," the fendas sede,
 "If thou wilt do bi our rede,
 For thou art ous leue and dere,
 340 We schul thee bring with fine amour
 Ther thou com in fram the priour,
 With our felawes yfere;

*But; fiends said
 If; by; advice
 to us believed; precious
 perfect love
 Where
 followers gathered together*

58

- "And elles we schul thee teche here,
 That thou has served ous mani yer
 In pride and lecherie;
 For we thee have so long yknowe,
 345 To thee we schul our hokes thrawe,
 Alle our compaynies."

*otherwise; you teach
 but
 known
 into your; looks threat
 company*

59

- He seyd he nold withouten feyle;
 350 "At Y forsake your conseyle;
 Mi penaunce ichil take."
 And when the fendes yherd this,
 Amidward the halle ywis
 A grete fer thai gun make.
- would not; fail
But I; counsel
I will
had heard
In the middle
fire; began to make

60

- 355 Fet and hand thai bounde him hard,
 And casten him amidward.
 He cleped to our Dright;
 Anon the fer oway was weved,
 Cole no spark ther nas bileden,
 360 Tharth grace of God alright.
- Feet and hands*
cast; in the midst
called; Lord
At once; fire away; quenched
Cold nor; was not left
Through

61

- And when the knight yseigh this,
 Michel the balder he was ywis
 And wele gan understand,
 And thought wele in his memorie,
 365 It was the fendes trecherie,
 His hert forto food.
- had seen*
Much more confident; indeed
treachery
tempt

62

- The fendes went out of the halle,
 The knight thai laddie with hem alle
 Intil an uncouthe lond.
 370 Ther no was no maner wele,
 Bot hunger, thrust, and chele;
 No tre so seigh he stond,
- land*
intv.; uncivilized land
no kind of comfort
Only; shirt; cold
tree; saw; stand

63

- Bot a cold wind that blewe there,
 That unsethe ani man might ybore,
 375 And perced tharth his side.
 The fendes han the knight ycome
 So long that thai ben ycome
 Into a valay wide.
- Blew*
scarcely; bear
pierced through
takes
valley

Sir Owain

64

- 380 Tho wende the knight he hadde yfounde
 The deepest pit in Helle grounde.
 When he com neighe the stede,
 He loked up sone arone;
 Strong it was forther to gon,
 He herd scheiche and gred.

*Then thought; found
 deepest
 near; place*

*Hard; further to go
 shrieking; lamentation*

65

- 385 He seighe ther ligge ful a feld
 Of men and wimen that were aqueld,
 Naked with mani a wounde.
 Toward the erthe that lay develing.
 "Alias! Alias!" was her brocking,
 390 With iron bendes ybounde;

*saw; lay; field
 women; were destroyed*

*spreading
 calls of distress
 iron bands bound*

66

- And gan to scriche and to wayly,
 And erid, "Alias! Merci, mete!
 Merci, God almighty!"
 Merci nas ther non, forsothe,
 395 Bot sorwe of hert and grinding of tothe:
 That was a griseli sight.

*began to shriek; wail
 cried*

*was not
 teeth
 gruesome*

67

- That ich sorwe and that reuth
 Is for the foale sinne of slewthe,
 As it seyt in the stori.
 400 Who that is slowe in Godes servise
 Of that pain hem may agrise,
 To legge in Purgatori.

*very sorrow; never
 stuck*

*says
 shaggish
 they may dread
 be*

68

- This was the first pain aplight
 That thai dede Owain the knight:
 405 Thai greved him swithe sore.
 Alle that pain he hath overschaken;
 Until another thai han him taken,
 Ther he seighe sorwe more

*in fact
 did no*

*troubled; very sorely
 passed by
 To
 Where; saw sorrow*

69

- 410 Of men and wimen that ther lay,
That cried, "Alas!" and "Wailaway!"
For her wicked lere.
Thalche soules lay upward,
As the other haddle ly downward,
That Y told of before,
- women
cried
their; conduct
These

70

- 415 And were thorth fet and bond and heved
With iren nailes gloweand red
To the erthe ynuylid that tide.
Owain seigh sitt on hem there
Lothli dragouns alle o fer,
420 In herd is sought to hide.
- through feet and hands and head
iron nails glowing
nailed at that time
saw sit; them
Loathsome, on fire
In public nothing can be hidden

71

- 425 On sun sete todes blake,
Esates, neddren, and the snake,
That frete hem bac and side.
This is the pain of glotonii:
For Godes love, bewar therbi!
It rinneth al to wide.
- sat toads black
Newts, adders
bit them [in the] back
gullet
run all too widely

72

- 430 Yete him thought a pain strong
Of a cold windle blewe hem among.
That com out of the sky;
So bitter and so cold it blewe,
That alle the soules it overthrew
That lay in Purgatori.
- And then*
them
knocked over

73

- 435 The fendes lopen on hem thare,
And with her hokes hem al toters,
And loude thai gun to crie.
Who that is licchoure in this lif,
Be it man other be it wiſf,
That schal ben his bayli.
- leapt; them there
their hooks them tow up
began to cry
lubber; life
wife (i.e., woman)
country (dwelling place)

Sir Owain

74

- 440 The fendas seyd to the knight,
 "Thou hast been strong lichoure aplight,
 And strong gloteour also:
 Into this pain thou schalt be dight,
 Bot thou take the way fal right
 Ogain ther thou com fro." *lether indeed*
gloton
placed
Unless; right away
back where

75

- 445 Owain seyd, "Nay, Satan!
 Yete forthermar ichil gas,
 Thurh grace of God almighty."
 The fendas wald him have hent:
 He cleped to God omnipotent,
 450 And thair lorn al her might. *Still farther I will go*
Through
would; seized
called
lair

76

- Thai ladde him forther into a stede
 Ther men never gode no dede,
 Bot shame and vilanie.
 Herkneth now, and ben in pes!
 455 In the firth field it wes,
 Al ful of tormentrie. *Ind; further; place*
Where men; did
shame; villainy
Listen; be in peace!
fourth field; was
torment

77

- Sum bi the fet wer honging,
 With iron hokes al brening,
 And sum bi the swere,
 460 And sum bi woebe and sum bi rigge,
 Al otherwise than Y can sigge,
 In divers manere. *fort; hanging*
iron hooks; burning
neck
belly; back
woe
various ways

78

- And sum in forneise wern ydon,
 With molten ledde and quic brunston
 465 Boiland above the fer,
 And sum bi the tong hing.
 "Allas!" was ever her brocking,
 And no nother preiere. *furnace; placed*
lead; caustic brimstone
Boiling; fire
tongue hung
calls of distress
no other prayer

79

- And sum on grediris layen there,
 470 Al glowand ogains the fer,
 That Owain wele yknewe,
 That whilom were of his quayntaunce,
 That suffred ther her penaunce;
 Tho chaunged al his hewe!

*gridiron lay**glowing upon; fire**recognized**at some time; acquaintance**Thew; color*

80

- A wilde fer hem tharthat went,
 475 Alle that it oftok it brent,
 Ten thousand soales and mo.
 Tho that henge bi fer and swore,
 That were theves and theves fere,
 480 And wrought man wel wo.

*fire them throughout**overtook; burned**more**These; feet; neck**thieves; companions**caused; woe*

81

- And tho that henge bi the tong,
 That "Alias!" ever song,
 And so loude crid,
 That wer backbiters in her live:
 485 Bewar therbi, man and wife,
 That lef beth for to chide.

*those; hung**sang**cried**backbiters: lives**Beware; wife (i.e., woman)**Who are eager to scold (complain)*

82

- Alle the stedes the knight com bi
 Were the paines of Purgatori
 For her werkis wrong.
 490 Whoso is lef on the halidom swore,
 Or ani fale witnes bore,
 Ther ben her peynes strong.

*places**their works**willing to; relies swear**false witness bear*

83

- Owain anon him biwent
 And seighe where a whale trest,
 495 That griseliche were of sight.
 Michel it was, about it wond,
 And brend right as it were a brond;
 With hokes it was ydight.

*went**saw; wheyl turned**gruesome**Great; moved**burned; brand**hooks; fitted out*

84

- An hundred thousand soules and mo
 500 Opon the wheli were henging tho,
 The fendes theril oum.
 The stori seyt of Owain the knight,
 That no soule knowe he no micht,
 So fast thai gan it tourn.

*wheel; hanging
thereto arranged
says
recognize
made it turn*

85

- 505 Out of the erthe com a lighting
 Of a blo fer al beuning.
 That stank fosale withalle,
 And about the wheli it went,
 And the soules it forbrent
 510 To poudre swithe smal.

*came lightning
blaz (i.e., livid) fire; burning
burnt up
powder very fine*

86

- That wheli, that remmeth in this wise,
 Is for the sinne of covainise.
 That regnes now overal.
 The coveytous man hath never anough
 515 Of gold, of silver, no of plough,
 Til deth him do down fallie.

*rune in this way
covetousness
reigns; completely
covetous; enough
land
Until death makes him fall down*

87

- The fendes seyd to the knight,
 "Thou hast been covairise aplight,
 To win lond and lede;
 520 Opon this wheli thou schalt be dight,
 Bot yif thou take the way ful right
 Intil thin owben thede."

*covetous indeed
land; nation
placed
Unless; immediately
Unto your own country*

88

- Her conseyl he hath forsaken.
 The fendes has the knight forth taken,
 525 And bounde him swithe hard
 Opon the wheli that arn about,
 And so lothly gan to rout,
 And cast him amidward.

*Their counsel
very
turned
adversely; below
in the midst*

89

- 530 Tho the hokes him torent,
And the wild fer him torent.
On ihess Crist he thought,
Fram that whelc an angel him bare,
And al the fenes that were there
No might him do right sought.
- Then; hooks; tore
fire; burned fiercely
bore

90

- 535 Tha laddeth him forther with gret pain,
Til tha com to a mounsteyn
That was as rede as blod,
And men and wimen theron stode;
Him thought, it nas for non gode,
For tha cride as tha were wode.
- mountain
red; blood
women; stood
He thought; was not
cried; crazy

91

- 545 The fenesseyd to the knight than,
"Thou hast wonder of thilke man
That make so deuri mode:
For tha deserved Godes wreche,
Hem schal sone com a bevereche
That schal nought thenche hem gode."
- these men
woeful mood
God's vengeance
(To) them; drink
intend

92

- 550 No hadde he no rather that word yseyd,
As it is in the stori leyd,
Ther com a windes blast,
That fende and soule and knighi up went
Almest into the firmament,
And sethen adon him cast
- sooner; said
told (recorded)
Almost
afterwards down

93

- 555 Into a stirkand river,
That under the mounsteyn ran o fer,
As quarel of alblast,
And cold it was as ani ise
The pain may no man devise,
That him was wrought in hast.
- drinking
mountain; offire
missile of a siege engine
any ice
desribe
in haste

Sir Owain

94

- 560 Seyn Owain in the water was dreynt,
And wex therin so mad and feyst,
That neighe he was forlore;
Sone so he on God might thenschen ought,
Out of the water he was ybrought,
And to the lond ybore.
- drenched*
grew; fainy
nearly; lost
As soon as; think at all
bore

95

- 565 That ich pain, ich understand,
Is for bothe nifhe and ond,
That was so wick liff;
Ond was the windes blast
That into the stinking water him cast:
570 Ich man bewar therbi!
- very*
malice; spite
wicked life
Fierce

96

- Forth thai laddle him swithe withalle,
Til thai com to an halle,
He no seigne never er non swiche.
Out of the halle com an hete,
575 That the knight bigan to swete,
He seigne so foule a smiche.
- led; quickly*
saw; before; such
heat
sweat
saw; smoke

97

- Tho stint he farther for to gon.
The fendes it aperceived anon,
And were therof ful fawe,
580 "Turn again," thai gan to crie,
"Or thou schalt wel sone dye,
Bot thou be withdrawe."
- Then stepped; to go*
realized
tried
taken out

98

- And when he com to the halle dore,
He no hadde never sen biforn
585 Halvendel the care.
The halle was ful of turmentis:
Tho that were in that bayly
Of blis thai were ful bare,
- door*
A half part of; pain
torments
These; fortress
bare

99

- For al was the halle grounde
 590 Ful of Pittes that were rounde,
 And were ful yfylt
 To the beordes, gret and smal,
 Of bras and copper and other metal,
 And quic bronston ymelt;

pitt

filled

ring

brass; copper

caustic brimstone molten

100

- 595 And men and wimen theron stode,
 And schrist and crid, as thai wyr wode,
 For her dedeli sinne;
 Sum to the navel wode,
 And sum to the breastes yode,
 600 And sum to the chan.

shrieked; cried; crazy

deadly

waded

breasts were

101

- Ich man after his misght
 In that pein was yfylt,
 To have that strong hete;
 And sum bere bagges about her swere
 605 Of pens gloweand al of fer,
 And swiche mete ther thai ete:

Earth; sun

pain; thrust

heat

bore bags (*i.e.*, pouches); necks

coins glowing all on fire

such meat; ore

102

- That were gavelers in her liif.
 Bewar therbi, bothe man and wiif,
 Swiche sinne that ye lete.
 610 And mani soales ther yede uprightes,
 With fals misours and fals wightes,
 That fendes upon sete.

usurers

permit

stood upright

assuers; creatures

set upon

103

- The fendes to the knight sede,
 "Thou most bathi in this lede
 615 Ar than thou hemnes go;
 For thine okering and for thi sinne
 A parti thou most be wasche herinne,
 O cours or to."

said

bathe; area

Before; hence

money-lending

period of time; washed

A cycle or two

Sir Owain

184

- Owain drad that torment,
 And cleped to God omnipotent,
 And His moder Marie.
 Ybore he was out of the halle,
 Frum the paines and the fendas alle.
 Tho he so loude gan crie.
- dreaded
 called
 mother
 Borne
 Then

185

- Anon the knight was war ther,
 Whare sprang out a flammme o fer,
 That was stark and store;
 Out the erthe the fer aros.
 Tho the knight wel sore agros,
 As cole and piche it fore.
- aware
 flame of fire
 strag; furce
 Then; novely terrified
 coal; pitch it spewed

186

- Of seven maner colours the fer out went,
 The soules therin it forbrent;
 Sum was yalu and grene,
 Sum was blac and sum was blo;
 Tho that were therin hem was ful wo,
 And sum as nadder on to sene.
- burned up
 yellow; green
 black; blue
 Those
 as if one saw an adder

187

- The fende bath the knight ynone,
 And to the pit thai weren ycome,
 And seyd thus in her spelle,
 "Now, Owain, thou might solas make,
 For thou schalt with our felawes schake
 Into the pit of Helle."
- fiends; taken
 their spelle
 solace
 follows hurry

188

- "This ben our fooles in our cage,
 And this is our courtelage
 And our castel tour;
 Tho that ben herin ybrought,
 Sir knight, hoo trowestow ought,
 That hem is anthing scour?
- Birds; cage
 garden
 Those
 do you believe at all
 That they are at all agonized

109

"Now turn organ or to late,
 650 Ar we thee put in at Helle gate;
 Out no schaltow never winne,
 For no noise no for no crie,
 No for no clepeing to Marie,
 No for no maner ginne."

*back before too late**Before**shall you**calling**convenience*

110

655 Her conseil the knight forsoke.
 The fended him non, so seith the bokes,
 And bounde him swithe fast.
 Into that ich wicke prisoun,
 Stinkand and derk, fer adoun.
 660 Amidward thau him cast.

*counsel**took**fully**wicked**Stinking; dark, for**midst*

111

Ever the aether that thau him cast
 The hatter the fer on him last;
 Tho him gan sore smert.
 He cleped to God omnipotent,
 665 To help him out of that turment,
 With gode wille and stedefast hert.

*deeper**better**Then: be pained**calmed**good*

112

Out of the pit he was yborn,
 And elles he hadde ben forlorn
 To his ending day.
 670 That is the pine, that ich of rede,
 Is for the foul sinne of peude,
 That schal lasten ay.

*carried**otherwise, lost**pain; tell of**pride**forever*

113

Biside the pit he seighe and herd
 How God almighty him had ywerd;
 675 His clothes wer al torn.
 Forther couthe he no way,
 Ther him thought a divers contray,
 His bodi was al forbeest.

*saw; heard**protected**torn**could**strange country**burned badly*

114

- 680 Tho chaunged Owain rode and hewe;
 Fendes he seighe, ac non he no knewe,
 In that divers land;
 Sam sexti eighen bere,
 That lothetliche and griseliche were,
 And sum hadde sexti hond.

*Then; face and complexion
 new, but
 strange
 sixty eyes bore
 loathsome; grawsome
 sixty hands*

115

- 685 Tha seyd, "Thou schalt sought ben alon,
 Thou schalt havens ouz to mon,
 To leche thee newe lawes,
 As thou hast ylernd ere.
 In the stede ther thou were
 690 Ansonges our felawes."

*attend to
 learned before
 place*

116

- The fenes has the knight ynone;
 To a stinkand water tha ben ycome.
 He no seighe never er non swiche.
 It stank foulier than ani bounde,
 695 And mani mile it was to the grounde,
 And was as swart as piche.

*taken
 stinking
 saw; before; such
 bound
 black as pitch*

117

- And Owain seighe therover ligge
 A swithe strong, narw brigge.
 The fenes seyd tho,
 700 "Lo, sir knight, sextow this?
 This is the brigge of Paradis,
 Here over thou most go;

*lay
 very, narrow bridge
 then
 do you see
 mait*

118

- "And we thee schul with stones throwe,
 And the windre thee schul over blowe,
 705 And witche thee ful wo.
 Thou no schalt, for al this midserd,
 Bot yif thou falle amidwerd
 To our felawes mo.

*inflict misery on you
 for all the world
 Avoid falling in the middle
 other fellows*

119

- 710 "And when thou art adoun yfalle,
 Than schal com our felawes alle,
 And with her hokes thee hedde.
 We schul thee teche a newe play
 Thou hast served oure mani a day
 And into Helle thee ledde."

*follow**behind*

120

- 715 Owain bitheld the brigge smert,
 The water thersunder, blac and swert,
 And sore him gan to deude.
 For of o thing he tok yeme:
 Never mot in sonne bome
 720 Thicker than the fendes yede.

*bridge painful**black; dark**sorely; dread**one; notice**never; sun beams**came*

121

- The brigge was as brighte as a tour,
 And as scharpe as a rasour,
 And narw it was also;
 And the water that ther ran under
 725 Brend o lighting and of thonder,
 That thought him michel wo.

*high; tower**sharp; razor**narrow**Burned of lightning, thunder**Which he thought [of] great difficulty (misfortune)*

122

- Ther nis no clerk may write with ynke,
 No no man no may bethinke,
 No no maister devine,
 730 That is ymade, forsothe ywys,
 Under the brigge of Paradis,
 Halvendel the pine.

*is no; ink**imagine**master figure out**One half of; pain*

123

- So the dominical ous telle,
 There is the pure entré of Helle:
 735 Seis Poule berth witneise.
 Whoso falleth of the brigge adoun,
 Of him nis no redempcion,
 Neither more no less.

*(see note)**entry**Saint Paul bears**off (from)**Neither*

Sir Owain

124

- 740 The fenesseyd to the knight tho,
 "Over this brigge might thou sought go,
 For noneskines nede.
 Fle periil, sorwe, and wo,
 And to that stede, ther thou com fro
 Wel fair we schal thee lede."
- then*
For any need at all
Fle periil
place
lead

125

- 745 Owain anon him gan bithenche
 Frum hos mani of the fenes wrenche
 God him saved hadde.
 He sett his fot upon the brigge,
 No feld he no scharpe egge,
 750 No nothing him so draf.
- consider*
wiles
felt, edge
dreaded

126

- When the fenes yseigh tho,
 That he was more than half ygo,
 Loude thai gan to crie,
 "Alas, alas, that he was born!
 755 This ich knight we have forlorn
 Out of our baylie."
- saw then*
gone
last
prison

127

- When he was of the brigge ywent,
 He thonked God omnipotent,
 And His moder Marie,
 760 That him hadde swiche grace ysent,
 He was deliverd fro her turment,
 Intil a better baylie.
- gone*
from their
Duty; keep

128

- A cloth of gold him wan ybrought,
 In what maner he nist nought,
 765 Tho God him hadde ysent.
 That cloth he dede on him there,
 And alle woundes hole were,
 That er then was forbrent.
- did not know*
That clothing he put on
healed
earlier; burned

129

- He thanked God in Trinité,
 770 And loked farther and gan yse *see*
 As it were a ston wal. *stone wall*
 He bheld about, fer and neighe,
 Non ende theron he no seighe. *far and near*
 O red gold it schon al. *Of, shone*

130

- 775 Furthermore he gan yse *see*
 A gate, non fairer might be
 In this world ywrought;
 Tre no stel nas theron non,
 Bot rede gold and precious ston,
 780 And al God made of nought:

131

- Jaspers, topes, and cristal,
 Margarites and coral,
 And riche saferstones,
 Ribes and salidoines,
 785 Onicles and causteloines,
 And diamantane for the noses.

topaz; crystal
Pearls
sapphires
Rubies; celadon
Onyx; chalcedony
diamonds indeed

132

- In tabernacles thai wer ywrought,
 Richer might it be nought,
 With pilers gent and small;
 790 Arches ybent with charbukelston,
 Knottes of rede gold theropon,
 And pinacles of cristal.

sanctuaries
columns beautiful; delicate
curved; carbuncle

133

- Bi as miche as our Savyour
 Is queinter than goldsmithē other paintour,
 795 That woneth in am lond,
 So fare the gates of Paradis
 Er richer ywrought, foesothe ywis,
 As ye may understand.

more skilful; or
Dives
far
Are

134

- 800 The gates bi hemselfe undede.
 Swiche a senal com out of that stede
 As it al baurne were;
 And of that ich swetenisse
 The knight tok so gret strengthe ywis,
 As ye may forþewaerd here,
- opened
smell; place
balm
sweetness
truly

135

- 805 That him thought he might wel,
 More bi a thousand del,
 Saffri pain and wo,
 And turn ogain siker aplight,
 And ogain alle fendas fight,
 Ther he er com fro.
- times
firmly assured
against
Where; earlier; from

136

- The knyght yode the gate ner,
 And seighe ther com with milde chere
 Wel mani processioune,
 With tapers and chaundelers of gold;
 815 Non fairer no might ben on mold,
 And croices and goinfaisoun.
- went; went
in gracious manner
many [in] procession
candles; candle-holders
earth
crosses; banners

137

- Popes with gret dignite,
 And cardinals gret plente,
 Kinges and quenes ther were,
 820 Knights, abbotes, and priours,
 Monkes, chancouns, and Frere Prochours, canons; Friar Preachers (i.e., Dominicans)
 And bischopes that croices bere;

138

- Frere Menours and Jacobins,
 Frere Carmes and Frere Austines,
 825 And nonnes white and blake;
 Al maner religious
 Ther yede in that processioune,
 That order hadde ytake.
- Friars Minor (i.e., Franciscans); Dominicans
Carmelites; Augustinian Friary
nuns
religious
west
religious orders had taken

139

- 830 The order of wedlock com also,
Men and wiesen mani mo,
And thorked Godes grace
That hath the knight swiche grace ysent,
He was delivered from the fenes torment,
Quic man into that plas.

wedlock
more*Living*

140

- 835 And when thai hadde made this melody,
Tuay com out of her compayne,
Palmes of gold thai bare.
To the knight thai ben ycomme
Bitax hem tuay thai han him nome,
840 And erchibischopes it were.

Two; company
bareBetween; two; takes
archbishops

141

- Up and down thai laddie the knight,
And schewed him joies of more myght,
And miche melodye.
Mire were her carols there,
845 Non foles among hem were,
Bot joie and mensacie.

led
power
much
MerryThere were no sins among them
miserably

142

- Thai yede on carol al bi line,
Her joie may no man devine,
Of God thai speke and song;
850 And angels yeden hem to gy,
With harpe and fithel and sastry,
And belles mire rong.

were; in a line
understand
speak; sang
west; guide
fiddle; psaltery (i.e., stringed instrument)
merrily rang

143

- No may ther no man caroly inne,
Bot that he be cleve of sinne,
855 And leten alle foly.
Now God, for Thine woundes alle,
Graunt ous caroly in that halle,
And His moder Marie!

carol (i.e., sing)
Unless
leave*Let us sing*

144

- 860 This ich joie, as ye may se,
Is for love and charitē
Ogain God and mankinne.
Who that lat erthely love be,
And loveth God in Trinité,
He may caroly therinne.

NETT

Towards
leves behind earthly love

ring

145

- 865 Other joies he seighē anough:
Heighē tres with mani a bough,
Theron sat foules of heven,
And breeke her notes with mani gle,
Burdoun and mene gret plentē,
870 And hauain with heighē steven.

birds

trilled; merry glee

base; melody

treble; loud sound

146

- Him thought wele with that fousles song
He might wele live theramong
Til the worldes ende.
Ther he seighē that tre of lif
875 Wheribar that Adam and his wif
To Helle gun wende.

birds'

life

Whereby

went

147

- Fair were her erbes with floures,
Rose and hil, divers colours,
Primrol and paruink,
880 Mint, fetherfoy, and eglentere,
Colombin and mo ther were
Than ani man mai bithenke.

gardens

Primrose; periwinkle
clayanthemum; briar rose

Columbine

imagine

148

- It beth erbes of other maner
Than ani in erthe growthē here.
885 Tho that is leſt of pris,
Evermore thaſe springeth,
For winter no sooner it no clingeth,
And swetter than licorice.

There are plants of other kinds

Those that are least of value

summer; shrivell

sweeter

149

- 890 Ther beth the wellis in that stode,
The water is swetter than ani mede,
At on ther is of pris.
Swiche that Seynt Owain seigh tho,
That four stremes um fro
Out of Paradis.
- well
sweeter; beverage
But one; value
Such; then
streams flow from

150

- 895 Pison men clepeth that o strem,
That is of swithe bright leu,
Gold is therin yfounde.
Gihon men clepeth that other ywis.
That is of miche more pris
900 Of stones in the grounde.
- Pison; one
gleaming
second
value

151

- The thridde strem is Eufrates,
Fesothe to tell, withouten lies,
That rinneth swithe right.
The forth strem is Tigris;
In the world is make nis
905 Of stones swithe bright.
- third
Truth to tell, without lies
quickly forth
fourth stream
now ocker

152

- Who loveth to live in clenesse,
He schal have that ich blisse,
And se that semly sight.
910 And more he ther yseighe
Under Godes glorie an heigher:
Yblissoed be His might!
- pleasing
saw
on high
Blessed

153

- Sum soale he seyghte woni bi selve,
And sum bi ten and bi twelve,
915 And everich com til other,
And when thai com togidres ywis,
Alle thai made miche blis
As soster doth with the brother.
- saw may alone
twelve
to the others
together
much
sister

154

- 920 Sam he seigh gon in rede scarlet,
And sam in pourper wele ysett,
And sam in sikelatoun;
As the prest ate Massse wereth,
Tuncles and aubes on hem thai bereth,
And sam gold bete al doun.
- purple; attired
silk woven with gold*
*Vestments; also
hammered gold*

155

- 925 The knyght wele in alle thing
Knewe bi her clotheing
In what state that thai were,
And what dedes thai hadde ydo,
Tho that were yclothed so,
While thai were mannes fere.
- their
status
Those
among mankind*

156

- 930 Ichel you tel a fair semblaunce,
That is a gode accodaunce
Bi the sterres clere;
Sam ster is brighter on to se
Than is besides other thre,
And of more pouwere.
- I will; comparison
That accords well
stars bright
three others*

157

- 940 In this maner ydelt it is,
Bi the joies of Paradis:
Thai no have sought al yliche;
The soule that hath joie lest,
Him thenketh he hath aldernest,
And holt him also riche.
- dealt
alike
least
believes; most of all
holds; as*

158

- 945 The bischopes ogain to him come,
Bituen hem tuy thai him noeme,
And ladde him up and doun,
And seyd, "Beother, God, herd He be!
Falfild is thi volenté,
Now herken our reson.
- back to
Between; two, took
led
God, be He praised
desire
know; explanation*

159

- 950 "Thou hast yse with eighen thine
 Bothe the joies and the pine:
 Yherd be Godes grace!
 We wil thee tel bi our coman done,
 What way it was that thou bicome,
 Er thou hennes pas.
- snow; eyes
 pale
 Praised
common judgment
hence pass

160

- 955 "That lond that is so ful of sorwe,
 Bothe an aven and a morwe,
 That thou thus com bi
 (Thou suffredes pain and wo,
 And other soules mani mo)
 Men clepeth it Purgatori.
- evening and morning*

161

- 960 "And this lond that is so wide,
 And so michel and so side,
 And is ful of blis,
 That thou hast now in ybe,
 And mani joies here yse,
 Paradis is cleped ywia.
- bread
 great; spacious
called

162

- 965 "Ther mai no man comen here
 Til that he be spoured there,
 And ymade al clene.
 Than cometh thaider." The bischop sede,
 "Isto the joie we schul hem lede,
 Sunwhile bi tuelve and tene.
- cleansed*
At some time; twelve; ten

163

- 970 "And sun ben so hard ybounde,
 Tha nite never hou long stounde
 Tha schul suffri that hene;
 Bot yif her frendes do godenisse,
 Yif mete, or do sing Messe,
 That tha han in erthe ylete,
- bound
 do not know; nine
 heat
 friends
If appropriate, have Mass sung
arranged for

164

- 980 "Other ani other almosdede,
Alle the better hem may sped
Out of her misays,
And com into this Paradis,
Ther joie and blis ever is,
And libbe here al in pays.
- Or; admired
honor
misery*
- Where
live; peace*

165

- 985 "As hye cometh out of Purgatori,
So passe we up to Godes glori.
That is the heighe riche,
That is Paradis celestien;
Therin com bot Cristen men:
990 No joie nis that yliche.
- quickly*
- high kingdom
celestial
only Christian
life*

166

- "When we comen out of the fer
Of Purgatori, ar we com her,
We no may nougnt anon right.
Til we has her long ybe,
995 We may nougnt Godes face yse,
No in that stede alight.
- before
right away*
- place stay*

167

- 1000 "The child that was yborn tonight,
Er the soule be hidre ydight,
The pain schal overflé.
Strong and hevi is it than,
Here to com the old man,
That long in sinne hath be."
- Before; here placed
past over
heavy*

168

- Forth tha went til tha seighe
A mounteyn that was swithe heighe,
1005 Ther was al gamen and gle.
So long tha hadde the way ysome,
That to the top tha weren ycome,
The joies forto se.
- extremely high
playing; glee
take
summit*

169

Ther was al maner foulens song,

all kinds of birds'

- 1010 Michel joie was hem among,
And evermore schal be;
Ther is more joie in a foules mowthe,
Than here in harp, fidel, or crouthe.
Bi lond other bi se.

bird's

fiddle; crowd (i.e., stringed instrument)

By land or by sea

170

That lond, that is so honestly,

called; terrestrial

Is ycleped Paradis terestri.

That is in erthe here;

kingdom

That other is Paradis, Godes riche:

That; like

Thilke joie hath non yliche,

- 1020 And is above the aise.

171

In that, that is in erthe here,

I spoke

Was Owain, that Y spac of here,

Which; lost

Swiche that les Adams;

firmly

For, hadde Adam yhold him stille,

- 1025 And wrought after Godes wille
As he ogain him naen,

against him took up

172

He no his offspring nevermo

offspring

Out of that joie no schuld have go;

Bot for he brac it so sone,

broke

With pike and spade in diche to delve,

ditch

To help his wif and himselfe,

much

God esade him nische to done.

173

God was with him so wroth,

clothing

That he no left him no cloth,

leaf

- 1035 Bot a lef of a tre,
And al naked yede and stode.
Loke man, yif hye ner wode,
At swiche a conseil to be.

went; stood

Look; if you are not mad

counsel

Sir Owain

174

- Tho com an angel with a swerd o fer,
 1040 And with a stern loke and chere,
 And made hem sore aferd;
 In erthe to ben in sorwe and wo,
 Therwhile tha lived evorne,
 He drof hem to midnes.
- Then; sword of fire
 countenance
 afraid
 drove; earth*

175

- 1045 And when he dyed to Helle he nam,
 And al that ever of him cam,
 Til Godes Sone was born,
 And suffred pain and Passioun,
 And brought him out of that prisoun,
 1050 And elles were al forlorn.
- traveled
 lost*

176

- Hereof speketh David in the Saunter,
 Of a thing that toucheth here,
 Of God in Trinité,
 Upon men, that ben in gret honour,
 1055 And honoureth nought her Creatour
 Of so heigne dignité.
- Psalter
 is relevant here*

177

- Alle that ben of Adames kinne,
 Th[at] here in erthe have don sinne.]
- S.....
- 1060 O.....
- H.....
- A.....
- kin*

178

-
-
- 1065
-
-

179

- 1070 Th
 1070 B
 In the paine of Purgatori;
 And bot he have the better chaunce,
 At Domesday he is in balaunce
 Ogaines God in glorie.
- Judgment Day*
With regard to

180

- 1075 The bischopes the knight bete
 To tellen hem, that he no lete,
 Whether Heven were white or blis,
 Blewe or rede, yalu or gense.
 The knight seyd, "Withouten wene,
 1080 Y schal say min avis.
- commanded
 leave out
 gray
 Blue; yellow
 doubt
 opinion

181

- "Me therketh it is a thousandfold
 Brighter than ever was ani gold,
 Bi sight opon to se."
 "Ya," seyd the bischop to the knight
 1085 "That ich stede, that is so bright,
 Nis bot the entré.
- very place*
entry

182

- "And ich day ate gate o siþe
 Ous corneth a mele to make oas blithe,
 That is to our biþeve;
 1090 A swete smal of al gode,
 It is our soule fode.
 Abide, thou schalt ous leve."
- one time
 To us; meal; glad
 benefit
 piece
 food
 believe

183

- Anon the knight was war there,
 Whare sprong out a flamerbe of fer,
 1095 Fram Heven gate it fel.
 The knight thought, al fer and neighe,
 Ther over al Paradis it fleighe,
 And gaf so swete a smal.
- aware
 flame of fire
 far and near
 flew
 gave; smell

184

- The Holy Gost in fourme o for
 1100 Opon the knight light ther,
 In that ich place;
 Tharth verte of that ich light
 He les ther al his erthelich might,
 And theeked Godes grace.

form of fire
alighted

185

- 1105 That the bischop to him sede,
 "God fet ous ich day with His beode,
 Ag we no have noure neighe
 So grete likeing of His grace,
 No swiche a sight open His face,
 1110 As tho that ben on heighe.

feeds; bread
But; nowhere near
Such a great enjoyment
there; high

186

- The soules that beth at Godes fest,
 Thilche joie schal ever last
 Withouten ans ende.
 Now thou most bi our comoun done,
 1115 That ich way that thou bicome,
 Ogain thou most wende.

feast
last
judgment
back; must go

187

- Now kepe thee wele fram dedli sinne,
 That thou never com therinse,
 For nonskines nede.
 1120 When thou art ded, thou schalt wende
 Into the joie that hath non ende;
 Angels schal thee lede."

well; deadly sin
For no reason at all
lead

188

- Tho wepe Seynt Owain swithe sore,
 And prayd hem for Godes ore,
 1125 That he most ther duelle;
 That he no seigne nevermore,
 As he hadde do bifore,
 The strong paines of Helle.

Then
pardon
sight; remain

189

Of that praiser gat he no gain

- 1130 He nam his leve and went again,
Thei him were swithe wo.
Fendes he seighe ten thousand last,
Thay flowe fram him as quarel of alblast,
That he er cors fro.

*took his leave; back
Though*

fled: like a missile from a catapult

190

No none than a quarel might flé,

- 1135 No fende no might him here no se,
For al this warlid to winne;
And when that he com to the halle,
The thriven men he fond alle,
1140 Ogaines him therinne.

*stone; flee
hour; see*

Facing towards

191

Alle that held up her hand,

- 1145 And thorsked Jhesu Cristes sond
A thousanded times and mo,
And bad him heighe, that he no wond,
That he wer up in Yrlond,
As swithe as he might go.

help

*hurry; wonder
might be
quickly*

192

And as ich finde in this stori,

- The prior of the Purgatori
Came tokening that night,
1150 That Owain hadde overcomen his sorwe,
And schuld com up on the morwe,
Thurth grace of God almighty.

*[Tis] the prior
Come with a premonition*

193

Than the prior with processoun,

- 1155 Wih croise and wih goinfaisoun,
To the hole he went ful right,
Ther that knight Owain in wende,
As a bright fere that brende,
Thai seighe a lem of light,

cross; banner

*traveled
fire; burned
glaem*

Sir Owain

194

- And right armides that ich light
 1160 Com up Owain, Godes knight.
 The wist thai wele bi than,
 That Owain hadde ben in Paradiſ,
 And in Purgatori ywys,
 And that he was holy man.

195

- 1165 Thai ladde him into holi chirche,
 Godes werkes forto wieche.
 His prayers he gan make,
 And at the ende on the fiften day,
 The knight anon, forsofthe to say,
 1170 Scrippe and burdous gan take.

works to do

Pilgrim's bag and staff

196

- That ich holy stede he sought,
 Ther Jhesus Crist ous dere bought
 Opon the Rode tre,
 And ther He ros fram ded to live
 1175 Tharth venting of his woundes five:
 Yblisced mot He be!

place

Cross

197

- And Bedlem, ther that God was born
 Of Mari His moder, as flour of thorn,
 And ther He stighe to Hevene;
 1180 And sethen into Yrlond he come,
 And monkis abste undemome,
 And lived there yeres seven.

Bethlehem

flower

ascend

habit assumed

198

- And when he dycyd, he went ywys
 Into the heigne joie of Paradiſ,
 1185 Tharth help of Godes grace.
 Now God, for Seynt Owain's love,

Sir Owain

Grauntous Heven blis above
Bifor His swete face! Amen.

Explicit

Explanatory Notes to Sir Owain

Abbreviations: see Textual Notes.

In order to maintain consistency with other editions of *Sir Owain* and with citation practices in secondary criticism about the poem, this edition includes stanza numbers. The explanatory and textual notes, following METS format, are, however, listed by line number.

- 1-2 The first two lines of this stanza and probably the five preceding stanzas are missing. E explains the excision from the preceding folio of A that would have caused the loss (p. xxii) and prints in a note (pp. 135-56) the first 36 lines of the Anglo-Norman version of the poem.
- 11-12 *That no held ir . . . that he sede*. The sense of these lines is that the Irish understood (held) everything he said to be "foolishness concerning nothing."
- 13-24 *al that seyd commoanliche . . . No her fuler blinne*. The Irish say they will all be convinced if a man visits Hell and returns with information about the pain suffered there. This is a bit inconsistent with the primarily purgatorial experience to which the poem turns.
- 20 *suffri*. The use of an *i* ending for the third person plural present indicative is unusual even in descendants of Class 2 Old English weak verbs. One would expect -*sh*. The use of the *i* or *y* ending for the infinitive, though ordinarily a Southern dialect characteristic (occasionally on the borders of the Southwest Midland), is common throughout: see 23, 76, 208, 246, 250, 251, 305, 328, 391, 614, 807, 853, 857, 864, and 975.
- 43-102 St. Patrick has a dream vision in which Jesus comes to him. He gives St. Patrick a heavy book, apparently more comprehensive than Scripture, because it includes *Godles privete* (line 54), those matters which are properly the knowledge of God alone and usually not to be enquired into by man. In addition, Patrick is given *Godles Shaf* (line 58), a symbol of episcopal authority. He is shown an entry way into

Sir Owain

Purgatory and told that, if a penitent spends a night and a day, he will be forgiven and have a vision of Paradise. When St. Patrick awakes, the book and staff remain with him.

- 47 *dere bought*. Redemption is, etymologically, a "buying back." The theological idea is frequently rendered as a process whereby Christ *dere bought* ("dearly bought") us.
- 49 *bok*. It is tempting to see the book as the ninth-century Book of Armagh, often taken to be a relic of St. Patrick. This book, however, seems to contain more comprehensive information about "Godes privete" (line 54) than does the Book of Armagh, which is preserved in Trinity College Dublin (MS 52). Indeed, the Book of Armagh contains documents related to St. Patrick, so the book cannot be the Book of Armagh as we know it, but a good deal of confusion surrounds such artifacts in the fourteenth century.
- 54 *Godes private*. Since men are ordinarily not to know *Godes private*, the book is a powerful gift to St. Patrick.
- 58 *Godes Staff*. The *Staff*, "a bishop's staff, crozier" (*MED*), is clearly a sign of episcopal authority granted by God. *Godes Staff* may have a special meaning with regard to St. Patrick. It is mentioned by Giraldus Cambrensis (c. 1147–1216/1220) in connection with St. Patrick's expulsion of the snakes from Ireland, and it appears in many other Patrician legends. That it was a real object is attested by its being seized from the archbishop of Armagh in 1177 and lodged in London, where it was probably burned in 1538. For an interesting bibliography, see E, p. 196.
- 64 *gret desert*. A *desert* was "a barren area, wooded or arid" (*MED*). The location is on Saints' Island in Lough Derg, County Donegal. The site of the entry was later redefined as Station Island (Lough Derg), which remains a site of penitential pilgrimage. See Introduction for greater detail.
- 82–83 *A night and a day . . . be forgive his sonne*. The idea that a day and a night, preceded and followed by prayer and fasting, would forgive sins and satisfy puratorial punishment was traditional. The inclusion of a view of the "Earthly Paradise" was less common in visions of the hereafter. The foreground of the poem switches to the puratorial rather than the infernal at this point.

Explanatory Notes

- 119 *Peter.* A: *patrik* is clearly not possible. I have followed E in substituting *Peter* because of the foundation of Sts. Peter and Paul's, Armagh. Around 1130 the Augustinian Canons Regular of the Abbey of Sts. Peter and Paul, Armagh, were given authority over a dependent priory on Saints' Island.
- 120 *rede.* More than simply "read", it is a liturgical observance: "To read aloud or chant during a church service" (*MED*).
- 124 *Regles.* There is confusion in the manuscripts of various versions of the poem about whether the name *Regles* is derived from the Irish *reccles* (a small church or monastic cell) or from Latin *regula* (rule of a religious order). Regardless, it is clear that the *Regles* in A is a monastic establishment and becomes the repository of the book and the staff (lines 130–32).
- 127 *White canons.* E identifies these as Premonstratensian Canons, founded by St. Norbert at Prémontré in 1120, and called "white" because of their habit. They lived according to the Rule of St. Augustine (St. Augustine appeared to St. Norbert) with some Cistercian influence probably because of St. Norbert's friendship with St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the founder of the Cistercians. Premonstratensians were extremely austere and propagated the doctrine of Purgatory from their inception. There is, however, no certainty that the canons were Premonstratensian. Other Canons Regular of St. Augustine had existed for some time and generally wore white habits.
- 143 *went into Helle.* The meaning is clearly "visited Hell," but some confusion about the use of the terms Purgatory and Hell exists. Purgatorial visions often represented souls as suffering informal pains, sometimes less severe, but only for a limited time.
- 144 *storie.* No specific source may be intended. The poem frequently makes such references to a vague source of a sort much more common in romance than in devotional literature. See Introduction for comment on similarities with romance including formulas of the sort noted below at lines 147 and 163, as well as more substantive narrative techniques.
- 147 *alle and some.* A line-filling formula more common in romance than in devotional literature.
- 154 *Hir.* The word is mysterious, but seems intended since it rhymes with "Paradys" (line 155). A word seems to be missing or implied, such as *Hir fown*.

Sir Owain

- 156 *þheru our thider bring.* This is the first of a number of pious ejaculations that the narrator sprinkles though the poem.
- 163 *laſſe and more.* A line-filling formula, like "alle and some" (line 147), more common in romance. See also "withoutes les" (line 175) and "forsothe to say" (line 191).
- 166 *Now herbyes.* This address directly to the reader is another feature rather characteristic of romance.
- 169 *Stevener.* King Stephen (r. 1135–54). It is unusual to think of him as a wise king. His contemporary, Henry of Huntingdon (c. 1080–1160), characterized Stephen's reign as a period of civil and political disorder largely the result of Stephen's weakness and indecisiveness. See Henry, archdeacon of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 698–777. Huntingdon's view has never been seriously challenged.
- 189 *the bishop of Friend.* The bishop is, of course, not St. Patrick, since the story has moved to the twelfth century. The prior of the abbey becomes Owain's main interlocutor.
- 192 *Penance to take.* Sir Owain asks to receive the sacrament of Penance, which would forgive his sins but still leave purgatorial satisfaction to be accomplished. The reception of Penance and the Eucharist, as well as a fifteen-day period of prayer and fasting, were required of all fictional visitors to St. Patrick's Purgatory and all pilgrims to the geographical site.
- 200 *blamed.* "Rebuked" or "convicted," but not in a legal sense. Rather it is a recognition of Owain's self-admitted sinfulness, a holding accountable.
- 211 *Nay; Owain, frende.* The bishop acts according to the tradition in trying to dissuade Owain.
- 226 *prior with processione.* At this point the prior becomes the master of ceremonies and leads the determined Owain to the entry hole. It was traditionally the prior's duty, as well as the bishop's, to try to dissuade penitents from this extreme and dangerous journey, but the prior does not do so in this version.
- 247 *Thritten men.* The Troctator has fifteen men.

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- 253 *the priour and his covent*. *Priour* and *covent* are more characteristically Dominican terms, though Augustinians and Cistercians used them with regard to dependencies as opposed to primary establishments.
- 271 *newe schore*. Their heads were freshly shaved with the tonsure of religious orders.
- 276 *reason right*. "Right reason" is reason informed by the will's selection of higher rather than lower goals. (St. Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I qu.94)
- 293 *thow go to Helle*. Owain's experience is purgatorial, but he is warned that he is in danger of falling into Hell.
- 329 *sine*. This seems to be derived from the verb *sine*, "to perish spiritually" (*MED*); thus it means sin's damnation or damnation by sin.
- 340 *fine amour*. *Amour* is "love between the sexes" (*MED*), and *fine amour* is usually reserved for "courtly love," characteristic of romance, especially French romance; but in a moral sense *fine* can also mean "pure, true, genuine, perfect, faithful, unwavering" (*MED* *fin* adj.6).
- 345 *pride and lecherie*. Pride and lust are two of the seven deadly sins, the root sins that are the source of all others. Although Dante constructed his *Purgatory* around the seven deadly sins, no such systematic presentation appears in this poem. Other deadly sins — greed, sloth, and gluttony — are mentioned but they are not schematically arranged. Anger and envy seem to be missing except implicitly.
- 385–90 The situation of the suffering souls here is reminiscent of Dante, though it is not shaped into a systematic allegory. Dantean condign punishments are especially notable also at stanzas 69, 70, 71, and 77.
- 398 *slawthe*. Sloth is one of the deadly, or source, sins. The Middle English variant used at line 400, "slowe," aptly emphasizes the basic failing involved in the sin — a slowness to act, particularly with regard to spiritual obligations.
- 403–05 *This was the first pain . . . gryved him swithe sore*. The verb *alde* (line 404) refers to his seeing this "first pain" of Purgatory rather than experiencing it. Owain has already been cast upon the fire in the hall. Here he begins his observation of the torments.

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- 420 *In herd.* "In public." The point is that there is no way to hide from the torments.
- 479 *thieves and thieves fere.* Although the connection is not explicitly made, thieves and their companions are guilty of the deadly sin of greed or covetousness. "Covetise" is mentioned specifically at line 512.
- 484 *bachtriers.* Although backbiting is not, by itself, a deadly sin, it flows from the deadly sins of anger and envy. Thus, the effects of all the deadly sins seem to be acknowledged even if the poem is not arranged around them.
- 493–516 The wheel of punishment, rather than of fortune, seems Dantean in its imaginativeness, but the relation between punishment and sin is not as clear as in Dante.
- 515 *plough.* "A unit of land measure" (MED), thus the greed is for gold, silver, and land.
- 604–07 In medieval art, usurers and misers are frequently represented as wearing a pouch (of coins) around their necks. E (p. 174) has many examples. Also, in Dante's *Inferno*, XVII, 52–57, usurers gaze down into the pouches around their neck. This section of *Sir Owain* (stanzae 99–103) is rather Dantean in the way punishment fits the crime.
- 611 *misours.* E (p. 298) suggests that *misours* is an early form of *miser* not found in the MED and first found in the OED c. 1560. The generality of *wrightes* later in the line suggests that perhaps *misours* here is also general, a combination of *mir* ("sin, sinfulness . . ." MED) with -our as an agentive suffix, thus yielding "sinners" or "evildoers."
- 618 *cours.* "A sequence of periods, stages, or events" (MED), thus some indeterminate measurement of time periods.
- 631 *seven miser colours.* The significance of the seven colors is not clear. E (p. 175) suggests a relation to the seven seals of Hell mentioned in the thirteenth-century early Middle English "Vision of St. Paul," but the circumstances here are quite different. Only four colors are mentioned. The number seven may be a numerological convention, but the fires likely are from the "Vision of St. Paul," 23:1–2.
- 671 *sime of pride.* Pride was the chief of the seven deadly sins. Just as the presentation of the deadly sins here is not systematic, pride is not given an especially prominent place as it was in Dante, Langland, Spenser, and many others. See Morton Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious*

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Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State College Press, 1952)

- 682-84 *Sun sexti eighteen here . . . non habet sexti horis.* Owain had been dealing with "fiends," largely undescribed physically. Here, just before coming to the bridge, the fiends become loathsome beasts, some with sixty eyes and some with sixty hands. The number sixty may have simply implied many. See S. J. Tucker, "Sixty as an Indefinite Number in Middle English," *Review of English Studies* 25 (1949), 152-53.
- 697-756 The narrow bridge to Paradise crosses over true Hell and is the last danger to be faced. This bridge appeared in the fourth-century *Apocalypse of St. Paul* and became a staple of the medieval literature of Purgatory. It is prominent in the Middle English version of Paul's Apocalypse, "The Vision of St. Paul," and perhaps surfaced in altered form in secular literature in Chrétien's *Lancelot*. Sir Owain borrows or shares many features of the Middle English "Vision," including the seven-colored fire and many of the specific punishments. Both Middle English poems, however, are in fact borrowing from the fourth-century *Apocalypse*, a vision of Hell whose influence is ubiquitous in the medieval literature of Purgatory.
- 706-08 *Thou no schalt . . . To our felawes mo.* There is a verb missing in this sentence, perhaps "cross" or "pass over." The sense is: "you will not cross, for all middle-earth, without falling down towards our fellows." E (p. 178) comes to much the same conclusion.
- 733 *dominical.* The term is conjectured from an obscure abbreviation in A (see textual note). The *MED* cites the word in *The Eleven Pains of Hell* (also called *The Vision of St. Paul*), from Laud Miscellany 108 (Bodleian), with the sense "noun: ? a book containing the liturgy for Sunday." That the *Owain*-poet cites "Scim Poule" ("St. Paul" — line 735) as his authority helps to substantiate this meaning. Regardless, the dominical here is a source of information about the true Hell that Owain must pass over by means of the bridge that St. Paul mentions.
- 775 ff. Having escaped the fiends and passed over the treacherous bridge, Owain finds himself at the entry to Paradise. It is, however, not true Heaven, "the celestial Paradise," but the earthly or "terrestrial" Paradise. In the early Church and through the Middle Ages, the Earthly Paradise was, in the first instance, the Garden of Eden, from which Adam and Eve were expelled after the Fall. It was a place of abundant beauty and gratification befitting the prelapsarian state of Adam and Eve. Many

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people searched for it, unsuccessfully, and learned opinion was that, for one reason or another, it was inaccessible. The terrestrial Paradise took on an additional meaning in controversy and poetry about the places of the afterlife. By some it was considered the temporary abode of the saved until the Last Judgment. By others it was taken to be a stage in the movement to the celestial Paradise after purgation had been completed. Dante's presentation, *Purgatory* 27–32, was the most elaborate and theologically complex, but many treatments of Purgatory describe, often with beautiful details of gems, flowers, and birdsong, this place of joy that immediately preceded true, celestial Paradise.

- 781–822 The catalogue of gems on the door is a familiar poetic figuration of the beauty and value of the terrestrial Paradise. Catalogues (of gems, flowers, birds, weapons, etc.) were a stock decorative feature of Middle English verse, especially the romances. The stones mentioned include jaspers, sapphires, chalcedony, and topaz, all foundation stones of the New Jerusalem (*Apocalypse* 21:19–20).
- 784 *saldstone*: "A fabulous stone of two kinds, said to be found in the stomach of a swallow" (MED). The term, usually "celadon," is listed under *celidone* with many spelling variations.
- 785 *counclownes*: "Some kind of precious stone; ?chalcedony" (MED). The term is listed under *counclowne*. According to the OED, it is "transparent or translucent."
- 786 *for the nenes*: The phrase functions as an intensifier.
- 787 *tabernacles*: "A canopied niche or recess in a wall, pillar, etc., designed to contain an image" (MED). Other definitions associate the term with the portable Hebrew sanctuary, the dwelling place of God, the repository for the Eucharist, and reliquaries. Thus, in context it is architectural and in resonance it is spiritual.
- 790 *charbukelstow*: The OED records that carbuncles were said to give off light or glow in the dark.
- 793–94 *our Saviour...patour*: God, as the Creator of the world, was frequently described as the greatest of all artists or makers.
- 813 *masi processioun*: Although I have not followed E in inserting *in*, clearly one single procession is intended.

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- 817-28 These stanzas provide a dignified catalogue of the higher orders of the clergy and laity. Although the list is a bit haphazard, it incorporates the aristocracy, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, monks, friars, and nuns.
- 820 *abbotes, and priours.* Although the titles were sometimes used loosely, an abbot was the chief religious and administrative officer of a monastery. A prior was the chief officer of a conventional establishment of friars, especially Dominicans, but sometimes applied to the head of a dependent monastic establishment.
- 821 *canonour.* Canons regular were priests who lived communally, ordinarily at a collegiate church, according to some religious rule. Their role was often to devote their lives to saying masses for the dead.
- Frere Preachers. Dominicans. They were especially distinguished for their preaching, notably about Purgatory, and their learning, counting among their number Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas.
- 823 Frere Menours. Franciscans, technically the Order of Friars Minor (O.F.M.), counting among their number St. Bonaventure, Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham.
- Jacobins. Dominicans, so called because of their first establishment in Northern France (1218) on the Rue St. Jacques in Paris. Thus, the Dominicans are mentioned twice in this catalogue, either by accident or design.
- 824 Frere Carmes (Carmelites) and Frere Austiners (Augustinians) comprise, with the Dominicans and Franciscans, the four great mendicant orders.
- 825 *nonnes white and blake.* The habits of nuns, white or black, could apply to many, almost all, of the religious orders of women.
- 828 *order.* To take "orders," whether as a monk, a friar, or a nun, meant to live according to some religious rule, such as that of St. Augustine or St. Benedict, though orders could simply refer to the hierarchical stations in life.
- 829 *order of wedlock.* It is noteworthy that the poet should list wedlock as an order, suggesting that it is an honored way of life guided by spiritual principles.
- 851 *fishe.* "Fiddle," the most popular stringed instrument of the Middle Ages. It had three

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to five strings, was rectangular with rounded sides, and was about the size of a modern viola (*Dictionary of the Middle Ages*).

sountry." "Psaltory," a stringed instrument, essentially a resonator with ten or more strings supported by bridges at each end (*Dictionary of the Middle Ages*). The *OED* notes that it resembled a dulcimer and was plucked with the fingers or a plectrum.

- 868 *broke her notes*. Henry Holland Carter defines the phrase as "To begin to sing," that is, to break out in song. See *A Dictionary of Middle English Musical Terms*, p. 52.
- 869-70 Carter, *Musical Terms*, provides the following definitions for vocal music. *Burdour* (line 869) refers to "the recurring refrain, in a low, usually bass, tone, which is sung or sounded with a melody of a higher pitch" (p. 57), *mone* (line 869) signifies "the middle part, whether instrumental or vocal" (p. 278), while *hauchain* (line 870) means "high in range or volume" (p. 200).
- 874-76 As E. notes, this clearly sets the scene as "the Earthly and not the Celestial Paradise" (p. 185). The reference to *that tre of lif* (line 874) as the means by which Adam and Eve went to Hell is unusual. The original sin was the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden so that they would not eat of the tree of life and become immortal (Genesis 3:22-24).
- 877-82 A decorative catalogue of flowers. Flowers, like birds and gems, were particularly characteristic of the Earthly Paradise.
- 883-88 The description of perpetual summer echoes the characterizations of medieval "otherworlds" generally associated with fairies. The pleasantness here, however, is of an orthodox spiritual character suitable to the Earthly Paradise.
- 895 *Pisoe*. Although the first letter of this line in A may be *d*, the intention must be *p*, thus *Pisoe*. The first of the four rivers of Eden was *Pisces* (Genesis 2:11).
- 896 *Gihon*. A. *fison* must be *Gihon*, or something quite like it. St. Jerome's Vulgate says "Geon" (Genesis 2:13), and the two other rivers (Genesis 2:14) are the "Tigris" (line 904) and "Eufrates" (line 901).

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- 931-42 Although not clearly scriptural, the idea of gradations of bliss in Heaven was the recurrent teaching of the fathers and doctors of the early Church. It was not, however, defined as dogma until the Council of Florence in the early fifteenth century.
- 973-84 The souls in Purgatory in this poem do not know how long they are going to be there. In *The Gast of Gy*, the Gast knows that he will be released by Easter. Although there was controversy about what the souls in Purgatory knew, the belief that suffrages (masses, prayers, almsgiving) could shorten the length of purgation was consistent and central to the doctrine.
- 985-1020 The distinction between the "terrestrial" and "celestial" Paradise is made clear in these lines.
- 1013 *crouche*. A stringed musical instrument identified by the MED as Celtic and Middle Eastern.
- 1021-32 Although opinion was somewhat divided, it was broadly held that Adam and Eve would have remained in Eden if they had not sinned. Although they would not have been immortal, they would not have suffered the pains of earthly existence. After death, like the Old Testament patriarchs, they presumably went to that "Hell" (*limbo Patrum*), while waiting for the Resurrection of Christ.
- 1045-50 Adam and all his descendants had to await Redemption by Christ in "Hell." Thus, there are at least two places called Hell. The idea of Christ's "descent into Hell," is based on tenuous interpretations of Matthew 27:52-53, Luke 23:43, 1 Peter 3:18-12, and Ephesians 4:9. The notion appears in the Apostles' Creed by the fifth century. The "harrowing of Hell," Christ's descent to "Hell" to release the virtuous who had died before the Redemption, was popular in the Middle Ages, supported by the apocryphal *Book of Nicodemus* and perpetuated by Aelfric's *Homilies*, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, and the mystery plays. The story is well summarized in *Cursor Mundi*.
- 1048 *Passio[n]et*. The Passion of Christ is His suffering and death described in Matthew 26-27, Mark 14-15, Luke 22-23, and John 18-19.
- 1057-70 The missing lines probably stated that all of the descendants of Adam required Redemption and were in some intermediate place or state until that time. They probably also indicated that individual sin after baptism required penance and satisfaction.

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- 1087–92 The bishop's speeches recall both the manna that sustained the Israelites during their flight from captivity (*Exodus* 16:13–20) and reception of the sacrament of the Eucharist.
- 1105–1110 See explanatory note to 1087–92.
- 1148 *The prior*. *To* must be assumed at the beginning of this line since *the prior* must be in the dative case for the line to make sense.
- 1168 *on the fifteen day*: Owain performs the traditional fifteen days of prayer and fasting following his return from Purgatory.
- 1170 *Scrippre and bursdour*: "A pilgrim's wallet" and "a pilgrim's staff" (*MED*). The appurtenances of medieval pilgrims included a cape over a loose frock and a broad-brimmed hat. Over their breasts they wore a pouch (*scrippre*) to hold food, money, relics, and whatever. They carried a staff (*bursdour*) made of two sticks tightly wrapped together. The traditional dress is well-described in the romance *The Squyer of Low Degree*.

Textual Notes to Sir Owain

The basis of my text is National Library of Scotland MS Advocates' 19.2.1, the Auchinleck Manuscript (A), which is the only non-fragmentary source extant of the quatrain version. Easting's edition (E), entitled *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, includes, in addition, two couplet versions, the English prose Vision of William Stanton and the Latin *Tractatus Sancti Patricii*. Easting provides extensive commentary on these versions as well as relations to versions in other languages. Easting uses the title *Oswyne Afles* because that title appears at the head of the couplet version in British Library MS Cotton Caligula A. ii, while the quatrain version in the Auchinleck Manuscript is literally acephalous. I have preferred to entitle the quatrain version *Sir Owain* because it is the spelling that appears twenty-three times in the quatrain version. No other spelling appears more than twice.

I have accepted readings from E only when they seem necessary for the coherence or intelligibility of the narrative. I have compared these changes to Kolbing's edition and subsequent addenda (K) and Zupitza's (*Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 10:247-57) corrections (Z) to Kolbing. The Auchinleck Manuscript is generally quite clear even in the Scolar Press facsimile. The manuscript does have many places where the scribe has corrected an error by writing over it, but these are easy to decipher and I have accepted them, usually without comment. I have also expanded abbreviations without comment. In the notes as in the text, I have replaced Middle English graphemes with modern orthography unless the original grapheme is relevant to the explanation. Further manuscript and bibliographical details precede the text of the poem.

Missing lines: Approximately 32 lines are missing at the beginning of the poem. Apparently a miniature on the folio preceding where *Sir Owain* begins was excised (See E, p. xxi.) Easting provides the roughly corresponding lines from the Anglo-Norman version in his notes.

- 5 *untrywthe*. So K, E. A: *untruewe*. A's reading is not attested in the MED and K, E preserve the rhyme with line 4.
16 *saw man*. A: *no man* (though a bit unclear). E's emendation makes sense of the sentence.
22 *þær*. Inserted above the line in A.

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- 28 *afficcion*. A: *afficcon*; E: *afficcion*. A's reading is not attested in the *MED*, which offers no examples of *afficcion* as a variant. *Afficcion* provides a closer rhyme to *orysoun* (line 29), though the *afficcion/orysoun* rhyme recurs in A, line 223. But both "afficcion" and "orysoun" in this later stanza rhyme with "processious"; thus my emendation to *afficcion* here and in line 223. N.b., Robert Mannyng's *Hortulenge Synne*, where "afflycconysun" (line 310) is rhymed with "orysoun" (line 309); the rhyme there sounds right through metathesis.
- 36 *Trond*. So K, E. A: *Trised*. A is clearly in error.
- 83 *schuld be forgive*. Z, E insert *be*, which makes the line appropriately passive.
- 87 *xindfist of biles*. Z, E insert *of*, an important clarification.
- 112 *Wharthurh*. So A, K reads *thurch* throughout, but A's *tharth*, though a less common spelling, is clearly correct.
- 119 *Peter*. So E. A: *patrike*. I have accepted E's emendation. See explanatory note.
- 152 *seye*. A: *seje*. I have followed the rhyme with "heye" (line 151), though elsewhere I have transcribed "seigh" (line 773).
- 172 *Northumberland*. A: *Norþumberlond*. There is no need to double the *h*.
- 174 *Ar*. So K, E. A: *At*. The change to *Ar* makes the line intelligible.
- 175 *Owlyn*. A: *Uweyr*; E: *Oweyne*. Although there is variation in the spelling of the hero's name, I have accepted E's emendation because elsewhere the name always begins with *O*.
- 223 *afficcion*. A: *afficcon*. See textual note to line 28.
- 267 *there*. So A. As E notes, *there* would improve the rhyme with line 270, but the difference does not seem great enough to intrude on A.
- 292 *as ar*? A: *dry*. K, E insertion of *ar* repairs the grammar.
- 296 *do thee*. A: *dofte dofe*, with the second excised.
- 416 *glowwand*. Corrected from *growwand* in A.
- 419 *dragones*. A: *dragrosses*. K, E's correction of an obvious slip.
- 425 The scribe of A, normally very consistent, marks the stanza break after this line, though clearly it should come after the next line.
- 427 *strong*. *r* is inserted above the line in A.
- 433 *there*. So A, E. K: *there*. I agree with E's retention of A; it is consistent with line 267, where, in fact, K does not make the change.
- 440 *lichoure*. The *ho* in *lichoure* is partially obscured, but I agree with K, E reading of *ho*.
- 455 *the*. Inserted above the line in A.
- 499 *and*. Inserted above the line in A.
- 520 *thow schalt*. A: *he schal*; K, E: *thow schalt*. The change to the second person is necessary for the sense of the passage.
- 524 *forth*. The *f* is added above the line in A.

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- 552 *setthen*. A: *seþþen*. There is no need to double the *þ* in transcription. So, too, in line 1180.
- 641 *schale*. The *ch* is added above the line in A.
- 642 *the*. Inserted above the line in A.
- 643 *foules*. The *s* is added above the line in A.
- 683 *were*. A: *we*. I have accepted K, E's correction on the basis of rhyme.
- 703 with. Corrected from *wir* in A.
- 708 *felawes*. A: *fewes*. I have accepted K, E's correction.
- 733 *domical*. So K, E. A: *dmcil*. Although the stroke over the *m* is similar to the abbreviation mark for *m*, *n*, or *e*, there is no way to make sense of the word orthographically. See explanatory note.
- 743 E reads A as *cov* and changes to *thow* (*bou*), but I agree with K that the scribe of A has already made this correction.
- 746 *fender*. Although the first *e* of *fender* is obliterated, there is no doubt about the whole word.
- 762 *better*. A: *beter*. The A form is not cited in MED as a variant of *better*.
- 794 *goldomyshe*. A: *goldomysþe*. The scribe of this part of A frequently combines *r* and *þ* where either *th* or *b* would do, as he does in the A version of *Amis* and *Amiran*. (See Bliss, p. 658.)
- 803 *ywir*. The *y* is inserted above the line in A.
- 813 *processior*. So A. E inserts *in* before *processior*, but I agree with K that it is not necessary.
- 817 *digust*. A: *digusit*. Clearly a scribal slip.
- 830 *mo*. An *r* is canceled before *mo* in A.
- 853 *may*. Corrected from *man* in A.
- 884 *groweth here*. E notes correctly that the second half of this line is partially obscured, though legible, because of a piece of paper placed in A to repair the damage caused by the excision of a miniature on fol. 31v.
- 891 *it*. Inserted above the line in A.
- 895 *Pison*. A: *alson*. E is clearly correct about the name of the river, though A clearly reads *alson*.
- 898 *Gibon*. A: *flore*. Again E is correct about the name of the river. See explanatory note.
- 912 *be*. K, E have properly inserted the *be*, which is missing in A.
- 927 *were*. A: *weren*. I have accepted E's emendation, which is grammatically possible and repairs the rhyme with line 930.
- 930 *Whale*. A: *Whise*. K, E's emendation makes sense, and some alteration is clearly necessary.
- 938 *Paradis*. A: *parabir*; K, E *paradis* is obviously necessary; K does not indicate that this is a change from A.

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- 956 K, E read A: *Bothe even and a morwe*. K leaves *even* as a variant of *even*. E changes to: *Bothe an even and a morwe*.
- 970 *ende*. Second e inserted above the line in A.
- 988 *celestier*. Corrected from *celestiar* in A.
- 993 *way*. Corrected from *war* in A.
- 1016 *is*. Corrected from *jis* in A.
- 1018 *other*. Corrected from *oner* in A.
- 1044 *midwurd*. So A. K incorrectly reads *midwurd*. The word in A is a derivative of Old English *middangward* (MED). It seems to refer to the extra-paradisi world.
- 1058-70 These lines are lost in A. E. "The excision of the miniature at the head of 'The deputisoun bitwen the bodi and the soule' has caused the loss of most of thirteen lines." The miniature was on fol. 31v. The initial *sh* (*D*) of line 1058 is legible, as are the upper parts of *have doe s* in this line. The K, E reading of the whole line is from Laing and Turnbull's early transcription (1837). The initial letters are legible in succeeding lines: 1059 *r*, 1060 *o*, and 1070 *b*. Laing and Turnbull were apparently able also to see initial letters at lines 1061: *k*; 1062: *a*; and 1069: *D*.
- 1180 *sethen*. A. *sejben*. See textual note to line 552.

The Vision of Tundale

Introduction

Few critics have commented on *The Vision of Tundale*, and even fewer have found any merit. From its earliest versions, in prose or verse, in whatever language, commentators have disparaged the narrative as structurally chaotic, dramatically pointless, and doctrinally slender. To the Middle English poetic version in particular one might add linguistically repetitive and rhythmically pedestrian. Why, then, was the narrative so well received for over three hundred years? Why was it, with *Sir Owain*, one of the two most popular religious narratives of the Middle Ages? Why was it so highly regarded until Dante sacred the laurels? It may be that recent readers have not found in the narrative what they expected. *The Vision of Tundale* is very much its own self. That it has seemed formless or wandering or insubstantial may simply reflect that the narrative is not what its critics, learned in the traditions of religious narrative, thought *The Vision of Tundale* ought to be.

The Latin original was written by Marcus, an Irish Benedictine monk from Cashel, recently arrived from Ireland at the influential Cistercian establishment of St. James in Regensburg. According to its dedication, it was a story brought from Ireland, written down at the behest of a certain Abbess G. Within the tract's own introduction it is dated by the author as 1149, a date open to quibbles, but certainly close and having the advantage of Marcus' authority. In a German translation later in the century by a Bavarian priest, Alber, the Abbess G. is more specifically identified as Gisela, and indeed there was an Abbess Gisela of the Benedictine convent of nuns in Regensburg at about the right time. Alber, who says that he made his translation into German in order to make this admirable work more accessible was the first of a long line of translators and adaptors, who included the Cistercian Helinand of Froidmont (d. 1235) in his *Chronicon*. Helinand shortened Marcus' version, removing many of the specifically Celtic references made by the very Irish Marcus, though so integral were St. Patrick and other Irish religious and legendary figures that they survived in Helinand and subsequent versions. Helinand's version seems to have been the source for St. Vincent of Beauvais' Tundale in his *Speculum Historiale*, written some time between 1244 and 1254. Both Helinand and St. Vincent relate the story under the year 1149. Although many versions followed (there are over 150 Latin manuscripts and the story was at the last reckoning adapted into thirteen vernaculars), the St. Vincent version seems to have been the primary source of the English poetic version found in five fifteenth-century manuscripts.

In all renderings of the narrative the structure and the dogma are consistent with Marcus' original, and these are the fundamental matters which seem to trouble recent readers most. The structure is, indeed, problematic. It is, metaphorically, as if *The Vision of Drythelm*, Bede's

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influential story of a vision in his *Ecclesiastical History* (731), recorded under the year 696, were exploded and Marcus put it back together again, without the instructions, and with many extra pieces acquired notably from works such as the *Apocalypse of St. Paul*, a late fourth-century apocryphon accessible throughout the Middle Ages in a series of Latin redactions, for scenes of torment; from *The Vision of Wetti* (824) for particularly sexual punishments; and from many other visions, popular in narrative and in sermons from the time of St. Gregory's *Dialogues* (593–94), all enlivened by Celtic elements apparently introduced by Marcus himself. Each of the elements taken from existing versions would fit within the Cistercian traditions of meditation, sermons, and reading as part of their spirituality, but the combination of them in this poem seems bizarre.

The Vision of Drythelm is an orderly account of a good man, who dies but revives the next morning and provides his distraught wife with an account of what occurred while he was "dead." A shining angel first shows Drythelm the horrors of purgatorial punishments of fire and ice, but warns him that this is not the worst. In a darker place, Drythelm sees the more severe infernal punishments at the mouth of Hell, with damned spirits who bob up and down in globes of fire, though the depths of Hell lie still farther beyond. The fiends try to seize Drythelm, but the angel returns, gradually taking form from a shining star, and guides Drythelm to a place of joy and light, in which Drythelm longs to stay. The angel, however, informs him that the souls in this happy place are not yet fully saved, but awaiting entry to Heaven itself, of which Drythelm gets a glimpse but is not allowed to enter. Some of this sounds very much like Tundale's experiences, but *The Vision of Drythelm* is concise and compact. Its tight narrative includes the four states of the afterlife according to St. Augustine: the state of purgation for the *mai⁹ non valid⁹* (sinful souls who undergo a severe purgative experience), the *mai⁹* (the damned), the *non valid⁹ boni* (sinners in a place of beauty, who have either completed purgation or were guilty of lesser faults, but are not quite ready for entry to Heaven), and the *boni* (the saved). The vision contains details present in *Tundale*, but the narrative is clear and straightforward. *The Vision of Tundale* is an eclectic representation that preserves the four groups, but changes emphases, adds a wealth of detail, and ambles through the afterlife in a more circuitous, digressing fashion. It is not that *The Vision of Tundale* is amorphous, in fact, in some ways it is the most precise and detailed fictional account of the Christian afterlife before Dante, and may even have been read by him. Rather it is that *The Vision of Tundale* moves through the afterlife according to its own logic.

The Middle English version replaces Marcus' references to the Irish Church and his location of the story in Cork with a formulaic call for attention that could be part of any number of contemporary narratives. In both versions Tundale is identified as a serious sinner, unlike the good Drythelm and most other visionaries, he is guilty of the eight deadly sins: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth, and the particularly Irish addition to the traditional seven, treachery. It is amidst callous behavior towards a debtor that the story begins. Tundale, generously invited to stay to dinner by his aggrieved debtor, is stricken with a violent fit that results rapidly in his apparent death. It is hard to see how one could ignore the drama of this beginning, unexpected and vivid, it is a powerful demonstration of the scriptural admonition: "Watch ye therefore, because

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you know not the day nor the hour... " (Matthew 25:13). His soul, parted from his apparently dead body, finds itself in a dark and grim place that causes an immediate regret that will deserve more attention in the discussion below of Tundale's character as visionary.

Tundale's guardian angel emerges from a star and accuses Tundale of ignoring him during life. Tundale readily and fearfully admits his guilt and the journey begins. In the Advocates' Manuscript version, printed here, Tundale's experiences are divided into ten *Passus* (literally "paces," but a common division of parts in medieval narrative), seven *Gaudia*, "joys", and a *Reversio Animæ*, a section in which Tundale's soul returns to his body, he reports his experiences, and promises to reform. Although the other Middle English manuscripts do not have these divisions, they accurately segment Tundale's experience, although sometimes, especially in the *Gaudia*, the distinctions between parts are not precise.

The *Passus*, however, are a rather neatly arranged catalogue of sins:

- I: In this prologue Tundale is threatened and abused by fiends and comforted by the angel.
- II: The murderers are melted and re-formed in the fires of a staking pit. As the poem proceeds, *The Vision of Tundale* is distinctive in the way it associates specific places with specific sins.
- III: The thieves and deceivers are swept back and forth between fire and ice.
- IV: The perjurers are in a pit of fire and brimstone over which is suspended a narrow bridge that can be traversed only by someone as humble as the pilgrim priest who makes his way across. So far, the angel has been explicit about the sin, but the punishments have not been noticeably suitable to one sin rather than another. Here the punishment fits the crime.
- V: The covetous must enter the gaping maw of Acheron to be tormented with fire and ice. There is some appropriateness in the greedy mouth of Acheron, but this section is more striking in that it is the first place where Tundale must actually undergo punishment rather than simply be a terrified observer. Perhaps appropriately to the sin, he is bitten by lions, adders, and snakes within the belly of Acheron.
- VI: Robbers, and more particularly the sacrilegious, who have defiled holy ground are in a fiery lake full of beasts. The punishment is not especially appropriate, but the angel makes clear that there are gradations of suffering, a point not always noted in visions. Across the lake is a bridge — long, narrow, and sharp — which Tundale, again suffering in his own person, must cross. That he must lead a wild cow across the bridge is a part of his particular transgression: he had stolen his neighbor's cow and, though he had returned it, his intention had been sinful. It is hard to avoid the comedy in this scene, perhaps a remnant of Irish legend, even within the gruesome circumstances.
- VII: Those guilty of sexual sins are tormented within an oven-like house. The souls, again not without some grim comedy, are hacked into bits by fiends, with devices ranging from weapons to fern implements, and then re-formed and hacked up again. Once more Tundale must suffer the punishment, but, as after each such torment, he is restored by his guardian angel. Here we see specific attention to genitalia, appropriate to the sin; among the sinners are men of religion and, for the first time in the poem, Tundale recognizes some of the sufferers.

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- VIII: Lascivious clergy and religious who have broken their vows are swallowed by a great bird and infested with worms that creep in and out of their bodies. The torment seems to fit the carnality and again Tundale must suffer.
- IX: In this Passus, what has earned the sinners their places in Vulcan's forges does not appear to be any particular type of sin, but rather the sheer number of sins they have committed. In the smithy of Vulcan they are tossed back and forth between infernal blacksmiths, who beat them with hammers on fiery forges. Again Tundale must suffer, because he has been a perpetrator of many and various sins.
- X: The last Passus is devoted to Hell itself and Satan. Although it has been suggested in IX that the tormented so far are in a purgatorial rather than infernal state, it becomes clear that in III through IX the sinners have not yet been judged and have no idea whether or when they might finish purgation; both Heaven and Hell are still possibilities, and they have no knowledge of the duration of their fate. In Passus X we have those who have already been judged and are certainly and eternally lost. The Passus culminates in a long description of the prideful archfiend and corrupter of mankind — Lucifer, who inflicts horrendous pains and is simultaneously tortured by the pains he inflicts, even as he is bound fast until the Last Judgment so that he will not cast the world into chaos. Pain here is horrendous and eternal, and, for the second time in the poem, Tundale ruefully recognizes some individuals he knows. But the Passus is dominated by the huge, black, and terrible vision of Satan, the author of all evil.

This schematic summary has been provided to show in detail something of the structure of the ten Passus as a whole as well as some of the features that are distinctive in Marcus', and thereby his successors', vision of the afterlife. Specific locations are designated for specific sins, an element so unusual that some have thought it influential on Dante. Tundale, despite the fact that he is there only in spirit not in body, must himself suffer for five of them; Marcus ignores the problem of an incorporeal soul suffering physical punishments in favor of directly involving Tundale in the horrors he observes. The presentation of the suffering sinners has not been climactic throughout the truly purgatorial parts in which sinners suffer but have not yet been finally judged. Perhaps the lack of dramatic climax has caused some disappointment with the poem, though, taken as a whole, the punishments are at least comprehensive. There is, however, beginning in Passus IX and mounting through the whole of Passus X, a climactic movement in the ultimate horrors of true Hell and the elaborate portrait of Satan. Finally, Marcus recognizes some souls, both among those not yet judged in Passus VII and among the damned — a small gesture in the direction Dante took more extensively and dramatically.

The poem could be over, but Marcus proceeds to show us better worlds in the seven Gaudia. This continuation is not unique to *The Vision of Tundale*; indeed it is almost a traditional part of visions of the afterlife such as Drythelm. It is rather the way that Marcus moves from the ten Passus to the Gaudia, especially the first two Gaudia, that is distinctive and has caused most consternation about the structure of the narrative. After the climactic movement of the ten Passus

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towards Satan and true Hell, Marcus backtracks in the first two Gaudia to a more tolerable Purgatory.

In Gaudium I are souls who, although in a much more pleasant place than anywhere in the ten Passus, suffer hunger and thirst. More strikingly, these souls know that they will eventually be saved, but they are not yet wholly without pain. Marcus is embarking on an Augustinian view of the afterlife, which, because of its placement after Lucifer and Hell, is structurally odd. These souls, as in the Augustinian tradition, are specifically called *mai⁹ non valde*, though the precision of Marcus' Latin is somewhat obscured in the language of the Middle English version:

All leved they well in honesté,
Yet grevyl they God in sum perté. (lines 1519-20) lived

Gaudium II presents the Augustinian *non valde* now, again rendered less obviously in the Middle English:

Thawye they ben clasyne of all yle,
Here mot thei abydon Goddes wylle. (lines 1567-68) Though

These souls include the Irish kings Cantaber (Conor O'Brien), Donatus (Donough MacCarthy), and the renowned Cormake (Cormac MacCarthy), who is especially well known to Tundale. All of them apparently must still suffer, but the pains of Cormake are particularly striking and vivid.

The remaining Gaudia move through a kind of Earthly Paradise to Heaven. Gaudia III-VI present an increasingly beautiful set of locations, decorated in more and more ornate ways for the virtuous of many sorts, including the chaste married, martyrs, virgins, virtuous clergy, and those who have founded and supported churches and religious orders. The region never specifically becomes the Earthly Paradise or the Garden of Eden, but references, especially to the fall of Adam, make clear that this is what it is. The beauties, in singing choirs, flowers, gems, and splendid pavilions, make it hard to believe that we are not in Heaven itself. It must be granted that Marcus finds it hard to sustain a dramatic progression through stages of this Paradise, straining to find a vocabulary that will sustain a sense of ever greater glory and gratification. However, by assertion if not by dramatic representation, it becomes clear that the joys increase as Tundale proceeds. And all of these souls are aware that at some indeterminate time, unknown to them, they are assured of salvation.

In Gaudium VII, devoted to a view of Heaven, the angel and Tundale climb to the top of the most magnificent wall of all, in a land of magnificent walls, composed of precious gems and mortared with gold. From here they see the whole of creation, not only the earthly and purgatorial, but Heaven itself. Improbably, Tundale sees the nine orders of angels that perpetually praise God and even more improbably, he has a glimpse of the Trinity. It remains only for Tundale, after a cordial greeting by Renodan (St. Ruadan, the patron saint of Lorrha in County Tipperary, perhaps Marcus'

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place of birth), to meet St. Patrick, the patriarch of the Irish Catholic Church and epitome of active holiness for an Irish narrator, and the four bishops who "reformed," that is, Romanized, the Irish Church in the first half of the twelfth century, and to see the empty seat reserved, apparently, for St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the greatest Cistercian of them all. Nothing is left but for Tundale to return to his body and live his life in conformity with the profound lessons he has learned.

Critical objections have been made, with some justification, to the static quality of *Gaudia* III-VI, but it is harder, in Latin or Middle English, to find a vocabulary for the increasingly glorious than for the increasingly horrific. It may also be that we have, retroactively, the supreme vision of Dante standing in our way. It has also been objected that the climax with the Irish saints would be very much beside the point to an English audience in the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Here again, there is some justice in the criticism, though the scene is handled with an economy and sense of ultimacy that transcends ethnic unfamiliarity. The most serious criticism, however, is that there is a structural discontinuity between the *Passus* and the *Gaudia*: the former move through gruesome descriptions of souls who are purged without even the assurance of salvation and issue in a staggering infernal vision of Lucifer; the latter begin with mildly suffering souls and lead to the Beatific Vision. *Tundale*, it is suggested, seems like two different visions with a radical disruption in between. It is as if the author tried at the beginning of the *Gaudia* to incorporate the Augustinian categories more explicitly. The result, for the structure of the whole poem, is that the vision begins with the *non valde mali* and proceeds to the *mali*, then reverts to the *honi non valde* and proceeds to the *boni*.

This final criticism must be acknowledged, but for the reader it may not be devastating and may even be a virtue if one does not insist that linear narrative is the only or the best kind. It may not be that the structure is chaotic, but that Marcus, and his inheritors so widely admired by a variety of audiences, has taken advantage of one kind of climax in the *Passus* and another in the *Gaudia* and that far from being clumsy or incompatible, they enhance each other in a way that is consistent with a monastic, especially a Cistercian spirituality. The audience is asked to balance two types of meditation, one of horror and one of hope, both representative of ultimate spiritualities. The *Passus* lead from torment to hopelessness; the *Gaudia* lead from a milder suffering to bliss. Both are true visions and to balance them against each other, even at the expense of linear narrative, is to represent quite dramatically the contrasts between eternal destinies.

If the structure of the whole has not been received generously, neither has the character of Tundale, who has been seen to have lost the distinctive characteristics of his sinful life and become a bland and undifferentiated traveler to the next world. Here again, I would defend the *Tundale* poet. It would be just as unthinkable to have him remain a miscreant as it would for him to react more variously to the spectacles provided him. In the *Passus*, he suffers and we have a sympathy for him impossible for other visionaries. Upon "dying" and finding himself alone in a bleak place, he immediately and sympathetically recognizes the error of his ways. He is intriguing because he sometimes seems not the sinner we began with, but a professed religious, being instructed in the

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afterlife. Those instances may be authorial lapses.¹ If they are a flaw, they are a welcome flaw that adds variety to the sometimes dreary role that a visionary is called upon to play. Regardless, Tundale is a participant-observer and, at a few crucial places, engages in dialogue with his angel or listens attentively to instruction that the angel provides, but those are more appropriate to the consideration of the theology of the narrative below, where it becomes clearer that we care about Tundale, and ought to.

Even if this poem is oddly, even clumsily, structured and Tundale has, for the most part, the blandness of the visionary, though his role is enhanced by the need actually to suffer along the way, it is not accurate to say that it is slender on doctrine. It is not a theological narrative, but it is imbued with doctrine that is fundamental to the idea of Purgatory. *Tundale* does not argue refinements on the doctrine of Purgatory. For example, it mentions but does not inquire into what the souls know, how long they will be purged, when salvation will ultimately come. It does not even seem to worry, in an analytic way, about having two classes of purgatorial souls — those who suffer unjudged and those who know they are saved. Nor does it quail at Tundale's seeing the Trinity when he is not truly dead. These are all taken for granted, mentioned, but rather as a matter of fact than a matter of contention. Most important in this regard, the story does not seem to be interested in the doctrine of suffrages, which became so important in purgatorial literature. Indeed, the only mention of suffrages is as a discouragement by the demons who first greet Tundale.

"All the gad that in the erthe is,
Nor all the matusse ne all the masse
Myght not help thee from the peyn of hell" (lines 211–13)

good, the earth
matusse, masses
pain

Their assertion that suffrages will now do him no good must, of course, in context be taken to suggest that suffrages can do good, but this aspect of purgatorial teaching is not what Marcus, or those who transcribed his narrative, were interested in. Suffrages were to become prominent soon after Marcus' work, when the doctrine of Purgatory became more the property of the Dominicans than the Cistercians. For Dominican scholars and preaching friars, suffrages had a special potency, but that focus is different from what seems to have been most important to the Cistercians in their uses of Purgatory as part of their meditative spirituality.

That difference is highlighted by the doctrine that is central to the theology and spirituality of Purgatory in *Tundale*: God's justice and mercy. That doctrine, which pervades the poem and gives it its spiritual vitality and compassion, is raised early, if obliquely, by the fiends who greet and torment Tundale immediately after his death. They emphasize that Tundale deserves to suffer. When they taunt him with what he deserves, they echo the scriptural counsel: "For what doth it

¹ See St. John Drelincourt Seymour, "Studies in the Vision of *Tundale*," p. 88. I find it hard to agree with Seymour that they are intentional or forgetful lapses into autobiography by Marcus.

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profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?"¹² Tundale's earthly power has abandoned him to what, in reality, he merits. Likewise, when the infernal fiends at the gates of Hell in Purgas IX threaten Tundale, they emphasize what Tundale deserves:

For thi wykwydnes and thi foly
In fyr to brenne art thu worthy. (lines 1213-14)

Even Tundale's guardian angel, in his first address to the soul, chastises Tundale for his guilt in not having paid attention to his urgings to live a better life and thereby not have to fear a deserved horrible eternity (lines 239-44).

It is important that Tundale is not wholly passive and the angel does more than lead him, identify the sins, and indicate when Tundale's special guilt makes it necessary for him to suffer a particular torment. The most important location in which the angel provides the advice which is fundamental to this vision of Purgatory is in Purgas VII. There Tundale, viewing the horrors of punishment, questions God's mercy by alluding to Scripture:

"Wher his the word that weyton was
That Goddes mercy schuld passe all thyng?
Here see Y therof no tokenyng." (lines 812-14)

rigy

Tundale is echoing Latin Vulgate Psalm 32:5, which the scribe quotes in Latin after line 814. The long response of the angel is a dissertation on the nature and profundity of God's mercy. He begins by asserting:

"Althouff God be full of myght and mercy,
Ryghtwesnes behovyth hym to do therby.
But He forgesyth more wykwydnes,
Thanne He findeth ryghtwesnes.
The peynas that thu haddis wer but lyght.
Gretur thu schuldyst have tholud with ryght." (lines 817-22)

Although
Justice requires
forgives
righteousness
suffered

The angel has succinctly stated the necessary interconnection between God's justice and mercy. He continues by asking (lines 826-29), why, without the threat of punishment, would man do God's will? But the main burden of his discourse is that all human beings, even babies, deserve, by justice, punishment by God; it is only the benevolence of God's mercy that makes salvation, or even alleviation, possible. In addition, granted the difference between what we deserve and what God's mercy makes possible, it behoves us to do penance on earth and live according to God's

¹² Matthew 16:26, see also Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25.

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will. Later the angel expands on this point in answering Tundale's question about why the wicked prosper, while the good on earth are often deprived (lines 1446–52); he explains that discomfort on earth may help human beings to struggle and live more in accord with divine will (lines 1453–60). That suffering on earth is desirable is a corollary of the doctrine of divine justice and mercy, especially in view of the fact that God tempers with mercy the retributive justice that we all deserve. Thus, it is better to suffer on earth than to have to face even a merciful reckoning after death. Penance on earth is preferable in view of what we all deserve according to a strict interpretation of God's justice. However, even purgatorial punishment in all its horrors is a manifestation of the operation of God's mercy. Purgatory becomes the "doctrine of the second chance," a powerful manifestation of God's prevailing mercy.

Much later than Marcus, Dante inscribed over the gates of Hell:

Justice moved my high maker.¹

This is a hard saying, but Dante could have equally as well introduced Purgatory by announcing it as the demonstration of God's mercy. That is the doctrine that underlies all of the pain in *The Vision of Tundale's Hell and Purgatory*, and the incomplete joy of the first two Gaudia, and even the waiting in Gaudia III–VI.

The angel's speech on justice and mercy is central to the whole narrative. Once one sees clearly what we get in contrast with what we deserve, the merciful solace that runs throughout the narrative becomes clearer. If one has not noticed before, one can see how the poem's demonstration of justice is repeatedly moderated by the pervasive recognition of how justice is tempered with mercy. As early as the preface, the narrator makes the fundamental doctrine clear. Tundale is a sinner:

Yet told not God is swile tyne
For He hit boghit from Hell pyne,
For His mercy passad all thryng. (lines 37–39)

would not; his soul harm
it bought; Hell's pain
mercy surpasseed

Long before Tundale's complaint in *Passus VII*, the narrator has assured us of the theological basis of all that we will see. In the act of Redemption, God demonstrated and made effective the doctrine that informs even the most gruesome aspects of the poem. After Tundale dies, the first recognition he has is that he must now rely on God's mercy and his angel soon comforts him:

But Goddes mercy schall thou save. (line 257)

God's

¹ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Charles S. Singleton, Bollingen Series 80, 3 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970–75), I.3.4.

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The angelic reassurance may destroy suspense, though the descriptions of the torments that come tend to preserve our unease, but mercy is a theme that recurs perpetually: in the fact that Tundale is allowed not to suffer in Passus II; in the angel's comfort upon their approach to Lucifer; in the explanation of why Cantaber and Donatus are not damned; and repeatedly in casual assertions throughout the journey. The doctrinal substance of *The Vision of Tundale* lies not in theological disputes about the refinements of the nature of Purgatory, but in its horrifying, though ultimately exalting, recognition of our dependence upon God's mercy in a universe where we would deserve even worse than what we see. In such a context, Tundale's *Reversio Ante* becomes not only a logical consequence of his journey, but an ultimate manifestation of the narrative's central consolation, the mercy of God.

Thus, it may be that the concatenation of horrors issuing in beatitude, presented in the context of the prevailing mercy of God, was the combination of elements responsible for the sustained popularity of the narrative in the Middle Ages. This is not to say that the narrative's twelfth-century audience saw exactly the same horrors and comforts that its fifteenth-century audience did, any more than it is to say that our perspective is the same as either. What in the twelfth century was an appropriate stimulus for Cistercian meditation and edification may be quite different from the sources of the narrative's popularity in the later Middle Ages. The Middle English version seems rather to rely on a more popular taste for the grotesque and horrific, mediated by eventual consolation, rather than on Cistercian spirituality. That four of the five manuscripts of the Middle English version include a large number of romances, including *Sir Gawther*, *Sir Isombras*, *Sir Amadas*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Sir Eglamour*, and *Sir Launfal*, may argue that interest in Tundale was consistent with a more general interest in stories of adventure.

Yet the perdurance of Tundale into the fifteenth century seems more than that. Yes, the fascination of the grotesque seems a likely attraction, but the integral affirmation of God's mercy seems likely to have been as comforting to a more popular and secular, though still religious, audience. The version in which they received the story admittedly is not graceful verse, though the story flows more rhythmically if one emphasizes its verse form simply as a four-stress line rather than as strict octosyllabics. Still, the power of the poem seems to reside largely in characteristics intrinsic to the narrative. The fifteenth century may have revelled more in the gory descriptions than Cistercian predecessors did. And the story may have been altered in its effect by the partial skepticism implied by the scribe at the end of the English poem:

Be it true, or be it false,
Hyt is as the coopy was. (lines 2382-83)

DNW
copy

That is to say, a fifteenth-century audience may have seen fiction where a twelfth-century audience saw history. Nevertheless, even if catering to a different taste for the descriptions and a different sense of the poem's verisimilitude, the demonstration of God's tempering of justice with mercy must have contributed to the later audience's pleasure and solace.

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No one would mistake *The Vision of Tundale* for the *Divine Comedy*, in which Dante endowed the matter of the afterlife not only with rare linguistic excellence but also with a metaphoric universality that transcends all ages. But there are many layers of quality between the sublimity of Dante and the banality of trivial descriptions. *The Vision of Tundale* is somewhere in between and deserves our attention more than as simply a document in literary history.

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	Jesu Cryst, lord of myghtas most,	greatest power
	Fader and Son and Holy Gost,	Father; Ghost
	Grant hem alle Thi blesyng	them
5	That lystenyght me to my endyng.	lives till my conclusion
	Yf ye that her ben awhyle dwell,	a while abide
	Seche a sampull Y wyll yow tell,	example
	That he that woll hit understand,	
	In hart he schall be full dredand	heart; greatly fearful
	For hys synnes, yf he woll drede	sins; fear
10	And cleane hym her of his mysdede.	cleanse him here; misdeeds
	In Yrlond byffyl sumtyme this case	Ireland; occurred once upon a time
	Sethyn God dyeyd and from deythe arasc.	After; died; death arose
	Aftyr that tyme, as ye may here,	
	A thowsand and a hundretyt yere	hundred years
15	And syn wynfur and fourty,	nine winters
	As it hys wretyn in tho story,	is written in the
	I woll yow tell what befell than	happened then
	In Yrlond of a rych man;	
	Tundale was is right name.	
20	He was a man of wykud fame.	his proper
	He was ryche ynow of tyches,	wicked reputation
	But he was poore of all gladnesse.	enough
	He was ay full of trychery,	always; treachery
	Of pride, of yre, and of envy.	anger
25	Lechery was all his play,	
	And glotony he loved ay.	gluttony; always
	He was full of covetyse	covetousness (avarice)
	And ever sleithe in Goddis servyse.	lothful; God's service
	Nou warkas of mercy wold he worsh;	No works; work (perform)
30	He lovyd never God, ne Holy Chyrch.	loved; nor Holy Church
	With hym was never no charyte;	charity
	He was a mon withowton pyte.	man without pity (compassion)
	He loved well jogelars and lyers.	deceivers (entertainers); liars

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- He mayntynod ay myndoers.
abered always miscreants
35 He loyld ay contact and strye.
always dissension; strife
Ther was non holdyn wots on lyf.
considered
Yett nold not God is sowle tyme.
would not; his soul harm
For He hit boghte from Hell pyne.
it bought (redemption); Hell's pain
For His mersy passid all thyng.
mercy surpassed
40 But Tundale had an hard warnynge.
severe
For as he in his transyng lay,
France (unconsciousness)
His sowle was in a dredful way.
many a huge pain
Ther hit saw mory an howge payn.
Before it came
At hit come to the body agayn.
In Purgatory and in Helle
45 As he saw, he cowthe well tolle.
could
But how he had a hard fyt,
severe fit
Yf ye woll here, ye may whytl.
will hear; understand
Tundale had frendys full mory.
friends very many
50 But he was full of trichery.
treachery
Of his maners mory had deed,
behavior many had dread
For he was lythur in word and dede.
evil
Throw occur wold he sylver leyn;
usury; silver lend
For nyne schylling he wold have ten.
nine shillings
55 For frystyng wold he occur take,
delaying would; usury
And nothyng leyn for Goddis sake.
give [to the poor]
When he sold his marchandyse,
merchandise
He sold ay deuar than ryghtfull pris.
always dearer; proper price
He wold gyve dayes for his best,
allow days for his own benefit
60 But he sold the dierus for the fryst.
dearer; delay
Tundale, he went upon a day
man; demand
To a mon to ascon his pay
three horses
For thre horsas that he had sold,
pence (money); unpaid
For the whych the penys wer untold.
requested a delay
65 That mon hym prayd of respite
For a certain time; debt; repay
Unto a day the deyt to quytte
offered him security; oath
And proferud hym sykernes by othe.
At once he grumblid and became angry
Anon he grucchad and waxyt wrothe
exactly the payment
For he had not evon tho pay.
threatened him vigorously; great anger
70 But theatte hym fast and made gret deray.
clever; wise
But Tundale was bothe qyntic and whys;
He sette the horsas to full bye pris
set the horses at a very high price

The Vision of Tundale

- For he had no pay in hende.
To hym the mon in scripture hym bondie,
The mon spake to hym curtesly
And broghte hym owt of his malycoly.
He sobort his hart that was so greyt
And made Tundale dwell at tho meyyt.
And when he was scytt and servyd well,
A greyt evyl he began to fele.
At the fyrt morsel soo syntand
He myght not well lefhe up his hond.
He cryed lowde and changyt chev,
As he had felud dehne nere.
To the weyf of the howse than callud he,
"Lewe dame," he seyd, "for charyte
Loke me my sparthe wher that he stande,
That Y broghtt with me in my hande,
And helpe me now heþon away,
For Y hope to dye this same day.
So harde with evyll am Y tane
That strenthe in me fell Y name.
For now my hart so febull Y fele,
Y am but dede, Y wot full wele.
A Jesu Cryst, Y aske Thee mercy,
For can I now non oðer remedy."
Ryght as he schald ryse of that stede,
Anon in the flore he fell don dedde.
Tho that wer his frendys by sybbe
Hred of that cause that hym bytydde.
Thei comyn to hym with hart sore
And saw Tundale lygge dedde in the flore.
For hym wer the belus yronge
And "Placebo" and "Dyrege" songe ysonge.
All his cloths wer of hym tane,
He lay cold dedde as any stan,
But of the lyft syde of Tundale
Was suthwat warme the veyne corale,
Wherfor sunn hyld hym not all dedde;
Forwhi thei flyme hym not fro that sted.
But styl as a dedde mon ther he lay
- Because; payment in hand*
The man gave him his bond in writing
man spoke; courteously
And brought him out of his anger
calmed; heart; great
invited; stay to dinner
seated and served
A great illness he began to feel
first morsel while sitting
could; lift; hand
cried loud; changed expression
As if; felt death near
wife; house; called
Dear lady; for charity
Find; battle as wherever it is
I brought
hence away
I expect to die
severely; illness; taken
strength; feel I none
heart; feeble; I feel
I am surely dead; I know full well
knew I; other
Just as he was about to rise from that place
Instantly on; floor; down dead
Those who were; friends; kinship
Heard; experience; befall him
They came; heart sad
lying dead
bell; rung
rung
clothes; taken
stone
left
somewhat; median vein
believed him not fully dead
Therefore; moved; place

The Vision of Tundale

- From mydday of that Wenesday
 Tyl the Settday after the none;
 By than wyst Tundale what he had done,
 115 Then he lay dedde, as ye han hard,
 Bat heras now how is sowle fard.
 Wen Tundale fell don sodenly,
 The gost departyd sone from the body,
 As sone as the body was dedde,
 120 Tho sowle was sone in a darke stod.
 Full wretchedly hit stod alone;
 Hit weput soore and made gret mose.
 He wend to a byn dampneyd ay to Payne *thought (himself) to have been damned forever*
 And never a com to the body agayne *to come; the*
 125 For the synnes that the body dyd,
 That myght nether be layned nor bylde.
 He had lever then al meydylere *xini*
 Ha ben agayne, so was he ferd
 But he sawe mony a hydwys Payne
 130 Or he come to the body agayne,
 But sun had more and sun had lasse,
 As tho story beyrthe wytnesse.
- midday; Wednesday
 Until; Saturday; noon
 then knew
 have heard
 hear; his soul fared
 When; down suddenly
 spirit parted immediately
- The soul; dark place
 wretchedly; it stood alone
 It wept sorely; lamented greatly
thought (himself) to have been damned forever
 to come; the
 xini
 neither; concealed; hidden
 rather; than all the world
 To have been *alive*; again; frightened
 saw many a hideous pain
 before; again
 some friends; less
 the; bears witness

I Passus

- As the gost stod in gret dowie,
 He saw coming a full loddly rowte
 135 Of fowle fendys ay gressyng,
 And as wyld wolfis thei cam rumpyng.
 He wold a flown from that syght,
 But he wyst never whydur he myght.
 Then fowle fendys cam to hym ther.
 140 The sowle for ferd made drury chyr,
 And that was full lyfull wondor;
 He went to a byn ryvon asendor.
 Thei wer so loghly on to loke,
 Hym thoughte the eyrthe undur hym schoke,
 145 Her bodys wer bothe black and fowle;
 Full grynsly con thei on hym gowle.
- spirit stood; great confusion
 terrifying rabble
 foul fiends ever baring their teeth
 wolves; leaping
 would have fled
 knew; whether
 These foul fiends came
 soul; fear; woeful countenance
 little wonder
thought (himself) to have been ripped open
 They were; horrible to look at
 He thought; earth; shok
 Their
 terribly began they; howl

The Vision of Tusdale

- Her ynee wer brode and brannynge as fyre;
All thei wer fall off angur and yre.
Her mowthas wer wyde; thei gapud fast.
The fyre owt of her mowthas thei cast.
Thei wer full of fyre within.
Her lyppus honget bynnythe her chyne.
Her tethe wer long, the throtus wyde,
Her tongus honged owt fall syde.
On fete and hondus thei had gret nayles,
And grette hornes and atteryngh taylys.
Her naylys wer kene as grondon stylle;
Scharpor thyng myght no mon fyll.
Of hem cam the fowlest stynk
That any eryhyly mon myght thynk.
With her naylys in that plas
Ychon cracched ether in the face.
Thei faghtton ycheon with odur and stryon,
And ychon odur all toryon.
Hit was a wondur grysely syght
To see how thei weryn all ydylgh.
In the word was no mon alive
That cowthe so grysely a sygth dyscryve.
Full gymly thei on hym staryd,
And all atonis thei cryd and rored
And seyd, "Gow abowte we yond wykyd gost
That hathe ey don owre counsel most
And syng we hym a song of dyed,
For he hathe wrought after owe red."
Thei umlapud the soule abowne
And creidon and mad an hugy schowt
And seyd, "Thu synfull wrechyd wyght,
In Hell a styd is for thee dyght,
For thu art now owre ownse fire.
Tha art deythus doghter dere.
And soo to fyre withouttyn ende
And to darknes art tha friend,
And to all lyght art thu foe;
Therfor, with us schalt thu goo.
This his thi felyschyp, thu caytyff,
- eyes: wide; burning; fire
they; anger; ire (wrath)
mouths; wide; gaped open
fire out; mouths

lips hung beneath their chins
Their teeth; the throats
Their tongues hung out at great length
feet; hands; great nails
great horns; potaceous tails
Their nail; sharp; ground steel
Sharper; man feel
From them came
earthly man
their nail; place
each one scratched
They fought each other; brawled
each other; tore to pieces
it; wonderfully gruesome
they were; shaped
the world; man
could so gruesome a sight describe
most fiercely; stared
at once; cried; roared
Let us go to yonder wicked spirit
Who has always done our counsel most
dead
done according to our advice
surrounded; about
cried; made; great shout
You; wretched creature
place; prepared
companions
death's daughter dear
without
friend
for

in your fellowship; caitiff (wretch)

The Vision of Tundale

- That thu chase to thee in thi lyffe;
Therfor, with us schald thu wende
To dwell in Hell withowton ende.
Thu hast ybyn bothe fals and fykyll,
190 And thu hast seyd fals scandalur mykyll;
Thu lovedyst stryft nyght and day,
And thu and we lovyd ay.
Thu hast ylovyd myche lechery,
195 And myche thu hast used vounry,
Pryde, envy, and covety,
Glotony with all odar vys.
Why wolddast not thu leyve thi trichery
Whyle thu levedust and was myghty?
Wher hin now all thi vanyté,
200 Thi ryches, and thi grette maynē?
Wher is thi pompe and thi prydē?
Thi wyckydnes may thu not hyde.
Wer is thi streynthe and thi myght
And thi harneys soo gayly dyght?
205 Wher is thi gold and thi treasour?
Wher is thi catell and thi stoe,
That thu wendyst schald never thee fayll,
And now may all hit not thee avayle?
Thu lovyst neyver God, nor Holy Chyrch,
210 Noo warkys of mercy woldest worsh.
All the god that in tho erthe is,
Nor all the matens ne all the masse
Myght not help thee from the peyn of Hell
For eyvermore therin to dwell.
215 That wykkyd thought that was in thi brest,
Woldyst thu never schowe it to no prest.
Wreche, thu tha not calle nor crye.
Thu wendast with us withowton mercy."
Ther the gost stod. Hit was darke as nyght
220 But sone he saw a sterre full bryght.
Tundale fast that sterre beheld.
Fall wyll comforted he hym feld.
Theow tho vertu of his creatur
He hopeyd to geyte sum socur,
- choose; life
shall; go
beow; false; fickle
said; slander great
loved strife
loved always
much
much; committed adultery
covetousness (greed)
Glotony; other vice
would; leave; treachery
lived; mighty
Where is; vanity
great power
Where; strength
armor; fancily fashioned
treasure
property; possessions
thought; fail
avail
loved
No works; would work (perform)
good; the earth
matens; masses
paine
wicked; breast
Would; make known; priest
Wrack; there did not call
travelled
soon; star; full bright
intently; star
Very well comforted; fel
Through the power; creature
hoped; get some comfort

The Vision of Tundale

- 225 That was the angell to beton is bale
 The whych was emer of Tundale.
 The angell sone with Tundale mett,
 And full mekely he hym grette:
 He spake to hym with mylde chere:
- remedy his misery
 guardian /angelf/
 soon; met
 graciously; greeted
 gentle manner
- 230 "Tundale," he seyd, "wat dost tha here?"
 When Tundale herd hym his name call
 And saw hym bryght schymyng withall,
 He was fayn and began to crie
 And seyd, "Swete fader, mercy!
- what do
 heard
 shining
 glad
 Sweet father
- 235 These fowle fendlis for my mysdede
 To tho fyr of Hell thei wold me lede."
 Then aweryd tho angell bryght
 And seyd to the deefall wyght,
 "Fader and lord thu callust me now.
- misdeeds
 the fire; would; lead
 answered the
 frightened creature
- 240 Why woldyst thou not er to me bow?
 Y was thi yemer even and moron,
 Seythou tha was of thi modur boron.
 This woldyst nevver to me take tent,
 Not to son of myn thu woldest not sent."
- earlier
- 245 Tundale seyd, and sykyd sore:
 "Lord, Y saw thee never before,
 Not never myght Y here thee lowde nor stylle,
 Therfor, wist Y not of thi wyl?"
 The angell that was of gret myght
- I; guardian evening and morning
 Since; mother born
 would; pay attention
 none of mine; assent (the guided)
- 250 Chasyd won that was a fowle wyght.
 Of all that fowle company
 Ther sensed non soo uggly.
 "Tundale," he seyd, "this is he
 That thu dyddest know and not me.
- Chased one; foul creature
 seemed; ugly
- 255 After hym thu hast alwey wrought
 Bat in me trystys thu ryght nocht.
 Bat Goddis mercy schall thee save,
 Althaff thu servydyst non to have.
 Bot Y woll welle that thu wyte,
- did know
 Following him; always worked
 trusted you not at all
 God's
- 260 Thee behovyt fynt an hard fyghe."
 Than was Tundale full glad.
 But he was after full hard bystad,
 For he saw peynas greyt and strong.
- Although; deserve
 wan greatly; understand
 must do
- laser severely afflicted
 pains great

The Vision of Tundale

- And sum of hem was he among.
265 Well he cowthe tell yche a peyn
When he come to the body ageyn.
Tundale throwet the angell hym drowgh,
For hym thought he had drede ynow.
When that thei saw, tho fendys felle,
270 That he schuld not goo with hem to Hell,
Thei began to rere and crye
And scanderyd then God almyghty
And seyd, "Thu art not tra justyce.
Thu art fals and unyghtwysse.
275 Thu seydast Tha schuldast rewaid sone
280 Ylke mon after that he hathe done.
Tundale is ovrus with skyll and ryght,
For he hathe sarvyd his day and myght,
Full wykydly has he leyyd longe.
285 Yf we leyf hym, Thu dost his wronge."
Thei sorud and crydon, so wyr thei woo
That Tundale schuld wend hem froo.
Ychon fought and with odur dyd stryne
And with her naylys her chekus dyd ryve.
295 So fewle a stynde, as thei cast that,
Feld never before yrthely man.
Then seyd the angell to hym at the last,
"Tundale, com forth and folow me fast."
Then seyd he and sykod fall sore.
300 "Lord, than seyst thu never me more.
Yf Y goo behind thee, then am Y schent,
Thes fendys from thee wold me bera
And leyd me with horn to Hell peyn.
Then getust thu me never ageyn."
305 Then seyd the angell, "Have no drede.
Thei may no wyse from me thee ledie.
As moriy, as thee thynkuth, semyth here,
Yet ar ther mo with naylys full neire.
Whylas that God is with us bathe,
310 Thei may never do his skathe,
But thu may rede to fende thee with,
In the profacy of Davyd.
- them
could report; each pain
again
out of there; drew
it seemed to him; dread enough
When they; the fiends cruel
them
roar
stammered
true
unjust
said; should; straightforward
Each man according to (see note)
ours; reasons
served as
lived
lose; as
roared and cried; grieved
go; from
Each fought; other did struggle
their nails; cheeks; tear
foul a smell; gave off
Felt; earthly
closely
sighed very sadly
will see
doomed
These; will; snatch
lead; them; pain
get
dread
may no way; lead
many; it seems to you; appear
are; more; near
While; both
as harm
consult to defend yourself
prophecy; David (see note)

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | That ther schall fall of thi lyf syde
A thowsand fendys in short tyme | on; left
time |
| 305 | And of thi ryght syde semend
Schall fall also ten thowsand.
And non of hem schall com to thee,
Bot with thi eya tha schalt hem see. | appearing |
| | Thu schalt ysee, or we too twyne,
What peynus fallyth for dyverse synne." | show
eyes; show
see, before we two parti
pains befall; various |
| 310 | | |

II Passas

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | When the angell had told his tale,
Throw an entre he lad Tundale,
That was darke; they had no lyght,
But only of the angell bryght. | Through; entry; led |
| 315 | Then saw a depe dale full marke,
Of that Tundale was full yrke.
When he hit saw, he ugged sore.
A delfull dwellyng saw he there. | deep dale very dark
troubled
shuddered violently
doleful; there |
| | That depe dale fast he beheld.
A fowle stenke therof he feld. | deep; intently
foul stench; sensed |
| 320 | Allie the grond, that ther was semend,
Was full of glowyng colis brennand.
Over the colys yron lay,
Red glowand hit semmed ay. | ground; visible
coals burning
coals; iron
glowing it seemed always |
| 325 | Fowr cubytus thyk hit was,
The heyte of the fuya dyd throw pas.
That yron was bothe large and brad.
For full strong payn was hit mad. | Four cubits thick it
The heat; fire; go beyond
broad
made |
| | The heyte of the yron was more
Then all the fyrs that was thore. | heat; iron |
| 330 | That fyr was ever ylyche brannynge
And ever mor stronglyke stynkyng.
Of that fyr com more stynk
Then any ertheley mon myght thynk. | always alike burning
more strongly |
| 335 | And that was peyn to hym more
Then all that he saw or he com thore.
Apon that yron, as hit was seyd, | Than; before he came there
Upon; set (determined) |

The Vision of Tundale

	Fendas with the sowiss wer layd.	Fiends; souls
	And in that stynke dyd thei brenne than	burn
340	And wet molton as was in a pan.	melted; candle
	Thei rosen throw fyr and yron bothe,	ran through fire
	As hit wer wax throw a clothe	As if it; through
	Thei weron gedersd and molton agayn;	re-formed (gathered); melted
	And fro thes therin to new payn.	from
345	Then seyd the angell to Tundale.	
	"Her may thu see mykyll baile.	great woe
	For every mon is dight this payn	assigned
	That fader or medar has yslayn,	father; mother; slain
	Or any odar throw cursyd red,	other; advice
350	Or ben aseytyd to any monus ded.	acquiesced; man's death
	Of this geyte thei never reles,	get; release
	For this peyn schall never sea.	cease
	In odar peyn yet schall thei be	other pain
	Then this that thow may herre see.	Than; here
355	But of this peyn schall thu not fele,	feel
	And yett thu hast deservyd hit fall welle."	Unlaw

III Passus

	Thei pasyd forth from that peyn	great mountains
	And comyn to a greyt montteyn	(large; high)
	That was bothe gret and hye.	beard; doleful
360	Theron he hard a detfoli crye.	that one side; seeming [to be]
	Alle that ton syde was sensand	burning
	Fall of smoke and fyr brennand;	dim
	That was bothe darke and wan	pitch; brimstone
	And stank of psyche and brymston.	that other side
365	On that todur syde, myght he know,	frat
	Gret was the forst and snow,	winds
	And therwith gret wyndas blast.	other storms; follow immediately
	And odar stormas that folowyn fast.	many evil fiends
	He saw ther mony fendys felle	heard them angrily roar
370	And herd hem lightly norre and yelle.	had forks; tongue
	Thei hadon forkys and tongus in hand	skewers; glowing
	And gret brochys of yron glowand	

The Vision of Tundale

- With horns thei drowyn and putton fal sore
The wrechyd sowlys that ther wore.
375 Owt of that fyr thei come horn drawe
And putton horn into the cold snowe,
And seyton into the fyr agayne
Thei putton horn into odur peyne.
Her peyn was turned many folde,
380 Now in holtie, now in cold.
Then seyd the angell, that was soe bryght,
"This peyn is for thefus dyght
And for horn that robry makus
Or agayn mennes wyll her guddus takus
385 Or throw falsched any mon bygylis
Or wynnyght mennes gade with wykyd wylis."
When thei hadon seyn that wykyd tument,
Fudurmore yette thei went.
- With which: pulled, pushed
were
began them drag
pushed them
afterwards
put them; other pain
Their, turned (alternated) many times
thieves designed
robbery commits
against men's will their goods take
folckhood, beguiles
win men's goods; wiles
seen
Further on still

IV Passas

- The angell ay before con pas,
390 And Tundale aftur that soe afurd was,
Thei hyldon ey forthe the way
Tyll thei come to another valay,
That was bothe dypte and marke.
Of that syght was the sowle yrke.
395 In erthe myght non deppar be.
To the grond thei myght not see.
A swowyng of hem thei hard therin
And of cryyng a delfall dyn.
Owt of that pyne he feld comand
400 A fowle smoke that was stynkand
Bothe of pycche and of bryntion,
And therin sowlys brent, mony won.
That peyn hym thought well more semind
Then all the peynas that he byforyn fand.
405 That peyn paasyd all odur peynas.
That pyt stod betwene two monteynas.
Over that pyt he saw a bryge
- always, ahead proceeded
because of, afraid
held always forward
valley
deep; dark
troubled
deeper
bottom
grawing: them they heard
doleful din
pit; sensed coming
smoking
pitch; bromstone
rods burned, many a one
steaming
pains; before found
pit stood between; mountains
bridge

The Vision of Tundale

	Fro tho ton to tho todar lygge,	<i>From the one to the other lie</i>
	That was of a thowsand steppas in leynthe to rede	<i>steps; road</i>
410	And scarsly of won fote in brede.	<i>scarce; one foot; breadth</i>
	All quakyn that brygge ever was,	<i>quaking (shaking); bridge</i>
	Ther myght no mon over lyt passe,	
	Leryd nor lewyd, maydon ne wyff,	<i>Learned; unlearned, maiden; wife</i>
	But holy men of pacfyt lyff.	<i>Except; perfect life</i>
415	Mony sowlys he saw don falle	<i>down</i>
	Of that brygge that was so smalle.	<i>off</i>
	He saw non that brygge myght passe,	
	But a prest that a palmer was.	<i>priest; pilgrim</i>
	A palme in his hond he had,	<i>palm; hand</i>
420	And in a slaveyn he was clad.	<i>pilgrim's cloak</i>
	Ryght as he on erthe had gon,	<i>out</i>
	He passyd over be hymselfe alon.	
	Then seyd the sowle to that angell tho,	
	"Y was never er soo wo.	<i>before</i>
425	Wo is me; Y not horn to passe. <i>I do not know [how] to pass over them (i.e., the steps)</i>	<i>sorely fearful; was</i>
	So sor aded never er Y wasse."	
	The angell seyd to Tundale ryght,	<i>here</i>
	"Dredde thee nocht her of this syght.	
	This payn schalt tha schape full well.	<i>escape</i>
430	But odur peyn schalt tha fell.	<i>other pain; feel</i>
	This peyn is ordeynyd full greves	<i>ordained; grievous</i>
	For prowde men and bostas."	<i>boasters</i>
	The angell toke hym be the hond swythe	<i>by the hand firmly</i>
	And lad hym over, that was he blythe.	<i>led; happy</i>

V Passus

	Yette went thei foryt bothe togeydar,	<i>Still; forth</i>
	But tho sowle wist never wydar,	<i>drew; whether</i>
	Be a longe wey of greyt merknes,	<i>By; way; darkness</i>
	As the story beryth wyttene.	<i>heavy witness</i>
	Thei passyd that and com to lyght,	
435	But he saw then an hogy syght.	<i>huge (fearsome)</i>
	He saw a best that was more to know	<i>beast; larger (lit., more to know)</i>
	Then all tho monsteyntus that thei saw,	

The Vision of Tundale

- And his ynee sermyd yette more
And bradder then the valcyys were.
ever seemed; larger
broader than; valleys were
- 445 In all his mowthe, that was so wyde,
Nyse thowsand armyd in myght ryde,
Betwene his toskys, that were so longe,
Too greyt gyandys he saw honge.
In myddys his mowthe stodon on yche syde
The hed of the one hung downward
The hed of the other hit head
the middle; stood; each
450 And the toder is hed stod upward.
In myddys his mowthe stodon on yche syde
Too pylers to hold hyt up wyde.
Tho pylers weron sett on scrywe.
In his mowthe wer thre partyse,
455 As thre gret yatys that open stode.
Gret flamas of fye owt of hym yode,
And therwith come also fowle a stynke,
As tong myght tell or hert thynde.
Thei hard ther a dylfull dyn
460 Of mony thowsand sowlys withyn.
Gowlyng and gretynge thei hard within among.
"Welaway" was ever her song.
Lowd thei hard hem crye and yell;
Hor sorow myght no tong tell.
465 Befor that bestys mowthe was sene
Mony thowsandas of fendys kene,
That hyed hem with myght and mayne
Tho wrechyd sowlys to dryve to payne.
With beynnyng baselys thei hem doneg
470 And with hem droffe to peynis strong.
When Tundale had that best yseen
And tho wykyd gostys, that wer so kene,
Tundale spake full delfally,
When he hard that hydos arie,
475 And seyd than to that angell bryght,
"What bytokenlyth this hydos syght?"
The angell onswerd hym anon.
"This best is callad Akyron,
And ther throw byhovyth thee to wend,
480 Yff we schall goo owee way to the end.
Non from this peyn may passe quyte,
means; hideous
answered
beast; Acheron
must (*it is fitting for*); go
entirely

The Vision of Tundale

- But cleyne men of lyffe purfyte.
This hogy best, as Y thee kenne
His sette to swollo covetous men
485 That in erthe makyght hit growd and towghe
And never weson to have ynowghe,
But evur coveton more and more
And that hor sowlyc forthyskon sore.
In tho profecy hit is weyton thas,
490 That a best schall swolewo the covetous.
So muche thurst hathe that best
That all the water most and lest
That evur ran est or west
Myght not stanche the bestys thurst.
495 Therfor, this payne is redy ydyght,
Namely for yche a covetous wyght
That weson never ynow to have,
Ne holden horn payd, nor vochensafie
That God hore sent of His grace.
500 Therfor thei schen say, "Alas! Alas!"
For ay the more that thei han free,
Tho more covetous a mon may hem see.
The gyandys, that thu syst with ee,
Hongyng betwene his torskus so hyc,
505 Goddys law wold thei not knowe,
But thei wer truw in hor owne laws,
Of whom the names wer called thus:
That son hyght Forcasso and that toder Cosallus."
"Alas," quod that sowle, "suche peyn have thy,
510 Whedur thei schall never thennas away."
Quod the angell, "Thee falow no glee;
And in erthe seche hast thu ybe."
When he had seyd thus, ther thei yode,
And byfor the best bothe thei stode.
515 But that was agayn Tundaleis wylle.
The angell vaneschyd and he stod stylle.
No wondar was thas he had drede.
The fowle fendys comyn gad sped.
Thei token hym and bowndyn hym fast,
520 Withynne that best thei connen hym cast.
- pure; life perfect*
huge beast; truck
to; swallow covetous
come to be; hard
believed; enough
always coveted
their souls repeat
prophecy; written
swallow (see note)
great thirst
waters
east
stanche
prepared

thought; enough
felt satisfied with
What
must say
always; have to themselves

giants; see with [your] eyes
tusk so high
acknowledge
to their own
the names
That one is named; that other

Whither; whence
You feel
Far; such; been
want
before
against
vanished
though
good speed (quickly)
bound; tightly
beast; began to cast him

The Vision of Tundale

- Awhyle within he most dwell.
Ther was he beyton with fendys fell,
With kene lyons that on hym gnawe
And dragones that hym al todrowe.
- 525 With eddrys and snakes full of venom
He was all todrawyn yche lym.
Now he was in fyr brennand,
Now in yse fast fressand.
- The terys of hys ynee two,
530 Thei brendon as fyr. Hym was full wo.
Strong stynke he feld of brymston.
He was in peynus mory won.
With his nalyss in angur and stryfe
Hys ownce chekus he con al toryfe.
- 535 Of yche synne that evar he daddie
He was upbraydad. Ther was non huddle,
In grett warhope was he ay.
He went never to have pasyd away.
But sone he come owt of that peyne.
- 540 He wist not how. He was full fayne.
Ryght now was he in full grett down,
And anon after was he without.
He lay awfryly as he wer dead,
And sone after he stod up in that sted.
- 545 As he hym dressyd so syttande,
He saw the angell byforyn hym stand.
He had comfort than of that lyght,
When he saw thys angell bryght.
The angell tweched sone Tundale
- 550 And gaff hym strynthe. Than was he hale.
Then lovyd he God of His grace
With terys soote gretand in that place.
He thus pasyd that turment,
But feedurmore bothe theri went.
- marr
beaten by; cruel
savag lions; gnawed
dragons; pulled apart
adders; snakes; venom
torn to pieces each limb
burning
ice; intensely freezing
tears; eyes
burned
sense of brimstone
pains many a one
nails
cheeks; began to tear to bits
each; did
reproached; none hidden
despair; always
thought
- knew; glad
perplexity
outside
as while as (if) he were dead
place
- raised up; sitting
in front of
- touched
gave; strength; well
- tears; moaning
torment
farther on

The Vision of Tundale

VI Passus

- 555 Anodur wey thei to con take,
Tyll thei corn to an hydous lake.
That lake mad an hydous dynse
Throw wawys of watur that weron wiflyne.
Tho wawys of that watur roes as hyc
560 As any mon myght with is ee ysee.
Therin wer howgy bestys and fell
That hydously con crye and yell.
Her ynce wer brode and brandon bryght,
As brannynge lampus doo on syght.
565 On yche a syde thei waytud ay
To swollow sowlys that was ther pray.
Over that lake then saw thei lygge
A wonder long, narow brygge,
Too myle of leymthe that was semand
570 And scarsly of the breed of a hand.
Of scharpe pykys of yron and stell.
Hit was grevous for to fele.
Ther myght non passe by that brygge thare,
But yeff her feet wer lyrt sare.
575 The hydous bestys in that lake
Drew neare the brygge her pray to take
Of sowlys that fell of that brygge don.
To swollow hem thei wer ay bon.
Cryng and yelling and gowling yfere,
580 Tho noyse was wonder dredfull to here.
These hydous bestas wer wondur gretis;
The sowlys that fell wer her mette.
Tundale saw the bestys all
And fyr owt of her mowthe walle.
585 The fyr that he saw from hem faulland
Made the watur all hottie walland.
He saw won stand on the brygge
With a burden of corne on is rygge
Gretand with a dylfull crye
590 And pleynad his synne full pytifuly.
The pykys his fett pykud full sor.
- those two took
hugeous
noise
waves
rise as high
bit eyes see
huge; cruel
did cry
eyes; burned
burning lamps do
waited
swallow
lie
narrow bridge
Two miles; length; snowing
breadth
spikes; steel
grievous
- Without their; here sorily
surer; their prey
off; down
always ready
growing together
- their food
- walled
falling
boiling
one
grain; his back
Moaning; doleful
bewailed; pitifully
spikes; feet pricked

The Vision of Tundale

	He droyd the bestys mykyll mor	dreaded; much more
	That hym to sile wer ay bowne,	ready
	Yef that he had falle of the begge don.	(L. off)
595	Tundale askyd the angell bryght, "What meneghth that hydous syght?"	means
	The angell answerud thus agayn,	ordained
	"For hym is ordynyd this payn	robbed; their
	That robberyght men of hor ryches	goods; theirs
600	Or any gadys that herys ia,	Unlearned; learned; Church
	Lewd or leryd, or Holy Kyrke,	work (day)
	Or any wrong to hem woll wyrk,	have; less
	But sum haught more peyn and sum lase	All according to their sins
	All after that her synnes his.	care not what; injure
605	Sum reckyns not wat thei deyre	refrain from destroying a church
	And woll not a kyrke forbeyre.	fieble; unfaithful
	Sum ar fekul and sum unleyfe.	rob; steal
	Sum well robbe and sum wol stell	belongs
	Thyng that to Holy Chyrche fallys;	Sacrilege; call
610	Sacrileggi that men callys	villainy
	Thei that done wronge or vylony	place of sanctuary
	Within that sted of seynwary.	place of religion
	Or within the sted of releyon	destruction
	Maketh any dysuccious,	tormented
615	All schall thei here tormentyd be	see
	In this peyn that thu may see.	shavers; mowring
	And he that thu syst on the brygge stand,	them stole
	With tho schewes so sore gretand,	other counted up
	Fro Holy Chyrch he hom stale,	pays; dearly
620	For thei wer teythe told by tale.	deed; has here
	Therfor, byes he hem fall dere	travel
	That dede throw peyn that he haught here.	dead; cow
	Over the brygge schalt thu wend nowe	Be careful to lead; warily
	And with thee lede a wyld cowe.	when
625	Loke thu lede her warly	You must (it behoves you); her
	And bewar she fall not by.	friend's; stole
	For wen thu art passyd thi peyn,	
	Thu delivur hur me agayn.	
	Thee behovys to lede huz over alle,	
630	For that thu thi geswynpus cow stale."	

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------|
| | Than spake Tundale with drury chere, | dreary mood |
| | "A mercy, Y aske my lord dere. | |
| | If all Y toke her agayns his wyl, | Even though; against |
| | He had her agayn, as hit was skyll." | as it turned out |
| 635 | "That was soght," quod that angell, | so
keep away |
| | "For the myghtest not from hym her stell. | |
| | And for he had is cow agayn, | |
| | Thu schalt have the lesse payn. | |
| | Yche wyckyd dede, moe or lesse, | |
| 640 | Schall be pomysched after the trespass, | punished; according to |
| | Bat God almyghty lykusse noght | likes not |
| | Nowdher ell dede, nor evyll thought." | Neither ill deed |
| | As Tundale stod that was ylle lykand, | ill-looking |
| | The wylde cow was broght to is hande. | |
| 645 | Maygrey is chelys hym byhoryth nede | Despair everything, must |
| | To take the cow and forthe here led. | |
| | Hym thought hit was to hym gret Payne, | |
| | Bat he myght not be ther agayn. | |
| | He did the angell commandment. | |
| 650 | By the hornes the cow he best. | did |
| | He cheryschyd the cow all that he myght, | grabbed |
| | And to the brygge he ledath hor ryght. | took good care of |
| | When he on the brygge was, | her |
| | The cow wold not otherwas pas. | further go |
| 655 | He saw the bestys in the lake | |
| | Draw nerre the brygge her pray to take. | their prey |
| | That cow had ner fall over that tyde | nearly; [at] that time |
| | And Tundale on that toður syde. | that other |
| | He was wonderly sor aferd than | afraid |
| 660 | Of gret myscheffe. Up than thei wan. | went |
| | Thei passydon forthe, that thought hym hard, | passed |
| | Tyll thei come to the mydwarde. | middle |
| | Odur wylde he abovyn, odur wyle the cow; | Some times; other times |
| | Bothe the hadon sorow ynow. | They both; enough |
| 665 | Then mette thei hym that bare the corne | bore; grain |
| | Ther went thei bothe. Thei hadon ben lorne, | Where; lost |
| | So narow then the brygge was | |
| | That nowdher myght for otherwas | neither |
| | To hem bothe hit was grette peyn. | |

The Vision of Tundale

- 670 For nowdar myght ther name ageyn.
 Nor nowdar dorst for all myddylend
 Loke byhynd hym, so wer thei ferd.
 The scharpe pykys that thei on yede
 Made hor feet sore to bledde,
 675 So that hor blod ran don that tyde
 Into that watar on eydur syde.
 He prayd Tundale of mercy
 That he wold lette hym paase by.
 He seyd, "Certes Y ne may,"
 680 For Y may not passe for thee away."
 Thei wepton sore. Gret dele ther was,
 For nowdar myght lette oðer pas.
 As Tundale stod with the cow in hondre,
 He saw the angell byfor hym stand.
 685 The angell broght hym from that wo
 And bad hym, "Lette the cow goo."
 And seyd, "Be of gad comford now,
 For thu schalt no more lede the cow."
 Tundale schewyd his fett, that thei wer sore,
 690 And seyd, "Lord, Y may goo no more."
 Then seyd the angell, that hym laddre,
 "Thynke how sore thi feett bledde,
 Therfor dredfull is thi way
 And full grevous, soghth to say."
 695 Then towchyd be the feet of Tundale,
 And as tyd was be all hale.
 Then seyd Tundale, "A blessyd be thu,
 That I am delivered from peyn now."
 The angell seyd, "Thow schalt sore ywyttie,
 700 A grett peyn abydas has yette.
 Fro that sted woll Y thet not save,
 That is full and more woll have.
 And thydar now behovyth theo
 Ageyses that may the not bee."
- dared; the world
afraid
spoke; went
their; bleed
(at) that time
either
- Certainly
- wept; distress
neither; either pass
- comfort
- showed
- led
- truth to say
- touched
- quickly; hastened
- know
- waits for us
- place
- so there now [it] behoves you [to go]*
Against

The Vision of Tundale

VII Passus

- 705 Tundale went forght, as the boke says,
Throw wyldernys and darke ways.
He saw an hows hym agayn
Was more than any montayn.
As an oven that hows was mad,
710 But the mowthe therof was wyd and brad.
Owt at the mowthe the fure brast,
And fowle stynkyng lye com owt fast.
The lye was bothe greet and thro
And start a thowsand fote therfro.
- 715 The sowlys withbowten that beene to noght,
That wykyd gestys thydar had broght.
When Tundale had sen that syght,
He spake to that angell bryght:
"Now goo we to a delfull stedde.
- 720 Yondur Y holde the yatys of dedde.
Who schall delyver me from that sore?
Y wene to be ther forevemore."
Then seyd the angell god,
"Thu schalt be delivryred from that styd."
- 725 "Gret myght he hathe of Goddis grace
That may delyver me from that plas."
The angelle sone hym answerd,
"Tundale," he seyd, "be noght afred.
W'thyne yonde hows byhovyth thee to wend,
- 730 But yonde lye schall thee not schend."
When Tundale com that hows nere
He saw many a fowle bocchere,
Evens in the mydward the fyre thei stond
And scharp tolys in her hond.
- 735 Summe hade syculus, knyvus, and saws,
Summe had twybyll, brodax, and nawgeres,
Cultorus, sythus, kene wytall,
Spytill forkas the sowlys to fall.
Thei wer full ledly en to loke.
- 740 Summe had swerdys and summe hoke,
Summe gret axes in here hond
- forth
wilderness
house in front of him
- Like; oven
wide; broad
fire burst
fire
dangerous
reached
outside; burn to nothing
thicker
- sorrowful place
behold; gates of death
- know (expect)
- place
- yonder house [it] behooves you to go
fire; destroy
- butcher
- tools; their hands
nickles; knives
- pickaxes; broad axes; scythes
Cultorus (plowshares); scythes, sharp withall
- Pitchforks
lathosome
- swords; hooks
their hands

The Vision of Tundale

	That setyd fall scharpe bytond.	<i>harrowd</i>
	Of that syght had he gret wondar.	
	How thei styon the sowlas insondar.	
745	Summe stroke of the hed, somme the thyres, Summe armes, summe legges by the knays, Summe the bodyes in gobedys smal, Yette kevered the sowlys togedur all. And ever thei smotan hem to gobettas agrym.	smote; apart off; thighs arms; legs; knees chunks (gobbed); covered
750	This thought Tundale a full grette peyn. Then seyd Tundale to the angell tho, "Lord, delyver me from this woo. Y beseche yow that Y may passe this care. For sweche a peyn saw Y never are,	<i>before</i>
755	And all odur turmentas that ben schyll, I woll suffar at yowre wyll."	<i>will be</i>
	Then seyd the angell to Tundale thus, "This peyn thee therike full hydous, But in this peyn byhovas thee to bee	<i>[if] behoves you</i>
760	And eke in more that schalt tha see." Of that peyn he thought more aw Then of all the peynas that ever he saw. But sone therafter he saw thase	<i>also</i>
	A peyn that he thought mare:	<i>aw</i>
765	He saw an hydous hward dwell Withinne that hows that was full fell. Of that hward grette dredc he had. Tundale was never so adrad.	<i>more</i> <i>harrowd</i> <i>afraid</i>
	Wen he had seyn that syght,	
770	He bysought of that angell bryght That he wold lett hym away steyl, That he com not in that fowle Hell. But the angell wold not for nofhyng	<i>beneight</i>
	Grant hym his askyng.	<i>mean</i>
775	The wykyd goosts that wer within Abowt hym com with gret dynse, With hor tolys and with her geysse, That he saw hem byfore beyre.	<i>noise</i>
	Among hem thei tokyn Tundale	<i>tools; equipment</i>
780	And hewyd hym in gobettas smale.	<i>bear</i> <i>task</i> <i>harrowd</i>

The Vision of Tundale

- He myght not dye for that peyn,
 For he was sone hole agrynn.
 The most maystar of that hows hyght
 Preston; that was his name ryght.
 785 He saw and hard wyle he was thare
 Gowlyng and gretynge and mykyll care.
 The lye that he saw withowtis passe
 Wastyd all that theryn was.
 Ther was full delfull noyse and crie
 790 And hongar for glotenzye,
 That all the sowlys that therin wer
 Myght not stanche the appetyt there.
 Tundale saw theryn allsoo
 Men and wemen that wer fall woo.
 795 That peymad wer in her prevytys
 And all tognawyn bytwene hor knays.
 He saw within that dongeon
 Many men of relygeon
 That full wer of fowle vermyn
 800 Bothe withowtyn and withyn.
 Strong vermyn on hem he saw,
 And on every lym beton and gnaw.
 Tundale knew summe ther full wyll
 That worthy wer that peyn to fele.
 805 But he com sone owt of that peyn.
 He wyst never how. Than was he fayn.
 Then stodde Tundale in a darke stede,
 That was callyd the caudron of drede.
 As he satte, his syght was dys:
 810 He saw his argell byfor hym.
 He seyd to the angyll, "Alas!
 Wher his the word that wryton was
 That Goddis mercy schuld passe all thyng?
 815 Here see Y therof no tokenyng."
 Then aweryd the angyll and seyd anos,
 "That word desseyves morry a mon.
 Althoaff God be full of myght and mercy,
 Ryghtwesanes behowyth Hym to do therby.
 But He forgyveth more wykkydnes,
- whole
great master; was named
heard while
Howling; lamentation; great grief
fire
Destroyed
hunger
satisfy
private parts
gnawed; their delight
Many
vermis
hor
knew; glad
place
cauldron of dread
sign (see note)
misleads
Although
Justice requires
forgives

The Vision of Tondale

820	Thenne He findeth ryghtwesnes. Tho peynus that thu haddas war but lyght. Geemur thu schuldyst have tholad with ryght."	righteousness suffered knew created
825	Then sayd the angell to Tondale, "Wherto schuld any mon geff tale, Yf God schuld ay forgeffe hym sone All the synnes that he had done Withoutwyn any peyn to fele?"	Why, give heed forgive
830	Thenne nedyd a mon nevir to do wele. But thei that ar wykyd and synfull kyd And no penance in body dyd, God takyth on hem no venjanc, Yf thei hadon any repentina.	needed knows penance vengeance repentance
835	Throw His mercy ar thei save. But yette the sowle som peyn schalt have. Oftontymes from morry a wryght Guddus, that han to hem be dyght, Fro hym God hem hathe ytake	Goods; assigned
840	And dothe here his peynus slake, For insted of peyn is worldas catell, Yf that a esen thotke God of all yll. So schall ther sowly have lase peyn Wen deth to grond hathe hem slayn,	pains lessen possessions (are taken) thank; ill
845	And the seynre from all peyn wende To the blysse withoutwen ende. But in the world is non, Y wene, Be he of synne nevir so cleme, Noght a chyld, for sothe to say,	When sooner
850	That was boron and dead today Have peyn and drede he schall ryght well, Thaw he schull not hem sore fele. To love more God he woll be fayn That soo may schape suche pain,	I believe Not even born; died
855	As the mon that darmpryd is To Hell for his wykydnes. He schall suche joy in Hevyn ysee That more icy myght nevir bee.	Though eager escape comfort

The Vision of Tundale

- That schall greve hym more the syght
Then all the peyn that in Hell is dyght,
When he may see that grette blysse
That he schall forever mysse.
But the prest that the palmer was,
That thu saw ovr the brygge pas,
He saw all the peynas stronge,
But non of hem was he among.
For he lovede God almyghty ay
And servyd Hym well to his pay.
Godes joy may he not mysse,
For he hathe a trone of blysse."
When the angill had thys told
To make Tundale the more bold,
The angell lad hym yett fadormare,
Tundale folowyd with myckyll care
- grieve
established
mis
pilgrim
reward
throne

Passes VIII

- A wonder hydous best thei saw,
Of whom Tundale had grett aw.
That best was bothe felle and kene
And more than he had evar ysene.
Two grett wyngys that wer blacke
Stod on eydur syde on his backe.
Two fer with naylys of yron and stell
He had, that weron full schaep to fell.
He had a long nekke and a smalle,
But the hed was grett withall.
The eyn wer brode in his hed
And all wer bransand as fyr red.
His mowthe was wyd and syde-lyppad;
Hys nose was with yron typpad
Fyr, that myght never slakyd bee.
Dwt of is mowthe com gret plentee.
That best sat evyn in mydward
A lake, that was frozen full hard.
That lake was full of gret yse.
- over
cruel
wings
either
feet
feet
slender
eyes
wide-lipped
nose; tipped
extinguished
frozen
ice

The Vision of Tundale

	Ther had sowlys full gret angwysse.	angwysse
895	That best was bothe fell and gredy And swolled the sowlys that wer redy, And when the sowlys wer theryn, Ther wer thei peyned for her syn.	cruel; greedy swallowed pained
900	In strong fyr ther brand thei ay, Too thei wer net wasted away, And than yeast fro that peyn Tyll thei wer covert agayn.	Till; wasted cast recovered grew; blue
905	Then wax thei blacke and bloo For sorow and care and muche woo. As wemen doight bothe meke and mylde,	 bearing
	When thei ben in beryng of chylde. Thei playnod hem and seydon, "Alas!"	complained (bewailed)
910	Harde wer hor peynus for hor trespass. For strong bytyng thei had withyn With wood edderys and odat vermyne That was withynne hem guarwyng ay.	wild adders
	As thei among snakys lay. When thei her tymys myght know and see, Thei made hem scrow then gaynyd no glec.	snakes times
915	Thei made suche dylle sothe to tellie, That noyse of hem rygh fylled Hell. So dylfull a noyse was never hard Of men and wemen, so thei fied.	dole nearly heard fared
	But her tymbe behovys hem to kepe, When the edders schalld owt of best crepe.	their; [they are] obliged adders; creep
920	Noght only throw peevy place, But throw ylike a lym maketh her trace. Throw hed and soyt, backe and syde, Throw armes and leggys thei com glyde.	private each limb feet began to glide
925	Throw wormbe and brest thei wer crepanad And throw ylk a joynet that thei fand. Thei crepanad owt all attornas. Thei sparad neydar flesse nor bwonas.	creeping found crepe; at once neither flesh; bones
	Theo eddres wer full gret and longe With hedys of yron that wer full stronge.	
930	Thei had mewthys of fyr glowand And glowand tongus owt schetand.	heads glowing sticking

The Vision of Thundale

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------------|
| | Her taylys wer full of smale broddys
As wether hokys wer the oddes. | picks |
| 935 | Whan the vermyn wold have owt crepon
At the holys that thei made open,
Thei myght not wyn owt hor taylys,
Soo fast hyldon the crokyd naylys. | holes; open |
| | Thei turnyd her hedys in agayne that
Throw ylke a joyst thei madon full bare,
Thei fretted hem within and hem grew,
And all ber bowell they owt drew. | held; crooked |
| 940 | Thei stryton her heddys owt and yn;
Her taylys thei myght not owt wyn.
When tho hokys thay hem ageyns tyt, | chewed; gnawed |
| | Thei turnedyd ageyn and toke ther bytt.
Fro hed to fotte ay was gnawynge,
Scrattynge, fretyng, fleyng, and stynsynge. | bowel |
| 945 | To Heven the moyse myght have ben harde,
So hydously thei crydon and sowlie fared.
The sowlyns thei crydon for grett angwys | stack; ready |
| | And pleyndon gretly ther folys.
They wer not lyveryt of hor payn,
For hit was newed ay agayn. | get out |
| 950 | Tundale seyd to the angyll bryght,
"Lord, this is a drefull syght.
Me thynkyght this peyn well more | back pulled |
| | Than all tho peyn that Y saw before."
Then osweryd the angell ageyn | Scratching, eating, flaying |
| 955 | And seyd, "Tundale, this peyn
Ys ordeynyd for men of relygion
That kepud not well hor professyon; | Heaven; heard |
| | For monkis, channons, prestus, and clerkes,
And for odur men and wemen of Holy Kyrke | fared |
| 960 | That deltyus hor bodys yn lechery
Or in any odur maner of foly,
And dothe not as ther ordyr wyll, | angwisch |
| | But ledas hor lyfle after ther wyll.
Thei schall have the same evermore | lamented; sins (follicies) |
| 965 | If thei amend hem not or thes goo before.
And for the same thou hast bene. | delivered |
| | | renewed |
| 970 | | |

The Vision of Tundale

- This schalt thou thole, that thou hast sene." suffer
- When the angyll had seyd thus,
- 975 The fendys, that wer full hydeous,
Within the best Tundale thei ladde,
And ther was he within full hard bestad.
- Berisynge in fyr that was full stronge.
Sethrynh the best hym owt kest,
980 Then was he swolled as he wold brest.
All full of edders than he was,
And non of hem myght from oðer paase.
But wen he shuld delyvered be,
Then he myght the angyll ysee
985 With mylde chere befor hym dyd stond.
He towched Tundale with hys hand
And delyvured hym of that bale.
Then seyd the angyll to Tundale,
"Com furðumore and follow me,
990 For more peyn byhovysð thee to se."
Furðumore thei went than,
But Tundale thought hit no gant.
Thei come into a wey fall derke,
Of that way was Tundale yrke.
995 For ther was no more lyght,
But that at come of the angyll bryght.
That way was strayt and longlastand
And wortz of all that Tundale fand.
Afronte unnethe thei myght passe
1000 So narrow of steppes don that was,
As thei had come from a hye hyll
Don into a deppe dongyll.
The more that Tundale folowyd ay,
The lengur hym thought was that way.
- 1005 Tundale feld a stynkyng ayre;
Then of his lyffe he was in speyr.
Then he sykud and wept full sore,
And seyd to the angyll thore,
"Lord, wydar schalt this way wend?
1010 Me therkyth this way hasse non ende."
- bear
Afterwards; east
swollen; burst
harm
game (pleasure)
troubled
straight; longlasting
found
Forward scarcely they might not pass
steps down
deep valley
sensed; air
despair
sighed
at that time
has

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|------|---|-----------------------------|
| | Then onward the angyll fre
And seyd, "Y wyll tellle thee
How this way lythe and into what sted.
This is the way that lyght to the dedde." | overwest |
| 1015 | Then seyd Tundale, "How may this be?
In boke we may wryton ysee
That the way that schall to the deythe lede
Ys bothe large and mykyll of bredie. | See
leads |
| 1020 | Thys is now a narow way
That thu as ledust, and longe to assay." | great of breadth (see note) |
| | Then seyd the angyll, "Wyll Y wate
That the boke spekys not of this gate,
But of the way of unclanness,
Of fleshely lust that dedly is. | array
<i>Well I know</i> |
| 1025 | Be that way men lightly wende
To the dedde withouten erode." | impurity
By |

EX-PATRIATES

- | | | |
|------|--|--------------------------|
| | Then went thei forghte and fardarmore | ford |
| | By that darke way that they in wose. | |
| | They come to a depe dengyll. | valley |
| 1030 | Of that syght lykyd hym full yll. | |
| | That dengyll full of smythus stood, | forges |
| | And smythus abowthe horn yode | blacksmiths; <i>were</i> |
| | With grett hameris in hor hond | hammers |
| | And gret tongus hoote glowand. | songs |
| 1035 | The smythus wer grymly on to leke. | forges; terrifying |
| | Owt of hor mowthus com grett smoke. | |
| | These smythus wer full of sowlys within | forges |
| | That wepton and mudyn grett dyn. | |
| | In grett fyres thei con hor cast | proceeded to throw them |
| 1040 | And sethen with hameris leydon on fast. | then; hammers laid on |
| | The master of that smythy was bold. | forge |
| | Vlkane was is name bold. | Vulcan |
| | "Lo yond," quod the angyll, "with is gyn | his devining |
| | Hath made mony a man do syn. | |
| 1045 | Wherfor with hym after thare diede, | death |

The Vision of Tundale

	Thei schall be peynod with hym in this stede."	<i>tormented, place</i>
	Then askond Tundale, "Lord fire,	
	Schall Y among yond fendys be,	
	As odur that han servyd well,	
1050	So grett peynas for to fell?"	<i>feel</i>
	Then seyd the angill sone,	
	"Tundale," he seyd, "thu hast so done	
	That thee behovyth to thole this torment."	<i>suffer</i>
	And then to the smythy he went.	<i>forge</i>
1055	The tarmestowrys com remand	<i>tormentors, running</i>
	With fargons and with tongas glowand.	<i>pokers, rings</i>
	Betwene hom hemt thei Tundale ther	<i>seized</i>
	And laddyn hym to muche care.	
	Tundale had thei with hem than	
1060	And leynt the angill stond alar.	<i>alone</i>
	Into that smythy thei hym casta,	<i>forge</i>
	In myddlys the fyr as hem liked best.	
	With gret balyws at hym thei blew,	<i>bellows</i>
	As hit wer as yron ymolton new.	<i>melted</i>
1065	Tundale bygan to brenne yche lym,	<i>flaccid</i>
	But thowardas thei brend with hym	
	Sum of hem thei madyn nesche,	
	As is the watur that is fresche.	
	Sum wer molton as molton ledde.	
1070	Sum as yron glowing redde.	
	Thei cast attonus full smartly	<i>at once</i>
	A thousand sowlys full petously,	<i>pitously</i>
	With yron hormonas thei stode	
	And leyde on hem as thei wer wode.	
1075	A thousand sowlys togedur thei dong	<i>laid on, crazy</i>
	In a pott full wonderly long.	<i>beer</i>
	As men schall tempore yron and stell,	
	And that was a grysly peyn to fele.	<i>temper</i>
	That torment most thei long dre,	<i>undergo</i>
1080	But yett myght thei not fully dye.	
	These tarmestowrys wer fowle and blake.	<i>tormentors</i>
	Ylike osto odur in cownsell spake	<i>counsel</i>
	What peynas thei myght the sowlys wyrke;	<i>work</i>
	Of wykkyd labours thei wer not yrke.	<i>tired</i>

The Vision of Tundale

- 1085 Yet thei did hom more peyn.
Thei smyton hom all insondor ageyn.
Odur smythus wer ther that tyde
Of another smyth ther besyde.
Thei seyd, "Habbath yowr wel her yowr pay." blacksmiths
1090 Kest ye hom hydior, lett us asay."
Thai lepedon and roredyn and criedon fast
And bad tho sowlys to hom kast.
And so thei dedyn with greyt talent,
And odur smythus thei con hom hent
1095 With holys and tongus boote glowand,
That thei hydion in hor hand.
Hom thought thei wer not smythyd ynoghe,
Up and don the develes horn droghe,
And in strong fyr thei brendon horn ay.
1100 Tyll thei wer rye brand away. nearly
But sone then aftur was Tundale
Delyvered owt of that greyt bale
Ageyns that grysly smyths wylle.
But all tho todar sowlys laffon stille.
1105 When Tundale com owt of that payn,
He was sone kevered ageyn.
Sone the angylls voys he hard.
The angyll asked hym how he fide.
"Tundale," he seyd, "now may thu see
1110 Weroft thi synnas servyd thee.
Thee behowyt to have a gret angwys
For thi delytes and thi folys.
These that thu art delyvered froo,
Wer ordeymyd the peyn fer to doo,
1115 For with that same company
Folayddyn thee yn thi foly."
Tundale stod and cowthe nocht say,
For his wytte was ner away.
Then seyd the angyll as he stood,
1120 "Looke thu be of comfod god.
Yf all that thu have had tene
In sum peyn that thu hast sene,
Grettar peynas yett schalt thu see
- blacksmiths
forge
You have had, enjoyment
Cast; array
Iraze

blacksmiths proceeded to seize them
glowing hot songs
held in their hands
beaten enough
pulled

gruesome blacksmith's
the other, left

recovered

in what way
deserve

from

Followed
could

suffering

The Vision of Tundale

- 1125 Herafter that abydus thee,
Fro hem schalt thou schap full well,
But thee byhovyth sum to fell.
Thu schalt see or we wende
Sowlyns in peyn withowtyn ende.
Her mysdedys hem dampenyd has;
Therfor her song is ay 'Alan.'
But odar that soghton Goddyns mercy
Passon that peyn well sycarly."
When the angyll had this sayd,
His hond upon Tundale he layd.
Then was he hool and feld no soor;
Yett went they farthe furdarmore.
- waits for
escape
you are obliged to feel some
Their; them damned
Pax; safety
whole; felt

X Passas

- As the angyll and he went in company,
Ther com a cold all sodenly.
Sache a cold Tundale feld
1140 That his lymes myght hym not weld.
He was ner freson to dedde.
Strong darkenes was in that stedde.
Then was Tundale fall ferd,
For more peyn never he hadde.
1145 For drede of peyn fall sore he qwoke.
Hym thought his hedde all toschake.
All his peyn byforyn, hym thought,
So muche as that grevyd hym nocht.
Then he spake to tho angyll sone
1150 And seyd, "Lord, what have Y done?
Y am so combret fott and hond
That Y may not upryght stond."
Then the angyll hym not onsweryd.
Then wept Tundale and was feed.
1155 He myght not steron lythe nor lym.
The angyll went away from hym.
When he myght not the angyll see,
Dele he made that was pytē.
- control
quaked
shook
grieved
numbred
stir joints; limb
Dale

The Vision of Tundale

- He went forthe ay furdarmare.
1160 To Helle the way lay evyn there.
A deelfull criye he hard sone
Of sowlys that wer in peyn don,
That dampnyd wer in peyn endles
For hor synne and hor wykkydnes.
- 1165 He hard a strong noyse of thondur;
To here that dyn hit was grett wonder.
Noo haft myght thenke, nor no tong telle
How hydous was the noyse of Helle.
Then was that sowle in grett dowte. anxiety
- 1170 He lokyd in every syde abowte.
Ever whan come that hydous dyn,
He lokyd to have be takyn in.
But he saw hym besyde
A deppe putt mackyll and wyde. deep pit great
pit; coming
- 1175 Owt of that pyt he saw comand
A grett flas of fyr all stynkand.
Sache a stynke eom of that hole
That he myght not long hit thole;
Owt of that dyke ther ros even endure
dark
- 1180 A pylar that ner raght to Hevon.
All brannard that pylar was
With lye abowte as a coempan.
He saw fendys and sowlys fyce
On that pylar bothe low and hys. pillar; nearly reached
fire; circumference
- 1185 Thei flow ay up and doo fast,
As sparkelys of fyr thoro wyndus blast.
And when the sowlys wer beent to askas all,
In myddys the dyke they con fallie.
They keverdyn that and wer broyght agayn; recurred
- 1190 On this wyse was ever newyd hor payn.
Tundale had lever than all myddelerd
Have turned ageyn, soo was he feed.
But ageyn myght he not goo,
Ne styr hys lyms to nor friso. rather
back
- 1195 As he was clomyd, stylly he stod.
He was so feed he was ney wod.
With hymselfe he began to stryve enfeebled
nearly mad

The Vision of Tundale

- And his owne chekys all toyeve.
He grevddie, he gowlyd, hym was full woo;
- 1200 For he myght not ageyn goo.
"Alas," he seyd, "what is tho best red?" advice
For now Y wot, Y am but dedde."
Tho wykyd gostus, as thei flow
Abowt the pele in that low,pillar; fire
1205 Thei hardon that gowlyng and that crye;heard; yowling
Thei come to hym fall hastyly.
Brennand holcys with hem thei brought;
To torment sowlys wez thei wroght.
Thei gretton hym, that sowle that meyné,greeted; group
1210 "Kaytyfe, wealand myght thu bee.Wretch; surrounded
Thu metast well with us at home;met
Tell us now fro wessex tha come.whence
For thi wykkydnes and thi foly
In fyr to beinne art thou worthy.
- 1215 For thu come in noo peyn yet to fele.cool
Here in Hell fyr we woll the kele,
For now with us schalt thou wende
And dwell in Hell withowtyn ende.
Of owe maneres we schall thee kenne.
- 1220 Without kelyng schalt thou bremme,customs; trick
Evermore to bremme in fyr need,ooling
For thu schalt never passe this steed.
Thee tharre not thynde, on no wyse,place
1225 Too be delyvered of this angwyse
In darknes schalt thou ever bee,
For lyghtnes schalt thou never see,
Trust thu not helpe to have,
For noo mercy schall thee save.
- 1230 Weochyd gost, we schall thee lede
To Hell gatys for thi myndede,
For in thi lyffe the bare thee yle
And wroghast all ageyn Goddis wyll.
Wherfor we wyll thee with us bere
- 1235 Too Satanas owe manere,his
That lythe depe in the pytt of Helle,
And with hym schalt thou ther dwelle.

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|------|---|-------------------------------|
| | He gaffe thee full eryll reyd, | advice |
| | That broght thee heddar to this steyd. | hither |
| | Ovne late to com woll hym falle | Too late |
| 1240 | To delyver thee from us alle. | |
| | But now sykyr may thu bee | certain |
| | That tha schalt never more hym see." | |
| | The wykkyd goestus togedyr spake | |
| | And seyd, "This sowle wolle we take. | |
| 1245 | To Satanus cast we hym, that grymly gioconus. | grouans |
| | He schalle hym swolow all atcoonus." | |
| | They brawneschedyn hym and manast fast | threatened; menaced hard |
| | To Sathanas that sowle to cast. | |
| | Ther he lay depe in Helle pynt. | |
| 1250 | Thydour they saydon thei wold hym flyte. | thrust |
| | A hydous noyse the fendys made. | |
| | Her eyen wer brannand and brade; | Their eyes; burning, broad |
| | As brennand lampes glowand they ware. | lampes |
| | Full grymly con they on hym stare. | |
| 1255 | Her teyt wer blacke, scharpe, and long. | Their neck |
| | With taskus both grett and strong. | |
| | Her bodyus wer lyke dragontys; | scorpions |
| | Her tayles wer lyke schorpyontys. | crooks |
| | They had naylys on her krocs, | anchor hooks |
| 1260 | That wer lyke askyr hokys | steel |
| | As they wer made all of stèle; | |
| | The peyntus wer full scharpe to fele. | |
| | They had wyngus long and brade; | |
| | As backe wyngus wer thei made. | bat's wings |
| 1265 | Whedur they wold, low or hye. | |
| | With hor wyngus myght they flye. | |
| | They grynyd on hym and bleryd here yye. | snarled; stuck out their eyes |
| | That wondur hit was that he dyd not dye. | |
| | Then com the angyll that hym ladde; | |
| 1270 | Tho fendys than fast away fledde. | frightened |
| | "Tundale," he seyd, "thu wer full radde. | |
| | Now may thu make joy and be glad. | |
| | Thow was the sone of peyn full ryght, | son |
| | And now thu art the sone of lyght. | son |
| 1275 | For now forward sycur thu bee; | safe |

The Vision of Tundale

- Goddus maney schall helpe thee.
God haſſe thee grantyd, thou mayſt be ſeyn,
That thou ſchalt fele noo more payn.
But Y well well that thou wette
1280 Moo peynus ſchalt thou ſee yette.
Com foryt with me ſmerty;
Y ſchall thee ſchew thi moſt enemy
To moſkynd that ever was,
That tyses al men to trepas."
1285 A lytall furthmore they yode,
And ſone at Hell gatus thei stode.
Ther Tundale ſaw a greyt pytie,
That all thi world myght not hit dytie.
"Com hydour," quod the angyll bryght.
1290 "Thou ſchalt here ſee an hydous vyght.
Stond ner thi pytie, and loke adon.
Thou ſchalt ſee her an hydous demou.
That pytie is ay darke as nyght
And ever thou ſchalt be withoutyn lyght.
1295 Bothe fendys and sowlys, that therin is,
Thou ſchalt ſee bothe more and leſſe.
And Sathanas, that lythe bound in Helle grond,
Thou ſchalt hym ſee in a lytall stond.
But they ſchall ſoo ywrekyd bee
1300 That non of hem ſchall ſee thee."
Tundale than to the pytie wenſt
Throw the angyll coemandmente.
He lokyd don with grett aw.
Sathanas at the grond he ſaw.
1305 So ugly was that loghly wyght
Never ar was ſeyn ſo hydous a vyght.
And ſo orybly he fard,
And ſuch dull he ſaw ther and hard,
That yeffe a mon had varely
1310 An hundryd hedys on wos body
And as moriy mowthus wiſhall,
As to yche hed ſchold falie,
And yche a mowthe above the chyn
Had an hundryd tongys within.
- glad
know
forth; quickly
greatest enemy
notices
wife
fill up
while
compelled
loathsome
before
horribly
dole; heard
(f. truly)
belong

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 1315 | And ylike a tong cowthe all the wytte
That all men have that lyvythe yete,
All wer not ynow to tell
The peyn that he saw in the pytte of Hell.
But Tundale toke full god kepe | eack; knew; learning
enough
<i>paid close attention</i> |
| 1320 | On Satanas, that lay soo depe,
And avysede hym of that syght
On what maner he myght dyscrivyn hit aryght.
He cowthe not wetton, he was so grym,
In what maner he myght dyscrivyn hym. | considered
describe
tell |
| 1325 | Hym thought he was as grett to know
As any best that ever he saw.
His body was bothe bood and thykke,
And as blakke as ever was pykke.
So blakk was non, as hym semyd than. | horrible
<i>piss</i> |
| 1330 | Hym thought he had the schappe of a mon.
He was bothe grett and strong.
And of an handryt cubytes long.
Twenty cubytes was he head,
And ten of thyknes was he mad. | shape
cubits |
| 1335 | And when he gaput, or when he gonas,
A thowsand sowlyns he swoluwys atomas.
Byfor and behynd hym was kende
On his body a thowrand hande.
And on ylike a honde was ther seyns | gapes; opens his mouth wide
at once
ones |
| 1340 | Twenty fyngrys with nayles keyn.
And ylike a fyngur semyd than
The leymthe of an handryt spoonne
And ten spoonne abowt of thyknes;
Ylike a fyngar was no les. | sharp
<i>finger seemed</i>
spare |
| 1345 | Hys nayles semyd of yron stroeg.
Full scharpe they wer and full long,
Lengur than evur was spere of werre,
That armyd men wer wont to berre.
Mony teight he had that was so wondur. | war |
| 1350 | With horn he gnaw sowlyns insondur.
He had a mache long snout,
That was ful large and brod abowt.
And hys mowthe was full wyde | teeth
gnawed
nose |

The Vision of Tundale

	With hongyng hyppus on cyther syde.	<i>hanging lips</i>
1355	Hys tayle was greyt and of gret leathe, And in hit had he fall gret strynthe. With scharpe hokys that in is tayle stykythe The sowlys therwith sore be prekydthe.	<i>pricked</i>
	Apon a gredyon fall hot glowand That fowle fende was ay lyggand. Brennand colys lay ay under.	<i>gridiron</i>
1360	But they wer dyn, and that was wondur, Many fendys as gloand folis, With balya blowyng ay at tho colys.	<i>lying</i>
	1365 So many a sowle abowt hym flow, In myldys the fyr and in the low, That Tundale had full gret farly How the world myght bryng forthe so many Satanas, that is soo grym,	<i>fiery imp</i>
1370	Lay ther bondon yche a lym. With yron cheynas gret and strong On that gredyon that was so long. As Tundale thought, the cheynas was Lappud abowt with walland bras	<i>flame</i>
	1375 And the sowlys that he best With hya bondes wer all tornet. He thrast hem insonder, as men dos Gragbys, thrastyng owt the wos. When he had groend hem alle	<i>bound</i>
	1380 Into the fyr he lette hem falle. And yeit they kevered all ageyn, And ever putte to new peyn. Tundale hard and saw aliso How Satanas groened for woo,	<i>chains</i>
1385	Forwby that he was bond so fast. At ylike a sykyng he con owt cast A thousand sowlys; from hym they flow Owt at his mowthe into the low, They wer sone scateryd wyde	<i>Surrounded; boiling brass</i>
	1390 Abowt hym ther on ylike a syde. But that peyn was not ynow, When he ageyn his ande drew,	<i>seized</i>
		<i>torn to pieces</i>
		<i>Grapes, pressing; juice</i>
		<i>recovered</i>
		<i>groaned</i>
		<i>Because</i>
		<i>flame</i>
		<i>scattered</i>
		<i>breath</i>

The Vision of Tundale

- All the sowlys he cast owt,
That wer yscateryd rond abowt,
- 1395 He swalowyd hem agrym ychon
With smoke of pycche and of brymston.
The sowlys that passyd owt of hys bond
Fellon into the fyr and brand.
- When thei agrym keveryd wro,
1400 With his tayle he smot hem sore.
- Thus peymyd he tho sowlys and dud hem woo
And hymselfe was peymyd aliso.
- The more peyn that he thare wroght
To tho sowlys that thydar were broght.
- 1405 The more peyn his owne was,
And fro that peyn may he not passe.
- The angyll seyd to Tundale,
"Here may thu see muche bale.
- Satanas," he seyd, "this ugly wyght
1410 That semyth soo muche unto thy syght.
- He was the first creature
That God made aftur His fygure.
- Fro Hevon throw pryd he fell adon
Hydour into thin depe doerion.
- 1415 Here ys he bounde, as thu may see,
And schall tyll Doomsday bee.
- For yeffe they saylyd, that hym schuld hold,
Heyvon and erthe trobail he wold.
- Of tho that thu mayst see with hym,
1420 Sun they ar of Adames kyn
- And odur angells, as Y thee telle.
- That owt of Hevon with hym felle.
- Ther ys neyder sowle ne fend,
But they ar diaspred withouttyn ende.
- 1425 And mony mo hyder schalle come
Or that hyt bee the Day of Dome,
- That foesakyn Goddes law
And Hys warkys wyl not know,
- Bothe lewyd men and clarkys,
- 1430 That lovyth synne and cursyd warkys.
- Thesse sowlys, that thu hast here yseyn,
- recovered were*
- first*
likeness
- dangere*
- Doomsday (Judgment Day)*
- woable*
- Judgment Day*
- works*
clerkz

The Vision of Tundale

- In all the peynas they have beyn.
 Now ar they cast on this manere
 To Satanas to thole peyne here.
- 1435 And whosoe is broght to thys kare
 Schall dwelle therin forevermore.
- 1438 Men that ar of muche myght,
 That don to pore men wrong and unryght,
 And woll algate fulfylle hor wyll,
- 1440 Whedur hyt be god or ylle,
 And streyn the pore, that ar lesse,
 Thei aron prynces of wykydnes.
- In strong torment schull thei bee
 With sendys, that have of hom posté."
- 1445 Tundale seyd to the angyll sone,
 "Syr, Goddas wylle behovys to be don,
 But o thyng wold Y fayne lere.
 Why gevith not God suche power
- 1450 Too all they that aron hold gad men,
 That throw ryght wollyn edur ken,
 As He dothe wykkyd men tylle
 That evermore wykkydnes wyl fullifly?"
- 1455 The angyll seyd that, "Suntyme lettus
 The wykkydnes of suggestus
 That wolle not be reulyd welle,
 Therfor gret peynas behovus hom to fele,
- 1460 And for suntyme God wolle nocht
 That the gad men of this world wer broght
 To over muche worldys gaddus havynge.
 Lost here tyme of gadnes thei wold leavyng.
- 1465 Thes fowle kaytyf, for all his myght,
 His not callyd pryme of ryght,
 But bys men mey hym calle
 Cheffle of markenes and pryncypalle
- 1470 All theys peynas that thei hast sene,
 To reckyn hem all bedene,
 That ordeynyd ben for monsus mysse,
 Ar but lytyll to the regard of thys."
 "Sartus," quod Tundale, "ye say well,
 Y have more dred now as Y fele,
- endure
grief
(see note)
- always
are
- over them power
- must
like to learn
- through good others will learn
- allows
subjects
ruled
- lose
This final wretch
- Chief; darkness; principal
- together
man's sin
with regard to
Surely

The Vision of Tundale

- Of this syght and more awe
Then of all the peyn that evar Y sawe.
Therefore, Y pray yow that ye me lede
Fro this syght and fro thys deode.
- 1475 Sun felows have Y here ysec
That sunnymse with me prevey have bee. close
dwelling
Now is heo wosnyng here full depe;
Y cleyn forsake hor felyschepe.
- And to that had Y been worthy
1480 Ner that Jesu on me had mercy; Unles
To that same peyn schuld Y have goo
And dwellyd therin forevur and oo." always
This woode the angyll hard, that ther stood,
And spake to hym with myld mod.
- 1485 "A blessed sowle Y may thee calle,
For the art passyd thy peymas all. refined
And all the sygthtas that thee have diyred,
Therof now thaue thee never be aifred.
- Thu hast now seyn in sorow and stryffit
1490 Men that wer of wykyd lyffe.
And now schalt tha see that blyue
That God hathe holy chosen for Hys,
And therfor glad may thu be.
Cums now forthe and follow me."

Primum Gaudium

- 1495 Tundale dyd hys commandment
And with the angyll forthe he were.
Sone wax hit bryght as the day, grew
And the darkenes was sone away,
And the drede that Tundale hadde
- 1500 Was avey; than was he glad.
Sone he thonkyd God of Hys grace
And followyd forthe the angyllis trace.
By that they hadon gon a lytall stonde.
They saw a walle was feyr and rounde. for
- 1505 Fall hye hit was, as Tundale thought;

The Vision of Tundale

- But sone within the angyll hym brought.
Men and women saw he there
That semed full of sorow and care,
For they had bothe hongur and thurst
1510 And grett travell withowtyn rest. *travell*
Gret cold they hadon alsoo,
That diadde horn sorow and made horn woo.
Hem wantedyn clothys and foode; *They lacked*
As downmpe bestys, makyd they yode. *dumb; went*
- 1515 Her penance was hard to see.
But lyght they had grett plente.
"Thys folke," quod the angyll, "aryn all save,
But penance yett behovys horn to have.
All leved they well in honeste, *lived*
1520 Yette grevyd they God in sum parté.
Honestly and well wold they leve,
But ouer lytall god wold they geve,
Nowdar to clothe nor to fede
The powre men that had gret nede.
- 1525 Therfor wolle God sumtyme that they had peyn,
Thoro wykyd stoenus of wynd and reyn, *rain*
And throw greyt hongur and thurst
But after He woll that they com to rest."
The angyll wold noo more say,
- 1530 But went forght fast upon his way, *forth*
And Tundale folowd after fast.
They come to a gate at the last.
That gate was openyd horn ageyn,
And in they went. Tundale was fayn. *glad*
- 1535 A feld was ther of feyr flowrys *field; fair*
And bewyd after all kyn colorwrys.
Of how com a swete smyllie, *blued; kind of colors*
Swetter than any tong may telle.
That place was soo cleare and soo bryght *smell*
- 1540 Tundale was joyfull of that syght;
Full clerly ther schen the sones
That well was hym that ther myght wonne.
Mony feyr trees in that place stood *trees*
With all kynnes fruyt that was gad. *types of*

The Vision of Tundale

- 1545 That Tundale hard ther ay amonge
Foll swet noyse of fowlis song.
Foll mckyl folke ther was seen
That of all kynne syn wer mad clese
And deliyered owt of all kyn peyn.
- 1550 They wer joyfull and full feyn.
In myddys that place was a welle,
The feyryst that any mon might of telle.
From that ran mony stremes sere
Of water, that was both feyre and clere.
- 1555 Tundale thought ther joy ynoeghe.
He spake to the angyll and loeghe.
"Lord," he seyd, "here is greyt solace.
Leyt us never wynde from this place."
The angyll seyd, "Hit beys not so,
- 1560 Fardarmore behovus has to goo.
The sowlys that thu syst here within
Has ben in peyn for hor syn.
But they ar clamyd throw Goddis grace
And dwellen here now in this place.
- 1565 But yett heanas may they noghyt
To the blysse of Hevon to be broght.
Thawye they ben clamyn of all yle,
Here mot thei abydon Goddis wylle.
The well that thu hast seyn here,
- 1570 With the water that spryngis soo clere,
Ys calyd be scytle the well of lyfe.
The name of that welle is full ryte.
Whosoo drynkyth of hit ryght weyll,
Hongur schall he never yfeyll.
- 1575 Ne thrust schall he neyvermore,
But lykynge have withowttyn care.
Yeffe he wer old, withowttyn peyn
Hyt wold make hym yong ageyn."

birds'
many folk
kind of rice

stremes various

enough
laughed

depart
it may not be so

as

see

sense

Thought
awair

by reason
well-dressed

thirst
pleasure

The Vision of Tundale

II Gaudium

- Yet forðarmore the angyll yede,
1580 And Tundale folowyd with god spede.
Sone then alþur, as they went,
He beheld and tolo god tent
Tyll a plas wer they schuld passe,
Wer mony a lewde mon wassie.
- 1585 Tundale had seyn sum of horn ase
And knew full weyl what thei ware.
Among horn too kynggus saw hee,
That wer sunstyme of greyt posté.
Tho whyle they lewyd on bon and bled,
- 1590 Bothe they wer men of trithe fall gudd.
The ton of horn Cantaber hyght;
That nodar was callyd Donatus ryght.
Then Tundale spake to the angyll free,
"Lord," he seyd, "what may thys bee?"
- 1595 These too kynggus, that Y see here,
They wer men of greyt powere.
They wer bothe stowt and kene.
In horn was lyfull mercy aseen.
Ayder of hem hatyd odar,
- 1600 As curiyd Caym and his brodar.
Sertas, syr, me thenkyth ferly.
How they myght be so worthyly
To come to thys joyfull stedde.
Me thynkyght they wer worthy to be dedde."
- 1605 The angyll thought hyt gret nede
To bryng hym owt of that drede
And seyd, "The schald wyte why
That God of horn hathe marcy.
Byfor hor deythe ther fylle suche schamse
- 1610 That they had verey repenteance.
For Cantaber, when he felle seke,
To God con he hys hart meke.
He made a vow with delfall cry
To yeld hymselfe to God almyghtly
- 1615 And all hys lyffe in penans to bee

way

paid attention

ordinary man

before

two kings

power

lived in bone and blood

The one of them, was called

The other

staunch; brave

them

Each; hated the other

Certainly; a wonder

chance

true repentance

he was able to make his heart receptive

The Vision of Tundale

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| When he were hole and had postē. | healthily, power |
| Donatas was in a preson strong; | prison |
| Beefor hys dethe ther was he long, | |
| All hys goddis gaffe he away | goods gave |
| 1620 To pore men for hym to pray. | |
| In grett pevertē was he withstande, | poverty; placed |
| And in preson hys lyffe he laddle. | |
| Yeffe all they wer kynggys of myghtt, | Even though |
| Yette they dyodon in pevertē dyghtt. | died; set |
| 1625 Therfor God wold not hom forsake, | |
| But to Hys blyssac He wold hom take. | confess |
| Of all hor synnas they con hom scryve. | mercy |
| Therfor marcy behovus hom have." | |
| Fall mckyll joy saw Tundale thare, | |
| 1630 But yett went they bothe fardarmare. | decorated |
| They saw an halle was rychely dyght; | |
| Tundale saw never so feyt a syght. | |
| The wallys semyd gold of that hows | |
| Full well ysett with stonas full precyous. | stones; precious |
| 1635 The rofe semyd of carbunkyll ston. | roof; carbuncle |
| Dorrus nor wyndows was ther non, | Doors |
| But moray entrys and thei wer wyde, | entries |
| That stodon ay open on every syde, | |
| For all the that wold in passe | |
| 1640 Was non lattyd that ther was. | prevented |
| Hyt semyd as bryght, bothe far and ner, | |
| As evur was sonne that schon here, | |
| Large and round were the worrys. | rooms |
| The flore was paved with precyous stonas. | |
| 1645 The halle was withowtien post. | column |
| Hyt semyd an hows of gret cost. | |
| Hyt schon within and withowtie. | |
| Tundale lokyd over all abowtie. | |
| He saw a seyt ryche apenalty, | seat richly adorned |
| 1650 Of red gold fynly enarmelyd | finely decorated |
| Clothas of gold and sylke gret plentē | |
| Saw he yspred apon that seytē. | spread; seat |
| He saw syme on that seytē | |
| Kyng Cornuke, that was full greyll. | |

The Vision of Tundale

- 1655 Hys clothynge was of ryche hew.
 Tundale full well that kyng knew.
 Meche pepall to hym soght,
 And ryche gefilus they hym broght.
 Befor hym stodde they full gladde,
 And muche joy of hym thei made.
- 550
- 1660 Tundale stood ner and toke gad kepe,
 And byheld that grett worchepe
 Tho men to Kyng Cormake thas dydde,
 That sumtyme was hys lord kydde.
- paid attention
- 1665 For he was sumtyme with hym of meyne,
 Therfore farly of that syght had bee.
 Prestus and deykenus come ther mony:
 Befor hym a greyt company
- known
company
wonder
Priests; deacons
- 1670 All revescyd, as they schald syng Mass
 With ryche clothas of holynes.
 That halle was seytte, within and withoutte,
 With greytt rycheuse all abowttie,
- veined; Mass
- 1675 With cowpus and chalys rychely dyghit,
 With sensowrys of silver and gold bryght,
 With basseymas of gold fayr and seemly,
 And with tabylls peyntyd rychely.
- cups; chalices
censers; silver
basins
tables
- 1680 Tundale thought, yeffe he had no mare
 But that joy, than he saw thare,
 He had of joy greytt plente,
 So greyt marthe and joy ther saw bee.
- 1685 They knelyd befor that kyng alle,
 Tho folke that comys into the halle,
 And seyd, "Weyll is thee on yche a syde,
 And weyll thee mott evur betyde."
- 1690 For tho warkys of thi hondys free
 We have now presented here to thee."
 Then spake Tundale to the angyll beyghe,
 For he was amerveld of that syght.
- amazed
- 1695 And seyd, "Of all tho that Y here see,
 Non hym servyd in legi posté,
 Therfor grett farly have Y here
 That they hym worscheppe on this manere."
 Then answerd the angyll curtesly
- as a vassal
wonder

The Vision of Tundale

- 1695 And seyd to hym, "Well wott Y
 That of all tho that tha may see
 Was never non of hys meyné,
 But sum wer pore pylgrimes kyd
 Too whom oft hys charyté he dyd.
 And sum wer men of Holy Chyrche,
 1700 To hold hem was he never yeke.
 Therfor wold God, full of myght,
 That hyt be yold throw hor hondas ryght."¹
 "Syr," quod Tundale, "haght he no torment
 Sothen that he owt of the world went?"
 1705 Then answerd the angyll ageyn
 And seyd, "He suffordy mony a peyn,
 And in more torment schall he bee.
 Thu schalt abyde and the sothe ysee."
 Anon the hows wax darke as nyght,
 1710 That before was clere and bryght.
 And all the men that therin wer,
 They laft hor servyse and dyd no more.
 The kyng turnd then from hys seyt.
 He grynde, he gawlyd, hys dull was gret.
 1715 Tundale folowyd after sone
 To wytte wat schuld be with hym ydone.
 He saw mony men sytt kneland,
 With hor hondas up to God prayand,
 And seyd, "God lord, and Thi wyll hit bee,
 1720 Have mercy on hym and pysté."
 Then saw he hym in gret bareyt
 And in a fyr to the navyll yseytt
 And above from the navyll upward
 Clothed with an hayre scharge and hard.
 1725 "This peyn," quod the angyll, "behovyth hym to have
 Yche a day onus, as God vouchesave,
 Forwhy he kept hym not clene
 Fro that tyme that he wedlyd had bene,
 And also he breke hys othe

company
knowe

support; unwilling

had
since

grew

walked; stode (surren)

know
knowing
praying

distress
travel

hairshirt

once; ground
because; pure

broke; oath

¹ That is (i.e., fealty) be yielded by their right hands.

The Vision of Tundale

- 1730 That he had made to wedlocke bothe.
 Yche day by ryght he been schall bee,
 Sette unto the navyll, as the myght see.
 And forwby that he commandyd to sloop
 An erle that he hatyd as his foo,
 because: to be killed
 1735 That was slain for hatered
 Besyde Seynt Patrycke in that sted.
 Therfor he tholuth, as thu wottas wele,
 This hayre that is full hard to fele.
 That grevys hym wher the knothas lyes
 place
 suffer; understand
 1740 And dothe hym full grett angways.
 Of all oðer peyn is he qwyte
 Save of these too, as thu mayst wytte."
 Then seyd Tundale anon ryght thus,
 "How longe schall he suffor thys?"
 two
 1745 The angyll seyd, "like a day owrys three
 This grett peyn sufferyn schall bee,
 And the space of won and twenty owrys
 He schall have joy and greet honowrys."
 hours
 And with that the angyll went fardermore
 1750 Too oðer blyssys that was there.
 there

III Gaudium

- Sone they saw thro syght of yye
 A wall that was wondur hye,
 All of bryght sylver all to see,
 But hit had no yatys nor entré.
 eye
 1755 Within that wall they wer sone togedar,
 But he west not how they com thydur.
 Ther they fwend a full delyttabull place
 That was falle of marthe and solace.
 found; delightful
 Tundale lokyd abowte hym thanne
 1760 And saw mony a mon and woman
 Synggand ay so maryly
 And makand joy and melody.
 Ther they honowryd God allweldand
 And pleydon and song to not ceassand,
 Singing
 making
 all-ruling
 played; ceasing

The Vision of Tundale

- 1765 "Blysse be to God of myghtas most,
Fadar and Son and Holy Gost."
Hoe clothas wer precyous and new,
As whyte as snow that ever dyd snow.
They wer joyfull and blythe ynogh
1770 And song and made myrthe and logh.
They lovd God in Trynité,
Nott cessand of that solemnys.
And ay as they wer syngand
Her vocys was ever acordant,
1775 As melodyes of musyk clere,
That full delectabull was to here.
Ther was gret swetnes and lykynge
And joy and marthe withouttyn sesyng.
Honesté, beawné, and cleanness,
1780 And helthe withouttyn sekenes.
They weren all off wylle free
In parfyte love and charyté.
The swette savour that ther was
All the swetnes of eyrthe dud it paase.
1785 "This joy," quod the angill bryght,
"Hathe God ondeynd for weddyd men ryght
That levan in cleyne maryage
And keputhe hor bodys from owtrage,
And for hem that hor guddys gevyn
1790 Too the pore that in myscheff levyn,
And for hem that techen dylygenly
Hoe sogettus to lobyn God almyghty
And chastyn hem after hor myght
When they done wrong and lyffe not right,
1795 And for hem that Holy Chyrche honowrys
And mayntenyth hem and socksors.
For tho that don wylle schall at gret Dom here
The voys of God that well say, 'Com neer
My Fadar, blesyd chyldyr free,
1800 And receyve My kyndam with Mee
Ondeynd and dyght for man
Seythyn the tyme that the word began."
Tundale prayd with god wylle
- snowed
happy
laughed
ceasing; celebration
always
voicer; harmonious
ceasing
beauty; purity
sickness
savor
pure
keep; outrage
distress
treach
subjects
chastise
maccors
well; Judgment
children
kingdom

The Vision of Tundale

- 1805 The angell that be myght dwell stytle.
 The angell gaff hym noo answer,
 For he wold not doo bys prayer.

IV Gaudium

- Pardunore yett then went thay,
 Withowtyn travayll or peyn, her way,
 And ylkor, as they went abowte, *travail*
 1810 Come to Tundale and to hym dyd lowtie
 And haylsyd hym and callyd hym ryght *bow*
 By bys name, as he hyght.
 They made gret joy at is metyng,
 For they wer faym of his comyngh *greeted*
 1815 And thonkyd God almyghty,
 That hym delyvered thoro Hys mercy,
 And seydon, "Honour and lovyng myght bee
 To the Loed of blys and pyté,
 That wold not the deythe of synfull men,
 1820 But that they tarme and love ageyn;
 And throw Is mercy wold ordeyn
 Too delyver this sowle from Helle peyn
 And wold bryng hym thus gracyously
 Among this holy company."
- bliss and pity (compassion)*
does not want
Unless, live
His

V Gaudium

- 1825 The angell and Tundale yett fadir went,
 And Tundale lokyd and toke gad tent.
 They saw a walle, as they schuld passe,
 Well herre than that todar wasse; *higher*
 1830 That wall semyd to Tundale syght
 As hyt wer all of gold bryght.
 That was schynand and more clere
 Than ever was gold in this world here.
 Tundale thought more joy of that walle
 To behold, that bryght metallie,

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1835 | Then hym thought of the solemynt
And of the joy that he had see.
Within that wall come they sone,
As they hadon erward done.
Tundale beheld that place thare. | <i>celebration</i> |
| 1840 | So fayr a plas saw he never are,
Ne he, ne noo eyrthely man,
As that was, that he saw anon.
Therin saw he, as hym thought.
Mory a trone all of gold wrought | <i>before</i> |
| 1845 | And of precyous stonys seer,
That wer sette ther on dyverse manere.
With ryche clothys wer they kevered ychon,
So ryche was ther, eyr never see he non.
Holy men and wemen bothe | <i>Neither he, nor any earthly man</i> |
| 1850 | Saten in horn, clad in ryche clothe.
He saw abowt horn in that tyde
Fayr honourmentys on yche a syde.
All that he saw wer full bryght.
Tundale saw never suche a syght. | <i>plowmen</i> |
| 1855 | Ne noo hert myght thynke of eyrthely man
Soo fayr a syghte, as saw he than.
Tho greyt bryghtnes of Goddess face
Schon among horn in that place.
That bryghtnes schon more cleer | |
| 1860 | Then ever schon any sonne here.
Allwey hit was fayr and schyre
And semyd as hyt had ben gold wyr.
Crownys on her heddis they had ychon
Of gold with mory a prescyous ston, | <i>shining</i> |
| 1865 | Of grett vertu and dyvers colowrys.
They semyd all kyngys and emperowrys.
Soo feyr crownys, as ther was seen,
In this world weren kyng ne qwene.
Lecternes he saw befor hem stande | <i>wire; various colors</i> |
| 1870 | Of gold, and bokys on hem lyggande,
And all the lecternes that he saw thare
Wer made of gold, bothe lasse and mare.
They song all ther with myld chere, | <i>Lecterns</i>
<i>books; flying</i>
<i>lectures</i> |

The Vision of Tundale

- "Alesuya" with vocys soo clere.
 1875 Hym thought they song so swete and clene
 Hyt passyd all the joyes that he had seen,
 And soo mykyll joy had he of that
 That all odur joyes he foegat.
- "These men," quod the angell bryght.
 1880 "At holy men that God loyvd ryght,
 That for Goddess love wer baxam
 In eyrthe to thole martyrdum.
 And that waschyd her stolys in the blod
 Of the lamb wyt myld mod,
- 1885 And had laft the world all holely
 For to serve God almyghty
 And to kepe hor bodys ay fra
 Fro lechery to chastyte.
 And they loyvd sobernes ay
- 1890 And wold not lye, but sothe to say.
 Therfor they ar to God full dere,
 As hys darlyngys that bee thus here."
 Among all that joy and solas
 Tundale lokyd and saw a plas
- 1895 Full of paveleoun schynand;
 Soo fayr wer never non seyn in land.
 They wer keveryd with purpull and grys,
 That wer full ryche and grett of pryse,
 The whylk was oversette and dyght
- 1900 With besantes of gold and silver bryght,
 And all odur thyngus of beawte
 That haet myght thynke or eyne myght see.
 The cordys therof wer bryght and new.
 They wer of sylke and of rych hew.
- 1905 They wer all with sylver twynad
 And freyt with gold, that bryght scheyned.
 On tho cordys wer instrumentus seer
 Of mykyll that hadon swete sond and clere,
 Orgons, symbols, and tympanys,
- 1910 And harpus that ronge all at onys;
 They geve a full delectabill sond,
 Bothc treball and meyne and burdown,
- ready
suffer martyrdom
washed their robes
lamb
- soberly
truth
- pavilions
silk
- which; covered; decorated
cables
- binding cords
- entwined
framed; alone
instruments various
music; sound
- Organs, cymbals; drums
kappa; once
- treble; mean; bass

The Vision of Tundale

- And odur instrumentas full mosey
That madon a full swette melody.
- 1915 All maner of musyk was ther hard tharse.
Soo muche in cyrthe had never no manse,
Not by an handrythe thowrand part,
As this was to any monnes regarde.
Within the ryche pavelota, whyte schynande,
- 1920 Ay makyll folke wer syngande
Fall swetly with a mery stevon,
With all maner of musyk accordant eyon.
So muche myrthe as thei made within,
No wordlyche wyte may ymagyn.
- 1925 Tundale thought that all the blys
That evar he had seyn was not to thys.
Then spake the angyll with reyld chere
Unto that sowle on thy manere.
"These folke," he seyd, "that marthe maketh thus,
- 1930 They wer gad religgyous,
As frerus, monkys, nonnas, and charmonas,
That welle helidon hor proffessyonas.
The wyche to God wer beysy ay,
Too serve hym bothe nyght and dey,
- 1935 Bothe blythelyche and with gad wyll
Hys commandementys to fallfylle,
And loyed ay God in hor lyfe here
And to Hym ever obeydyand were,
And putte hor with clese conscyons
- 1940 Undur the rewle of obeedyons,
And to chast lyfe hem toke
And all hor fleschely wyll forsoke.
Thei hyldon sylens withowtis jangelyng
And best loyed God over all thyng."
- 1945 "Syr," seyd Tundale, "Y pray thee
Lett has goo name, that Y may see
The swete semiland and feyr chere
Of the mary songes so schyll and clere."
Then seyd the angell so feys and bright,
- 1950 "Hereof thu schalt have a syght
Of hem, as thu hast mee besoughte,
- passions
many folk
around
harmonious
worldly
saints
holy
happily
obedient
conscience
obedience
kept silence; chattering
nearer
resonant

The Vision of Tundale

	Butt entred to horn getust thou nocht. The syghti, " he seyd, "of the Trinyté Schall not be schewyd unto thee.	<i>show</i>
1955	But this Y wolle thee schewe, that Y have hight. Thu schalt be usknowyn of that syght. For all they in worlde here, That have bee boorne and children were, That throw Godas grace have ben gad in levynge,	<i>promised</i> <i>ignorant</i>
1960	At now ordeyneyd sushe lykyng That here they schall dwell ever for sothe With all halows and with angells bothe; That in hor lyffe ay chast have bene	<i>pleasure</i>
1965	And levyd wylle, as vergynes clese, Thei schall ever thus joyfull bee, For they seen ever God in Hys see."	<i>saints</i> <i>virgins</i> <i>seed</i>

VI Gaudium

	They went then forthe and fordarmore By a fayr way that they in wore. Full greyt plente then saw they Of men and wemen by that way	
1970	That semyd all as angells bryght: Soo feyr they semyd to hor syght. Ther was soo swete savour and smyll, That noo haft rayght therlo, ne tong tellie,	<i>sweet</i>
1975	And swete voyse and melody Was among that company That made Tundale forgette clese All oðar joyes that he had seyn.	
1980	For all maner instrumentys seer Of masyk that wer swete and clere Gaffe ther sown and wer ryngand With howtyn touchyng of monnas hand.	<i>diverse</i>
1985	And the vocys of sprytyus thare Pasyd all joyes that ther ware And made joy and wer gladde And non of hem travell hadde	<i>sound</i> <i>spirit</i> <i>avail</i>

The Vision of Tundale

- Hor lyppas wer not mevand,
Ne made no contynanze with hand.
The instrumentys rong ther full schryll,
1990 And noo travayle was don thertyll.
All maner of sound was therin,
That hart tryght thynke or ymagyn.
Fro tho fyrmentare above hor hedde
Coss mosy bryght beymas into that sted.
1995 Fro the wyche byng chymas of dyvers fold
Schynand full bryght of fyn gold.
They hongyd full thycke on ylke a party
And annuelyd wondar rychely.
All wer they joynyd and fastenyd ryght.
2000 In yardys of seler full gayly dyght,
That hongad up full hye in the eyre.
Ther was noo eyrthely lyght never soo feyre.
Among them hong greyt plente
Of ryche jewellys and of greyt beawte,
2005 Pfyollis and cowpus of greytt prysse,
Sybals of sylver and flowre delyce
With bellys of gold that mery rong,
And angellys flewyn ay among
With whyngas of gold schynand bryght.
2010 Noo eyrthely mon saw ever seche syght
As the angels that flewyn in the eyre.
Among the beymas that wer soo feyre.
Ther was suche joy melody and ryngynge,
And suche marthe and such syngynge
2015 And suche a sygght of rychesse,
That all this world might hit not gesse,
Nor all the wytus that ever wer soy
Cowthe hyt never halfe dyscry.
Tundale ever grett delyte had
2020 Of that myrthe and joye that was soo glad,
That he wold never have gon away,
But ther have ydwellyd forever and ay.
Then spake the angell with myld mod
Unto Tundale ther he stode.
2025 "Cum now," he seyd, "hedur to mee."
- lips; moving
gesture
clearly
- beams
chains
- each parti
decorated
- rods
air
- jewels
- Bowl; cup; price
Chimes (Cymbals); *fleur-de-lis*
- wings
- joyous
- wit
describe

The Vision of Tundale

- Anon he come and saw a tree,
 That wonderly mykyll was and hye.
 Sache on saw he never with yye.
 Grett and hye that tre was,
 a one
- 2030 And brod and round all of compas,
 Chargytt on yche a syde full even
 With all kyn fritte that mon myght nemon,
 That full delycious was to sele,
 Ladew
 kinds of fruit; name
- 2035 With all kyn flowres that savoryd wele,
 Of dyverse kynd and seer hew:
 Sam wytte, sam neede, sam yollow, sam bluw.
 And all maner erbyss of vartu
 various
- 2040 And of every spycce of valew,
 That feyr was and swette smylland,
 Growyd ther and wer floryschand.
 Moey fowlys of dyverse colowrys
 herbs (plants); power
- 2045 Seyt among tho fruyt and the flowrys
 On the branchas syngant so meryly
 And madon dyverse melody,
 Sam wytte, sam neede, sam yollow, sam bluw.
 value
- 2050 Ylkeon of horn on hys best mansere.
 That song was joyfull for to here.
 Tundale lystenyd fast and logh
 And thought that was joy ynoghe.
 swirl
- 2055 He saw undar that ylike tree,
 Wonand in cellys, gret plente
 Of men and wemen schynand bryght
 As gold, with all ryches dyght.
 Each one
- 2060 They loved God with gret talent
 Of the gyftus that He had hem sent.
 Ychon had on hys hed a crowne
 Off gold that was of semly faschyos,
 attentively; laughed
- 2065 All sett abowtis on seyrwyse
 With precyous stonis of fall gret prise.
 And septuras in ther hand they had.
 2070 With gold they wer full rychely clad,
 With bryght clothas of ryche hew,
 As they wer kyngys crownyd new.
 scepters
- 2075 So rychely as they wer dyght
 Was never eyrhely mon of myght.
- arrayed

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 2065 | Than spake the angell as wwythe
To Tundale, that was bothe glad and blythe,
And seyd, "Thys tree, that thu myght see,
To all Holy Chyrche may lykkymyd bee.
And tho folke, that thu seyste here dwelle | <i>earnestly
pleased</i> |
| 2070 | Under the tree in her scelle,
Tho ar men that throw devocyon
Made howssus of relygyon | <i>cells</i> |
| | And susteynyd well Goddis servyse | <i>houses</i> |
| | And fowndyd chyrchys and chantryse | <i>founded; chantries</i> |
| 2075 | And mayntened the state of clargy
And felld Holie Chyrche rychely,
Bothe in londys and in rentys,
With feyr and worchefull honourementys | <i>clergy
endowed (see note)</i> |
| | As they that the world forsoke | <i>valuable ornaments</i> |
| 2080 | And to clene relygyon horn toke;
Therfor they ar, as thu myght see,
All reynyng in won fraternyte | <i>reigning; one</i> |
| | And ay schall have rest and pes. | <i>cease</i> |
| | And joy and blys that never schall ses." | |

VII Gaudium

- | | | |
|------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 2085 | Noo lesgur ther they stode,
But furdumore yett thei yood. | <i>were</i> |
| | They saw another feyr wall stand
Of greyt heylte, full bryght schynand. | |
| | Passe that todu wer feyr ther they had ben, | <i>Passing that other</i> |
| 2090 | But non so feyr as that was seen.
Tundale besyld hyt and abadde | |
| | And avysyd hym wharof hyt was made. | <i>Annotated
considered; how</i> |
| | Hee saw this wall, as hym thought, | |
| | All of precyous stones wrought. | |
| 2095 | Hit semyd that the stones brand, | |
| | So wer they of red-gold schynand. | |
| | The stones wer full whyte and clere; | |
| | What stones they wor ye schall here: | |
| | Crystall that was white and clere, | <i>crystal</i> |

The Vision of Tundale

- 2100 Berell, cresolyte, and saphere,
 Emeraudus, dyamondas that men desyres,
 Iacyntus, smaragdynes, and rubyes,
 Emastye and charbokull alsoe,
 Omacles and tapaces and odur moo.
 Beryl, chrysolite; sapphire
 Emeralds, diamonds
 Zirconia, emeralds; rubies
 Bloodstones; carbuncle
 Onyx; topaz
- 2105 Strong stonias of diverse hew,
 Suche saw he never, ne knew.
 Then spake the angell so feyr and free,
 "Tundale," he seyd, "cum up and see."
 They cloenbon bothe up on that wall
 2110 And lokyd don and seyyyn over all.
 The greyt joy that they saw thare
 Semyd a thowsand fold more
 Then all the joy that they had seyn
 Ther, as they befor had beyn.
 2115 For noo wyte myght tell of monnes mowthe,
 Paise he all the wytte of the world cowthe,
 Ne hart myght thynke, ne eyr yhere,
 Ne ee see wer hee never soo cleere,
 The joy that ther was and the blyse,
 2120 That God had orderyyd for all Hysse.
 They saw ther, as the story doghter tell,
 The nyne ordyns of angell.
 They schon as bryght as the sonne,
 And holy spryntus among hem worse.
 2125 Prevey woedys they hard than,
 That fallyth to be schewyd to no man.
 Then seyd the angell on this manere,
 "Tundale, opon thyn eyrus and here,
 And that thu herust, thu not foryste,
 2130 For in thi mynd loke thu hyt sett:
 God, that ys withdrawittyn ende,
 Wolle turne to thee and be thi frend.
 Now see that here ys joy and blys,
 That they that here aron schall never mysse."
 2135 Over that yeti sew they moore
 Among the angelles that ther were.
 They seen the Holy Trynyte,
 God sytting in Hys maiesté.
- Surpass
ear
eye
lived
Secret
open; ears; hear
what you hear; forget

The Vision of Tundale

- They beheld fast His swette face,
2140 That schon so bryght over all that place.
All the angells that ther were
Renne to behold Hys face so clere,
For the bryghmes and the bewis,
That they in Hys face myght see,
2145 Was seyvon sythus brygntur to syght
Then ever schon sonne, that was soo lyght;
The whyche syght is foode to angelles
And lyffe to spyrytas that ther dwelles.
In the styd wher they stode,
2150 They saw all, bothe evyll and god,
All the joy and the peyn beneythen
That they had beforon yseycene.
They saw alsoo all the world brad
And all the creaturys that God had mad.
2155 Ther saw they the ordur, hew as weor wonne,
In a bryght berm of the sonne.
Ther may nothyng in this world bee
Soo sotyll, nor so preev,
But that he may see a party
2160 That hathe seyn God almyghty.
Tho eene that have seen Hym
Mow never be made blynd nor dys.
Bot they had suche power and myght,
Ther they stodon on the walle beyght,
2165 That they myght see at a syght clere
All thyng that was bothe far and nere.
Alle that was behynd hem at that tyde,
Byfor hem and on ylike a syde,
All at onus, in that bryght place
2170 Was schewyd ther befor her face.
Of thyngys that Tundale had knowyng thare
Hyt was myster to have noo mare,
He knew wat thyng that he wold
Withowttyn any boke to be told.
2175 As Tundale stod, he saw com thanne
Wos that hyght Resodan
That made joy and glad chere

Ras
beauty

seven times

beneath
sun

in which we live
beam

subtile; secret
part

May

needful

One

The Vision of Tundale

	And grett hym on fayt manere And toke hym in hys armes lovely And schewyd hym love and curtesy. And seyd as they stod togedar, "Son, blessed be thi comyng hydar. Fro this tyme forward thu may have lykyng In the world to have god endyng.	greeted
2180		comfort
2185	Y was suntyme thy patron free Too whom the schailldast boxum bee. Thu art boldyn, as tha wost welle, Too me namly on kneus to knele." And when he had seyd thos wordys thare,	courteous bound <i>Knee to Kneel</i>
2190	Hee lafft hys speche and spake noo mare. Tundale lokid with blythe chere On ylke a syde, bothe farre and nere. He saw Seynt Patryk of Yrland Commyng in a bryght tyre schynand	happy
2195	And mony a byschop nobely dyght, Then had he grett joy of that syght. They wer full of joy and lykyng Withoutmyn dele or any sykyng. Among that blesseydfall company	attire dressed
2200	He saw ther fowre byschopus namly That he knew be syght of semland, Whan he was in the world dwelland. They wer god men and lyved with ryght, And won of hom Celestyen hyght,	bishops appearance
2205	That was archebyschop of Armake And muche god dedde for Goddes sake. And anoder hyght Malachye, That come after hym fall gracyouslye, That Pwope Celestyen of hys grace	though
2210	Mad archebyschop of that place. In hys lyfe he gaffe with hart glad Too pore men all that he had. He mad collagys and chyrchys mony, That nombard wer to fowre and fowerty,	Pope
2215	Namly for men of relygyon Too sarve God with devocyon.	colleges numbered

The Vision of Tundale

- He feffyd hem and ynoogh hem gaffe
All that was nedfull hem to hafe,
Save that aight to hymselfe only,
2220 Hee laft hym nocht to lyve by.
The theydde of hem that he knew than
Hyght Crystyne, that was an holy man,
That was suntyme byschop of Lyons
And lord of mony possessyons,
2225 But hee was ay meke in hert,
Symplyst of wyll and povert.
He was Malachynus owne broder;
Aydar of hem loved well oodur.
The fowrie of hem, that he ther knew,
2230 Hyght Neomon, that was full trew
And ryghtrwyse whyle he levyd bodily,
That suntyme was byschop of Clemy
And passud all the todur thre
Of wytte and wysdarn in his degré.
2235 Tundale saw besyde hem stand
A sege, that was full bryght schynand,
But hyt was voyde wen he saw hyt,
For he saw non therin sytte.
He beheld fast that sege soo bryght
2240 And askyd for whom hyt was ydyng.
Then spak Malachye and seyd
"Thys sege is ordeynad and purveyd
For wos of owne breder dere,
Wen he comrethe schall sytton here,
2245 The whyche is yette in the world levand.
Ay tyll he com hyt schall voyde stand."
Tundale had delyte greytt
Of the syght of that fayr seyt,
And as he stod joyfall and blythe
2250 Then com the angell to hym fall swythe
And speake to hym with blythe chere,
"Tundale," he seyd, "how lykuth thee here?
Thu hast mony a feyre syght seyn.
In dyverse places ther tha hast beyn."
2255 "That have Y lord," he seyd, "and loogh,
- donated; enough; gave
have
Except what was necessary to himself only
- poor
- just
- sear
void (empty)
- sear
prepared
- sear; ordained; prepared
brothers
- living
- happy
quickly

The Vision of Tundale

- Y have seyn joy ymooagh.
Dere lord, Y pray thee of thy grace
Leyt me not owt of thy place.
For Y wold never owt of this place wende,
2260 But dwell here withoutyn ende." go
"Thu spekyst," quod the angell, "all in veyn.
Thu schalt turne to the body ageyn.
That thu hast seyyn, hold in thy thought;
And thatt thu hast hard, foryeve hyt nocht."
2265 When he had seyd on thys manere,
Then wept Tundale and made sory chere
And seyd, "Lord, what have Y done
That Y schall turne ageyn so sone
To my body full of wrechydnes
2270 And leyve all this joy, that here is?"
The angell onswerd on thys manere
And seyd that, "Ther may non dwelle here,
But holy vyngyns that have beme
Chast and kept hor bodys cleene,
2275 And for the love of God almyghty
Have forsake the world all holely.
And to God ar gevyn fro all ylle
With all her thoughtus and all her wyll.
But such a thoughte and wyll was no in thee
2280 When thu wast in thi nowne poste. delivered
To God wold thu not the bowe,
Ne my conseyle wold thu not know.
To dwelle here art thu not worthy.
But turne agayn to thy body.
2285 And of fylthe make thee cleene,
And fro syn henforward thu thee absteyne.
My helpe thu schalt have and my conseil,
So that thu schalt not of Hevyn fayll."
When the angell had seyd thys,
2290 Tundale turned from all that blyse.
- your own power*

The Vision of Tundale

Reversis Animæ

	As hys sowle wox all hevy And feld hyt chargyd with hys body. He opotyd hys eene then and saw And hys lymes to hym oon draw.	grew; heavy burdened eyes
2295	And or he spake anythyng, He lyfthe up a greyt rykynge. They that hym saw and stoden by Wer astoneyd and had farly.	raised; sighted astonished; wonder
2300	And tho that lovd hym wer full fayn That he was turmyd to the lyft ageyn. He dressyd hym up all sykande And wepti and made hevy semlende	lifted heavy appearance
	And seyde thus with a grete crye, "Lord Jesu Cryst, Thy marce?"	mercy
2305	Worse than Y am," quod he than, "Was never noo boron of woman. But now wyls that Y have space, Y wolle amend with help and grace	while
	Off God, that for us tholyd pyne;	suffered pain
2310	Y houpe He wolle not my sowle lyne." He spake to hymselfe and seyd, "Katyff, Why hast thou levyd so wyld lyff? Ily have ben," he seyd, "a wyckyd man."	harm Wrath
	Full sore hym tenyd at hymselfe than.	I
2315	He bethoght hym of all the tyme, Of the greyt syghtus that he had syen. Therfor hyt semyd be hys contymance That for hys synne he had repentance.	countenance
	All had they ferly that by hym stode	wonder
2320	That he soo well had turmyd hys mood, For that he was sumtyme soo fell, As ye before have hard me tell, Won of hem, that stod hym next,	enraged
	Askyd hym yf he wold have a preste,	One
2325	For to schryve hym of all the foly And to hosal hym with Goddess body. Then answerd he ageyn.	drive; sin (folly) give the Eucharist

The Vision of Tundale

- "Yee," he seyd, "Y wold full feyn
That the prest come to me
To here my schryft in prevyté
And to howsall me; then wer Y saffe.
Y pray yow do me a prest to haffe,
And Goddas body that Y may take,
For all my synnes Y woll forsake."
- 2335 The prest come sone, for he was soght,
And Goddas body with hym he broght,
When Tundale was scheeven and made ready,
He receyvyd the ost full mekely.
Then spake Tundale with hert free,
"Lord," he seyd, "lovyd mot Thu bee,
For Thy marcy and Thi gadnes
Passus all menys wykkydnes.
Passe hyt be meche and grevus soore,
Thy grace and Thi mercy is meche more."
- 2345 Many a mon and also wemen
Wer geydoryd abowt hym then.
He told hem wer he had yben,
And wat he had had and seyn;
And wat he had feld was in his thought,
2350 He held in mynde and forgeet hit nocht;
And he warnyd ylike a man that peyn wold drede
Too ansend hem here, or that they yeede.
He cownself hem to bee holy
And had hem leyve hor greyt foly
2355 And turne hem to God almyghty,
Servyng Hym evermore devoutly.
He prechyd the wordys of God thare,
That never was prechyd among hem are,
And hem that synfull wer he told
2360 He repreved hem as Goddas lawe wold;
And comforad god men, that wer close,
Throw the joy that he had seyn.
And whyles he lewyd synnes he fledde
And all his lyffe in holynes ledde.
2365 He made to the world noo countynance,
But he lewyd ever in peynanne.

*confession; privacy
safe*

*shrive
(Communion) host*

gathered

heard

before; died (wore)

reproved

The Vision of Tundale

- He gaffe all bys gad away
Too pore men for hym to pray.
Noo worldys gad more wold he have,
2370 But levyd as long as God vouchesavre. *permitted*
And at the last wen he schuld bennus pas,
When that Goddess swete wylle was,
The sowle departyf from the body
And yode to God almyghty,
2375 In Hevyn evermore to dwell. *wylle*
Ther more joy is than tong may tell.
Too that joy He has bring
That made Hevyn, eyrthe and all thyng.
Ylkon of yow that have hard mee
2380 Seythe "Amen" for charytee.

Explicit Tundale, quod Hybeg.
Be it trwe, or be it fale,
Hyt is as the coopy was.

Here ends; says Hevyn
true
copy

Explanatory Notes to The Vision of Tundale

Abbreviations: see Textual Notes.

- 11 *In Friordhyfild*. Marcus, the author of the original Latin version, was an Irish monk. Ireland is an appropriate location because of its tradition of mythological "otherworlds" and because many visions of the Christian afterlife are associated with Ireland from at least the time of the *Ecclesiastical History* (731) of Bede, who narrated "The Vision of Furseus" under the year 633.
- 16 *in the story*. The reference to a source, which occurs throughout the poem, is appropriate in that the story ultimately comes from Marcus' Latin prose *Tractatus*, though the immediate source of this version of the poem is not certain. In any case, the reference to a source is a common way of establishing "authority" in both religious and secular literature. N.b., the A scribe frequently writes *theo* for the definite article "the" as well as the demonstrative pronoun "those", e.g., lines 489, 507, etc.
- 23-28 *full of trychery . . . And ever slowthe*. The poet lists the seven "deadly sins": pride, anger, envy, lust (lechery), gluttony, greed (covetousness), and sloth. These are the seven root sins, the dispositions, sinful in themselves, which underlie all other sins. St. Gregory the Great (c. 540-604) referred to them as "capital sins" because they lead to others. They were often used as a means for the examination of conscience, especially before auricular confession, which revived in the twelfth century. They are the basis of the structure of Dante's *Purgatorio* and Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, are crucial to Chaucer's Parson's Tale, and *Piers Plowman* B.5, and are frequently cited in penitential literature. See Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1952). Line 23, however, in the original Latin version lists an eighth deadly sin "treachery," which the early Irish Church added to the traditional seven.
- 29 *workes of mercy wold he worsh*. Besides avoiding sin, it was required, or at least strongly counseled, that the Christian perform works of mercy. According to Church tradition, there are seven spiritual and seven corporal works of mercy. The spiritual

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works are to instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish sinners, bear wrongs patiently, forgive offenses willingly, comfort the afflicted, and pray for the living and the dead; the corporal works are to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, harbor the harborless, visit the sick, ransom the captive, and bury the dead. The corporal works are loosely based on scriptural passages: the first six on Matthew 25:31–46, the seventh on Tobias 1:17–19. The spiritual works seem simply to be generally drawn from scriptural ideas. However, both groups of works of mercy are listed and explained in many highly popular fourteenth-century manuals of religious instruction, such as the *Speculum Pirae*, the *Speculum Christianorum*, and the *Prick of Conscience*. They also appear often in graphic form in the fourteenth century.

- 31 *charyté*: The Christian's primary duty is charity, the love which is central to the Christian message. Of the three theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity), it is called the greatest by St. Paul (1 Corinthians 13:13) because it will last into eternity. The importance of charity has many other scriptural bases, such as Luke 10:25–27, 2 Corinthians 9; Galatians 6:6–10. The goal of charity is pure love of God for His own sake, but that love is manifested in works of mercy.
- 38 *Boȝhtw̄*: A common medieval usage for "redeems" based on the etymological meaning of "redemption": "to buy back" (*redemptor*).
- 40–44 Tundale's soul separates from his body. This is the most common mode in vision literature. It differs from narratives like *Sir Orfeo* and the *Divine Comedy*, in which the visionary enters the next world body and soul.
- 45 *Purgatory*: The narrator promises that Tundale will see both Purgatory and Hell, though most of what he sees seems infernal except for the suggestion that early release is sometimes possible and the fact that Tundale himself is undergoing a kind of purgation.
- 53 *leyn*: Usury, the taking of any interest on loans at all, was formally forbidden by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), though it had long been condemned by the early Church. It is punished in Dante's *Inferno* 17, is prominent in *Sir Orfeo*, stanzas 96–103, and was a frequent subject in medieval art. The word *leyn*, thus, may simply mean "to lend," though the MED lists one meaning of the verb *lendere* as "to allow (a longer time) for repayment of a loan."

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- 76 *melycole*. Melancholy is "one of the four humors, black bile" (*MED*). When out of balance with the other humors (yellow bile, phlegm, and blood), black bile was thought to cause melancholy, sadness, and ill will. The *MED* also defines it as "anger, rage, hatred" and "sorrow, gloom, anxiety."
- 103 *belles yngre*. In addition to tolling the hours of the day, especially the canonical hours of prayer, church bells were rung to call Christians to worship, to recognize other significant events, and especially to note the death of a parishioner.
- 104 "*Piacebo*" and "*Dyrge*." *Piacebo* is the first word of the first antiphon for Vespers in the Office of the Dead (*Officium defunctorum*). *Dyrge* is the first word of Matins in the same liturgy. The Office of the Dead included psalms and short prayers appropriate to the canonical hours of Vespers, Matins, and Lauds, along with a recitation of the seven Penitential Psalms (6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142 in the Vulgate) and a litany. The Office was recited at the time of death and, usually, on commemorative dates after the death, e.g., a month, a year, etc. For a more complete explanation of the canonical hours, see *The Gest of Gy*, explanatory note to lines 202–05.
- 108 *veyne corale*. The "vena cephalica" or "median vein" (*MED*). The median vein runs through the arm and into other veins which eventually join with the jugular vein. Thus, the warmth on the left side of Tundale's body suggests that the venous system is still functional.
- 113 *nose*. *MED* lists this word as "the canonical hour of noses; thus three o'clock p.m." and "midday, the period about 12:00 noon." Both uses existed, though I prefer the latter for symmetry with line 112.
- 118 *gost departyd*. Although Tundale's soul has left his body, he has some "bodily" form since he suffers some physical punishments during his journey.
- 123 *wend to a byn*. Compare C line 181: *He wend to have be*. See also C line 200, which repeats the phrase. A often uses *a* as an abbreviated form of *ha* or *han* (e.g., lines 124 and 137); and *byn* as a participial form of the verb *to be* in lines 142 and 189. The idiom is repeated in line 142.
- 127 *myndelerde*. Besides "the earth," the word could refer to "worldly things as opposed to divine or spiritual" (*MED*). It is implied in phrases like "for all the world."

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- 133 The poem is divided by A into an introductory section, ten *passus*, seven *genua*, and the *reversio animi* (change or turning of the spirit or heart.) The beginning of the first *passus* is actually marked in the margin at line 135: *j passus*, but, because it makes more sense, I have moved it to follow line 132, as G does. A *passus*, etymologically a pace or step, is "a section, division, or canto of a story or poem" (OED). *Passus* are usually more regular in length than in *The Vision of Tundale*. Since the *passus* in this poem correspond with moving on to another segment of Hell, it may be that A, the only scribe to use these divisions, had in mind *passus* in a different etymological sense: suffering.
- 134–36 *a full hooldy rowte . . . ar wyld wofles that cum rampyng*. These are clearly infernal demons, denizens of Hell. The vision at this point is of Hell, though the effect on Tundale is educational and purgatorial.
- 159 *fowlest stynk*. The poet repeatedly emphasizes the stench. Hell is a place of pain not just by fire (and ice) but through all of the senses.
- 199–218 *Wher hit now . . . withoutwe mercy*. Using a variant of the *ubi sunt* trope ("where are . . ."), the fiends taunt Tundale with the transience of worldly riches that have no use after death. They refer to the fact that Tundale has not received the sacrament of Penance (lines 215–16) and therefore deserves Hell for his sins. They are literally correct, though Tundale is in fact being given a second chance. Finally, they assert that suffrages, in this case masses and prayers for the dead, will do him no good. Suffrages also included other works such as fasting and almsgiving on behalf of the dead. The efficacy of suffrages was an important part of the doctrine of Purgatory, as in *The Guest of God*, *Sir Orfeor*, and many works of fiction and theological instruction especially from the twelfth century. Aquinas' view was especially prominent, based on his notion on the doctrine of the Communion of Saints — the essential unity of the saved, the living, and the suffering souls in Purgatory.
- 226 *emer*. Guardian. Travellers to the next world characteristically have guides, providing the possibility for didactic dialogue. The guides included St. Michael (*The Apocalypse of St. Paul*, fourth century), St. Nicholas (*The Monk of Eynsham*, late twelfth century), St. John (*The Vision of Tharkill*, early thirteenth century), but from *The Vision of Drytheim* (Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 731) and *The Vision of Wett*, early ninth century, the guide was usually a "guardian angel," an angel especially assigned for the protection of an individual. Although the idea of a "guardian angel" was never defined as dogma by the Church, it has a venerable history. It was

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variously based on Matthew 10:10 and the apocryphal Book of Tobias, but taken seriously by St. Jerome, St. John Chrysostom, Aquinas, and Duns Scotus.

- 237 *bryght*. A common adjective for angels in works such as *The Vision of Drythelm*, *The Guest of Gy*, and many others.
- 276 **¶ Latin Note:** After line 276, A has, boxed in red: *Uniquique secundum opus suum, etc.* ("For thyself renderest to a man according to his work" — Psalm 61:13 in the Vulgate). The verse is paraphrased in the poem at lines 275–76.
- 302 **¶ Latin Note:** After line 302, A has, boxed in red: *Cadent a latere two milie et decem millia a dextris tuis, ad te autem non appropinquabit* ("Though a thousand fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, naught shall come nigh to thee" — Psalm 90:7 in the Vulgate). The verse is paraphrased in the poem at lines 303–07.
- 325 *cabytus*. "A measure of length (orig. the distance from the elbow to the top of the middle finger), usually, eighteen inches" (*MED*).
- 337 *seyd*. *MED* gives *seyd* as a form of *seid(ien)*, but does not cite this passage. Perhaps the word is a form of *seien* (*MED* v. 14), meaning "commanded," "prescribed," or, as my gloss suggests, "determined" — "Sei" makes the best sense, however.
- 355–56 *But of this peyn . . . yet thou hast deservyd hit*. The angel assures Tandale that he will not experience this particular torment, though later he does suffer physically, an experience shared by Farsus in his vision (seventh century) but by few other visionaries. The travelers ordinarily suffer emotionally or psychologically like Sir Owain.
- 364 *pyche*. Pitch, that is "wood tar, especially as a means of torture in hell" (*MED*). The *OED* expands: "A tenacious resinous substance, hard when cold, becoming a thick viscous semi-liquid when heated."
- brymstone*. "The mineral sulphur," perhaps more pertinently "burning sulphur" (*MED*).
- 407–10 *he saw a bryge . . . wið forte in breke*. The narrow bridge between two mountains recalls bridges over Hell in *The Apocalypse of St. Paul* (late fourth century), *The Vision of Stennið*/by St. Gregory of Tours (538–93), *Sir Owain*, and other poems about the next world. It is a common "test" motif, perhaps dating to antiquity. In *The*

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Apocalypse of St. Paul and its thirteenth-century early Middle English version, "The Vision of St. Paul," the bridge crosses all of Hell. In *Sir Owain* it leads to the "terrestrial paradise." Tundale's narrow bridge is only one foot wide and 1,000 steps long. It is perilous, for he sees souls falling off it into the fire below and only the holy palmer (pilgrim) is seen to traverse it safely.

- 453 *sene*wise. The word can mean "in a diverse way, variously" (*MED*), but in context the adverbial use of *sene* seems more probable: "physically apart; asunder," or "individually, separately" (*MED*).
- 469 *bæligr*. Specifically "a bundle of sticks used in flogging" (*MED*).
- 478 *Akyron*. Acheron. In Homer and elsewhere in Greek antiquity, Acheron was the main river of the underworld. In Latin and Hellenistic poetry, Acheron came to be the underworld itself (*OED*). The appearance of Acheron as a demonic character calls to mind the beasts, like Geryon (*Inferno* 16–17), that Dante puts in his Hell.
- 490 #⁹ Latin Note: After line 490, A has, boxed in red: *Absorberit flumen et non
merabitur et habebit fiduciam, quod influxat Jordanus in os eius. Amen.* ("Behold,
he will drink up a river, and not wonder: and he trusteth that the Jordan may run into
his mouth" — Job 40:18 in the Vulgate). A corresponding idea is expressed in lines
491–94, in which Satan replaces the behemoth of Job.
- 508 *Forciano . . . Conallan*. Forciano and Conallus appear in Marcus' original Latin
version as Fergusius and Conallus. Only A mentions them, suggesting that he was the
only scribe with access to Marcus' original as opposed to the slightly shortened
versions of Holman and St. Vincent of Beauvais (M, p. 61). Fergusius and Conallus
are the Latinized names of Fergus mac Roich and Conall Cearnach, prominent pagan
characters in the Irish Ulster Cycle and cohorts of the famous Cúchulain. For Fergus,
see *The Táin, from the Irish epic Táin Bó Cuailnge*, trans. Thomas Kinsella (Oxford:
Oxford University Press, 2002), and for Conall, see the particularly amusing *Fled
Bricrenn, "Bricriu's Feast,"* translated in *The Celtic Heroic Age: Literary Sources
for Ancient Celtic Europe and Early Ireland and Wales*, ed. John T. Koch in
collaboration with John Carey, third ed. (Andover, MA: Celtic Studies Publications,
2000), pp. 76–105.
- 568 *A wondur long, narrow brygge.* The *Vision of Tundale* uniquely includes a second
bridge, this one over a lake full of souls. It is even narrower, a hand's breadth, than
the first bridge, and crossing it is a man, who stole from the Church, bearing a barden

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of grain. This is the bridge over which Tundale must lead the "wild cow." It is curious that the man and Tundale are going in opposite directions, thus causing a traffic jam (lines 665 ff.) from which Tundale is saved only by the angel's intercession, thus allowing him to stop leading the cow (lines 683-88). The description is long and amusing, even comic.

- 588 After this line R explains that the man has stolen the grain from his neighbor's field.
- 603-04 *But sum hight more peyne and sum lare / All aftur that her synnes hit.* Although robbers have been mentioned before, this is the first specific reference in the poem to degrees of punishment related to the severity of the sin, a traditional early Christian concept clearly manifested in Dante, but rare as a literary trope before the fourteenth century.
- 610 **Sacrifgy.** A sacrilege is any sin against religion, but more strictly was applied to abuse of a sacred person (clergy), place (church), or thing (e.g., liturgical vessels.) It could manifest itself in striking a priest or unchastity by the priest himself, in the violation of a holy place or use of a holy place for secular purposes. Thus, it could range from theft from or desecration of a church to the action of a priest administering the sacraments while in a state of sin.
- 612 **seyntwary.** "A holy or sacred place, a place dedicated to God." More specifically, it could mean, besides the church itself, "a churchyard; a burial ground, a cemetery" or "land owned by or under the jurisdiction of the church" (MED). In ecclesiastical usage it often designated the part of a church, set off from the rest, where the priest actually said Mass and the sacred vessels were kept.
- 620 **tytthe.** Tithes, one-tenth of income due the Church for its own support and for charity. Tithing is mentioned in various contexts in the Hebrew Scriptures as early as Genesis 14:20 and 28:22, but it was not common in the early Christian Church. It was first enjoined by the Council of Macon (585). At first it was one-tenth of profit from land, but was extended to any kind of earned income (bequests were generally exempt). Tithes were at first paid to the bishop, but by the twelfth century were generally paid directly to the parish priest. Failure to pay tithes was a serious offense and could result in charges being brought in an ecclesiastical court with the possibility of excommunication.

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- 706 *wyldeर्*: "Wild, uninhabited, or uncultivated territory; trackless, desolate land . . . a desert" or, by extension, "a state of ruin or desolation, the condition of devastation" (*MED*).
- 735–38 In these lines, which are in none of the other MSS, A provides the fiends with a remarkable catalogue of farm implements as instruments of torture.
- 784 *Prestor*. In C, P, R: *Pystryne*; in B: *Pistroun*. The Latin has *Fistrinus*. I know of no one who has identified this figure under any of these spellings.
- 814 ⁴⁰ Latin Note: After line 814, A has, boxed in red: *Misericordia plena est terra, etc.* ("The earth is full of his kindness" — Psalm 32.5 in the Vulgate). The verse is a response to Tundale's questioning of God's mercy in lines 811–14.
- 836–46 *the sowle som peye schalt have . . . To the blyxe witheretten ende*. The angel describes some kind of purgatorial experience, since he is referring to souls which will pass from pain to salvation, even though such souls do not seem to have a separate, distinct location.
- 881 *snout*: "A human nose . . . used derisively" because the primary meaning was "The snout of a swine, boar, rhinoceros, dog, dragon, etc." (*MED*).
- 909–54 The invasion of the bodies of the damned by biting adders is mentioned in *The Apocalypse of St. Paul* (late fourth century) and in many later visions. The presentation in this poem is particularly gruesome and specially applied to corrupt clergy (lines 960–62).
- 967 *ordyr*: A religious order, as of monks or friars, bound to some rule of life such as that of St. Augustine or St. Benedict.
- 971–72 *for the same thow hast beene, / This schalt shu thode*. Once again Tundale must suffer physically. This is odd in context since the punishment has been assigned to corrupt clergy and particularly lines 945–46 seem to associate Tundale with this group. It is possible that here, and in a few places later, the scribe has preserved an oddity in Marcus whereby there is some confusion, intentional or not, of the vicious, worldly Tundale with the monk-author.
- 1002 *dwergill*: This is a very unusual word. In the *MED* it is spelled "dingle," with no examples or cross-references, and defined as "a deep dell or hollow." The *OED* says

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a bit more under "dingle": "A single example meaning 'deep hollow, abyss' is known in the 13th century; otherwise the word appears to be only dialectal in use till the 17th century." The only example given is from *Sawles Warde* (1240). The *OED* defines the probably related word "gill" as "A deep rocky cleft or ravine, usually wooded and forming the course of a stream," the earliest example being from *The Destruction of Troy* (1400). Regardless of the paucity of examples, the meanings in the *MED* and *OED* seem to fit the context in the poem.

- 1018 **#** Latin Note: After line 1018, A has, boxed in red: *dato est via quae ducit ad mortem* ("for wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction" — Matthew 7:13). The verse is paraphrased in lines 1017–18.
- 1042 *Vilane*: Vulcan, the "ancient Roman god of destructive, devouring fire," who was "highly admired, secretly feared" (*OED*). From Greek antiquity, his counterpart, Hephaestos, was a blacksmith. This conflation of the Greek and Roman gods fits the hellish context perfectly.
- 1223 *Theer sharre not thynde*. "No thought *must* come to you." The construction is apparently an unusual dative of agency, analogous to "me thinks," in which the subject is acted upon, and is thus in an oblique case.
- 1296 *more and less*. A common medieval line-filling formula here meaning "completely."
- 1305–60 An extended description of Satan, who simultaneously punishes and is punished. The idea of Satan was developed in the early Church out of a long tradition in antiquity and a variety of comments in Hebrew Scripture (e.g., Isaian 14:12–15). Literally, Satan means "the accuser." He is the author of all evil. The notion of the fall of Satan was developed in the early Church from texts such as Apocalypse 12:4–11 and Jude 1:6, but more elaborately in the apocryphal Book of Enoch. The fall of Satan and the other rebellious angels was taken seriously by Church Fathers and Doctors including Augustine and especially Aquinas, who asserted (ST I qu. 63 a6) that Satan's sin must have been pride, wanting to be "as God." In this poem, as in the tradition of vision literature including Dante, Satan is in the deepest pit of Hell suffering the greatest torments.
- 1342 *sponne*. "A unit of length variously reckoned as corresponding to the distance from the tip of the thumb to the top of the middle or the little finger when the hand is fully extended . . . a hand's breadth" (*MED*).

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- 1363 *gloand folw.* i.e., "fiery imps." See *MED* fol n 2: "an impious person, a sinner, a rascal."
- 1411-12 *the first creature / That God made.* The Middle English suggests that God created Satan before all other creatures, which is consistent with the sequence of creation in all of the drama cycles. In *Circeor Mosaïc*'s account of creation we are told that humankind was created to fill the gap left by Satan and the other fallen angels. Compare Gower, *Confessio Amantis* 8.21-34. (See Russell A. Peck's discussion in *Confessio Amantis*, vol. 1 [Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000], p. 226.) Augustine discusses the point in his *Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Charity*, ch. 29, "The Restored Part of Humanity Shall, In Accordance with the Promises of God, Succeed to the Place Which The Rebellious Angels Lost." See also Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, Book 22, ch. 1. Marcus says: *Hic est Lucifer, principium creaturarum Dei* ("Here is Lucifer, the principal of God's creatures"), and may simply be suggesting the eminence of Lucifer before his fall, though *principium* probably means "first."
- 1436 **#** Latin Note: After line 1436, A has, boxed in red: *Potentes tormento puctantur* ("The mighty shall be mightily tormented" — Wisdom 6.7). The sense of the verse is developed in lines 1437-44.
- 1495-1502 Tundale and the angel have entered the "terrestrial Paradise," the Garden of Eden. Most in the Middle Ages believed that the Garden of Eden had a physical location and many searched for it. Augustine and Aquinas saw it both as the literal place where Adam and Eve lived and fell and, figuratively, as a place of spiritual rest and beauty. It was sometimes considered a stage in the movement from Purgatory to Paradise. For some it was considered a beautiful and tranquil place where the saved, or those who had completed purgation, waited until the Day of Judgment, Doomsday, for admission to Heaven. By the time of *The Vision of Tundale*, the general view was that it was a transitional abode, as in *The Guest of Gry*, and that the saved went to Heaven after purgation, if necessary, was completed. Indeed, suggestions by Pope John XXII that it was a holding place until Judgement Day were considered potentially heretical. A place of sweet-smelling air, flowers, gems, and song, the prime literary example is in Dante's *Purgatorio* 27-32.
- 1504-28 *The Vision of Tundale* has a kind of vestibule to the terrestrial Paradise in which there is a mild form of punishment for those who, though shriven of their sins and saved, did not perform works of mercy during their lives. It is interesting that although their pain is temporary and not great, they are punished not for violation of

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a commandment or the commission of a deadly sin, but for failure to perform a "counsel of perfection."

- 1535–46 The sweet air, the flowers, the light, and the birdsong are all staples of poems which include a terrestrial paradise. Lacking at this point are the catalogues of birds, gems, and flowers that are usually incorporated, even in secular romances. Some skeletal catalogues appear later in the poem at lines 1907–14 and 2099–104.
- 1551 welle. The well, a place of refreshment, even a "fountain of youth," has waters flowing from it. Contrary to expectation, it is not the source of the four rivers of Eden (*Genesis* 2.11–14). It is more reminiscent of the River Lethe, the river of forgetfulness (a kind of renewal) in Dante, *Purgatorio* 28.25–33.
- 1561–68 The souls have undergone some kind of purgation and merit salvation, but they must wait until God admits them to Heaven. A does not make it clear when that will be.
- 1584 lewde mort. A "lewed man" was "a member of the laity, layman, non-cleric" (*MED*).
- 1591 Conchober. Conchobar, Conor O'Brien, the king of Thurmond. Conchobar was a friend of King Cormake. In 1138, however, Cormake was killed by Conchobar's brother, Cormake's father-in-law. For the whole story, see M, pp. 31–36.
- 1592 Donatus. Donough McCarthy, king of Munster from 1127, was the brother of Cormake.
- 1600 Caye. Cain, who killed his brother Abel (*Genesis* 4), was a symbol of murderous wrath and envy.
- 1607–10 The angel is careful to explain that the kings repented before death. This is necessary to justify their placement in the earthly Paradise, but it also reinforces the point that repentance always remains available even to great sinners.
- 1620 In the description of the moral rehabilitation of Donatas, A mentions that Donatas gave money to have prayers said for him. This is an example of a suffrage, an especially important part of Dominican teaching from the late twelfth century, but very prominent as an idea in this secularized version of a Benedictine Latin tract.
- 1635 carbuncyl ston. Carbuncle, which, according to the *OED*, was said to shine in the dark. See line 2103.

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- 1654 *Kyng Cormake*. Cormac MacCarthy, king of Munster (1124), dethroned by Turlough O'Connor in 1127. He was murdered in 1138 in his own home, reportedly by some kind of treachery, the eighth of the Irish deadly sins. See explanatory note to lines 23–28. See also G (pp. 316–17), who thinks that the Teampuill Chormaic, which Cormac built, may be the model for the magnificent structure in which Tundale finds him. Cormac was generous to the Irish Benedictine foundation at Regensburg where Marcus, the author of the Latin original, lived. On the relevant Irish history, see M, pp. 31–36.
- 1667 *deykemer*. Deacons, members of minor orders, by the time of the composition of the Middle English poem the deaconate was generally a stage in the progress towards major orders (the priesthood) rather than a permanent office.
- 1673 *chalys*. A chalice is a vessel, usually of gold or silver, used to hold the water and wine that will become the body and blood of Christ at the Consecration of the Mass. Chalices were often highly ornamented with precious stones.
- 1674 *anwoerys*. Censers, the receptacles, often made of precious metals, in which incense was burned in many Church liturgies.
- 1706–48 Cormake, although saved, must still suffer because of the gravity of his sins. Much about this passage is odd. It is unusual that anyone who has entered the terrestrial Paradise must still suffer pain. Also, when Tundale asks how long Cormake will suffer, the angel gives the strangely specific answer of three hours a day rather than an ultimate duration before the end of suffering. Cormake's position is awkward in that he lived at a time, during the reforms of the early twelfth century, when marriage laws from the Roman Church were being imposed on the Irish. He was reputed to have ordered a murder that would have been mortally sinful under either disposition, and this is duly noted, but his punishments seem to be primarily for lechery.
- 1724 *isayre*. A hairshirt. "A shirt made of haircloth, worn next to the skin by ascetics and penitents" (OED). "A penitential garment woven from the hair of mountain goats or camels" (MfED). The practice was usually monastic and was often discouraged by the Church as an egoistic excess, though when Thomas à Becket died he was found to be wearing one.
- 1736 *Beynde Seynt Patrycke*. This refers to a church, not the saint. G (p. 317) identifies it as probably the metropolitan church of Cashel.

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- 1759 ff. There follows a traditional description of the singing of hymns and carols in the joy of the terrestrial Paradise. Interestingly, in *The Vision of Trowdale* it is specifically the abode of souls who have lived righteously in marriage, souls who have performed works of mercy, and good rulers (lines 1785–96).
- 1798–1802 This passage paraphrases Christ's invitation to the virtuous to enter Heaven (Matthew 25:24). It also suggests that the souls will be in the terrestrial Paradise until Doomsday, the day of the Last Judgment, when the world ends.
- 1838 *eward*. "At or during some earlier time in the past, on a former occasion, formerly, previously" (MED).
- 1897 *gryz*. "A gray fur; probably from the back of the Russian gray squirrel in winter; also a piece of fur made from such skins" (MED).
- 1900 *bessant*. "A golden coin of Byzantium; any of several similar coins minted in Western Europe" or "a bezant used as an ornament" (MED).
- 1909 *Orgon*. Probably a large church organ, which might have had as many as 400 pipes, rather than the portable organ or any wind instrument. See Henry Holland Carter, *A Dictionary of Middle English Musical Terms*, pp. 337–41.
- cymbalix*. "A set, or one of a set, of two concave plates of brass or bronze, which emit a clashing, metallic sound when struck together" (Carter, p. 110). OED lists the possibility of "castanets" or a "chime," but the clanging sound of cymbals seems more appropriate to the exuberant circumstances.
- tympany*. "A general name for the drum" (Carter, p. 532). OED additionally suggests "any kind of stringed instrument," but gives only one example. The more common meaning seems to fit the boisterous joy of the context.
- 1910 *harpur*. A true harp had "eight to eighteen strings of twisted hair, gut, or wire," but the term also was used loosely as the equivalent of other stringed instruments like the "lyre, lute, cithers, etc." (Carter, p. 185).
- 1912 *treball and meyne and bardsone*. The *treball* (usually called a *hautbois*) is the highest part in a three-part vocal or instrumental composition, with *meyne* and *bardsone* as the middle and lower parts (Carter, pp. 200, 278, 510).

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- 1931 *friars, monkys, noromax, and chanmons.* A is more specific than the other MSS. Friars were members of mendicant orders (Dominicans, Carmelites, Franciscans, Augustinians), who lived a communal life at "convents" but spent most of their time begging and preaching (and, especially in the case of the Dominicans, studying). Monks lived in cloister, separated from the world, and followed a "rule" such as that of St. Augustine or St. Benedict. Canons were members of religious orders (canons regular) or served communally in a cathedral or major church (canons secular); many groups of canons established endowed communities (chantries) devoted to suffrages in the form of masses and prayers for the dead.
- 2006 *flowre delycy. Fleur-de-lis.* Although it is a "flowering plant of the genus Iris," in this context of elegant embellishment it seems more likely "a representation on a coin, a spoon, etc." (MED).
- 2057 *seyrweyse.* Here, as opposed to line 453, the phrase seems to have its more usual meaning of "in a diverse way, variously" (MED).
- 2074 *chantryse.* Chapels at which canons prayed for the dead; they usually were endowed by benefactors seeking suffrages. They could be free-standing or associated with a neighboring church. They became increasingly popular in the thirteenth century both as a locus of suffrages and as a means of benefaction.
- 2076 *affful.* This verb, from the feudal vocabulary of enfeoffment, meant "to put (a person, a religious foundation) in possession of a feudal estate held in heritable tenure" and "to endow, furnish with anything by way of a gift" (MED). Thus, the souls here have given generously to the Church. See also line 2217, where the verb is used of St. Malachy's endowment and support of churches and colleges in addition to his charity to the poor.
- 2099–2104 A catalogue of gems characteristic of descriptions of the terrestrial Paradise and of otherworldly descriptions in romance. There is some scriptural basis in Apocalypse 21:19–20.
- 2100 *cresolyte.* Chrysolite. "A name formerly given to several different gems of a green color, such as zircon, tourmaline, topaz, and amatite" (OED). The catalogue of gems has some apparent overlapping and vagueness.

Explanatory Notes

- 2102 *Iacynnes.* "A reddish orange variety of zircon" (*OED*). "A precious stone of blue (rarely of red) color" (*MED*). The experts seem baffled by the medieval terminology of precious stones.
- smaragdines.* These are generally accepted to be emeralds. Either there was another green precious stone or the narrator in his enthusiasm is repeating himself. The whole catalogue is a bit helter-skelter, suggesting that A simply wanted to accumulate the names of many gems — or was as baffled as the modern experts.
- 2103 *Emarlyce.* Bloodstones. "A name applied to certain precious stones spotted or streaked with red, supposed in former times to have the power of staunching bleeding," or "The modern heliotrope, a green variety of jasper or quartz, with small spots of red jasper looking like drops of blood" (*OED*). Again the narrator is either being exuberant or has some clearer characterization of gems in mind.
- charbokall.* "A carbuncle, a precious stone said to glow in the dark" (*MED*). "In the Middle Ages and later, besides being a name for the ruby . . . applied to a mythological gem said to emit light in the dark" (*OED*).
- 2117–20 *Ne hart . . . for all Hysse.* An allusion to 1 Corinthians 2:9 (itself a paraphrase of Isaiah 64:4): "That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him."
- 2122 The nine orders, or choirs, of angels were first enumerated by the man variously known as Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite or the Pseudo-Denys (late fifth century) as: angels, archangels, virtues, powers, principalities, dominions, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim. The idea is based on Psalms 96:7, 102:20, 148:2, 5 in the Vulgate, and especially on Daniel 7:9–10 and Matthew 18:10. The orthodoxy of the view is attested by St. Gregory the Great (c. 540–604) in his *Dialogues* and by Aquinas, ST I.qn.108a6. Although angels are frequently cited in Scripture as messengers of God, the role of the nine orders is primarily to stand before the throne of God singing His praises.
- 2125 *Prevey wondys.* The phrase "Goddes privitee" was common to denote the knowledge possessed by God, angels, and the saved, which it was not proper for human beings to know.
- 2128 *upon thyne eyns and here.* Compare Jesus' oft-repeated please in the Gospels, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15, 13:9, 13:43; Mark 4:9, 4:23,

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7:16; Luke 8:8, 14:35). A variation of the phrase is also repeated many times in the Apocalypse of St. John.

- 2176 *Renuker*: St. Ruadan (d. 584), abbot of Lethra. It is unclear what the special connection between Tundale and St. Ruadan could have been, especially in view of the chronological disparity. St. Ruadan was one of the "Twelve Apostles of Erin," who came to study with St. Finian in his School of Clonard, Meath, founded about 520.
- 2193 *Seynt Patryk*: St. Patrick (c. 389–461), the patron saint of Ireland, has pride of place in this series of pedlars. He is believed to have been a Roman Briton taken as a captive to Ireland. He returned later to Ireland to convert the people to Christianity and to organize the Irish Church. Although a historical figure, he has myths, even magical qualities, associated with him; e.g., that he banished all snakes from Ireland and that he could release seven souls from Hell each Saturday.
- 2204 *Celestyen*: St. Cellach or Celsus, abbot of Armagh (1105), and later archbishop of Armagh until his death in 1129.
- 2207 *Malachye*: St. Malachy, Malachias O'Moore (b. 1094; archbishop of Armagh, 1132–1138). He was ordained by St. Cellach ("Celestyen") in 1119 and was confessor to Cormac MacCarthy ("Cormake"), king of Munster. Malachy, feeling that he had done what he could in the reformation of the Irish Church, resigned from the archiepiscopate of Armagh in 1138 and returned to Connor where he had been bishop earlier (1124–32). In troubled times he was welcomed by King Cormac, who was killed the same year Malachy resigned Armagh. On his second trip to Rome (1148), he fell sick while visiting his great friend St. Bernard of Clairvaux, founder of the Cistercian reform of the Benedictines, and he is said to have died in St. Bernard's arms. These connections tempt one to find a Cistercian influence on the poem, but no specific Cistercian imprint is apparent. St. Malachy prophesied the number of popes (112) to come before Doomsday. St. Bernard wrote his Life.
- 2209 *Pwope Celestyen*: Pope Celestine II was elected in 1143 and died in 1144 after a short reign of six months. His name here must be in error, since Malachy was consecrated archbishop of Armagh in 1132 during the reign of Innocent II (1130–1143). The Latin versions have Pope Innocent, but all English MSS that include this line (A, C, R) make the same error, perhaps influenced by the "Celestyen" in line 2204.

Explanatory Notes

- 2213 *cology*: Presumably colleges of canons whose primary purpose was to pray for the dead, though colleges composed of canons, who were priests, often attached themselves to nearby churches and assisted in the clerical work.
- 2217 See explanatory note to line 2076.
- 2222 *Crystw*: Bishop of Clogher (1126–39) and older brother of St. Malachy. The Latin designation of his diocese, *Lugdicensis*, accounts for *Lyon* in A and causes M to identify his see as Louth rather than Clogher.
- 2227 *Molachynus*: Latinate form of Malachy.
- 2230 *Neomor*: Nehemiah O'Moriatach, bishop of Cloyne and Ross (1140–49). Sometimes he is erroneously identified as St. Neeman of Clary, perhaps because of the Latin version of Cloyne — *Claranensis*.
- 2232 *Clemy*: This is the bishopric assigned to Neomor by A, C has *Tyw*; P has *Ely*; R has *Cluny*. These seem to be various attempts to render the Latin "Claranensis." See explanatory note to line 2230.
- 2235–38 Many scholars believe the empty seat to be reserved for St. Bernard of Clairvaux.
- 2381 *Hykrg*: Richard Heeg, who transcribed A and various other fifteenth-century MSS. According to M (p. 64), Heeg seems to have seen himself as more than simply a scriptor, or scribe, and therefore felt freer to modify his copy-text. His apparent use of a copy of Marcus, however, suggests a concern for authenticity.

Textual Notes to The Vision of Tundale

I have based my text on National Library of Scotland Advocates' MS 19.3.1 (A), the longest extant version. In the nineteenth century, A was purchased by the poet Robert Southey and given to Sir Walter Scott. The only edition of A, besides a diplomatic edition by W. B. D. D. Turnbull (1843), is Eileen Gardiner's doctoral dissertation (G). G lists variants from British Library MS Cotton Caligula A. ii (C), which has been edited with variants from all other MSS by Rodney Mearns (M), Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1491 (B), Tokyo, Takamiya MS 32 (olim Penrose 10, olim Penrose 6, olim Delamere) (P), and British Library MS Royal 17. B. xiii (R), which has been edited by Albrecht Wagner with variants from A, B, C. I have made as few changes as possible to A consistent with making sense of the narrative. I have accepted and noted some alterations by G and a few of my own based on B, C, P, R. I have ignored G's changes that seem simply to tidy up the poem, because some rough passages in A contain a specificity that is an attractive characteristic of this MS.

I have silently expanded abbreviations and corrected obvious scribal errors such as "whet" for "when" (line 388), "bus" for "but" (837), and amended the scribal practice of occasionally hearing g and k interchangeably as in "styng" for "stynk" (333) and "tonke" for "longe" (1744). In the notes, as in the text, I have replaced obsolete Middle English graphemes with modern equivalents. Fuller manuscript and bibliographical detail precedes the text of the poem.

- 5 *ben awlyle*. A: *ben wyll awlyle*. I have omitted *wyll* as unusually clumsy and grammatically unnecessary.
10 *classe*. A: *classo*; C: *clawse*; I have accepted G: *classe* as doing least harm to A. Several times A has a mistake o at the end of a word; subsequently I have corrected those without comment.
14 *jere*. A: *here*; G, following C, P: *jere*.
19 *is*. A frequently has *is* for *hir* and vice-versa. I have retained this usage since it does not cause confusion.
24 *pride*. A: *pde* with i superscript.
37 *tyme*. A: *tyme*; G, following C, P: *time*.
59 *for his best*. G, following C: *as hym leit*, is plausible, but I have retained A.
70 *denay*. A: *anay*; G, following C: *denay*.
78 *at tho*. G, following C, P: *to*.
108 *corale*. A: *quaile*; G, following C, P, R: *corale*. See explanatory note.
110 *flyne*. A: *had*; G, following C, P, R: *flyne*.

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- 123 *payne*. A: *pyne*; G, following C, P, R: *payne*. *MED* lists *pyne* as a possible variant, but *payne* preserves the rhyme with line 124.
- 126 *nether*. A: *not ther*, G, following B: *nether*.
- layned. A: *laft*; G, following B, C, P, R: *layned*.
- 129–30 *But he sawe mony a hydeys Payne / Or he come to the body agayne*. A lacks these two lines, which are important to the sense. G has soundly reconstructed them from B, C, P, R. It is likely that A simply skipped two lines of his exemplar.
- 133 The poem is divided into ten "passus," seven "gaudia," and the "reversio animae." They are marked in the margins of A. Because it makes more sense, I have begun Passus I here, as does G, rather than at line 135, where it is marked (*/ passus*) in the margin of A. I, like G, have taken a similar liberty with Passus V, which is marked in A opposite line 433, Passus VI, which is marked in A opposite line 553, and Gaudium II, which is marked in A opposite line 1577.
- 155 *fete*. A: *face*. G, C, B, and P read *fete*.
- 167 *word*. A, G: *word*; B, C, R: *world*. *Word* is a common variant of *world* (*MED*).
- 176 *creidon*. A: *crendon*; B, R: *cried*; C: *cryde*; but G: *creidon* is a possible variant that changes A least.
- 191 *stryff*. A: *stryff* is canceled before *stryff*.
- 204 *harneys*. A: *horneys*; G, following B, P: *harneys*.
- 215 *thought*. A: *thoyght*; G, following B, C, P, R: *thoughter*. I prefer *thought*, preserving the singular and assuming a scribal error in one grapheme.
- 215–16 *Ther wyldyd thought that was in th brest / Woldyst shu never schewe it to no preste*. G, following B, C, P, R, places these lines after line 210. I have left them in their A position.
- 252 *uggly*. A: *angelly*; G, following C, P, R: *ugly*. Perhaps A intended *uggly*.
- 269 *ther*. A: *he*; C: *they*.
- 323 *the*. A: *that*; G, following B, C, R: *the*.
- 327 *broad*. A: *brad*; C: *broad*; P, B: *broad*.
- 333 *styng*. A: *syng*; C: *styng*.
- 339 *dyd*. A: *shd*.
- ther*. Omitted in A. C: *thu*.
- 340 *pon*. A: *pon*; C: *ponne*.
- 341 *ronnen*. A: *ronnon*; C: *ronne*.
- fir and yron bothe*. A: *thor yron into the fir bothe*; G, following B, P: *fir and yron bothe*.
- 342 *As hit wer wax throw a clothe*. I have retained A, though G, following C, P is more felicitous: *As molton wax dothe throwe a clothe*.
- 347 *dight*. A: *ordent* has some support from C: *ordyned*, but G, following B, P, R: *dight* makes slightly better sense and much better meter.

Textual Notes

- 348 or. A: and; G, following B, C, P, R: or.
yakyn. A: *bothe yakyn*; G, following B, C, P, R: *akyne*. To include A: *and* and *bothe* *yakyn* would make it necessary to have killed both parents. The reading in B, C, P, R makes it a matter of killing one parent. Surely, one is enough to deserve terrible torment.
- 353 schall. A: *schell*; C: *shall*.
- 357 forth. Omitted in A, C: *forth*.
- 363-64 *That was bothe darke and wan / And stank of psyche and brymstone*. These lines are reversed in A but marked by the scribe *b*, a for correction.
- 376 mowse. C: *mawse*, which better suits the rhyme.
- 382 This. A: *Then This*, with *Then* marked for expansion.
- 389-90 *The angell ay before con pas, / And Tindale after that sore afend was*. These lines are clumsy, but no obvious reconstruction from other manuscripts seems appreciably better without wholesale rewriting.
- 495 this Payne. A: *he*; G, following C, R: *this Payne* clarifies the line significantly.
- 529 hyx. Omitted in A. G, following C, P, R: *hyx*.
- 563 *Her ynce wer brode and brondon bright*. A: *Therin wer brondon and brondon bright*; G, following C, P, R. *Her ynce wer brode and brondon bright* makes a substantial improvement in this line and makes line 364 more effective.
- 565 waytud. A: *wantud*; G, following C, P, R: *waytud* is a more plausible action at this point in the narrative.
- 566 pray. A: *pay*, C: *pray*.
- 577 sowles. A: *sowlous*; G, following C, P, R: *sowles*.
- 614 distraccion. A: *distraccour*; G, following P, R: *distraccion*.
- 615 turmentyd. A: *turment*; G, following C, P, R: *turmentyd*.
- 626 she. A: *hee*. C: *she*; R: *ho*.
- 645 *Maygrey is chekys*. A: *Maygrey it is chekys*. I have omitted *it is* since it is not ordinarily included in the proverb, though the person of the pronoun was variable.
- 647 payne. A: *pyne*; G, following C, P, R: *payne*. As in line 123, *pyne* is possible, but destroys the rhyme with the next line.
- 687 And seyd. A: *oents seyd*.
- 699 *The angell seyd*. A: *and that*; G, following C, P, R: *the angell seyd*. Lines 699 and 700 are transposed in A. Accepting *The angell seyd* restores order to a confusing passage.
- 727-28 *The angelle . . . be night afend*. These lines are omitted in A. Some connection is needed. I have accepted G's use of B, P, R for line 727 and G's composite from B, C, P, R for line 728.
- 740 hole. A: *holes*; G, following B, P: *hole*. A destroys the rhyme and does not need -es to form a plural here.

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- 743 *had he*. G, following B, C, P, R: *Tundal had*, but A frequently used the pronoun where other MSS use the proper name.
- 770 *bryght*. A: *bryt*, G, following B, C, P, R: *bryght*. This is probably a simple omission by A, but I have emended it because it would destroy the rhyme with line 769.
- 799 *that fall*. A: *that fowle*, G, following B, C, P, R: *that fall*. A was probably distracted by the appearance of *fowle* later in the line.
- 799, 801 *vermyn*. A: *verym*; G, following B, C, P, R: *vermyn*. *Vermyn* is a possible word, but *verym* better fits this narrative and the tradition of vision literature.
- 808 *cawdorow of dode*. A: *cawdorow of dode*; G, following B, C, P, R: *schaadwe of dode*. The latter makes for an interesting allusion to Vulgate Psalm 22:4, but A makes sense as it is.
- 814 *tokeryn*. A: *thyng*, an eyewit's repetition from the previous line. C: *tokeryne*.
- 816 *desseyves*. A: *dothe save*; G, following R: *desseyves*. Clearly, deception rather than salvation is required in the line, as suggested also by C, P: *begyles*.
- 860 *then*. A: *the*.
- 873 *had hym*. A: *had hym*; C: *icelle hym*; P: *haw hadde*.
- 903-04 *Then was . . . and mische wo*. The manuscripts differ substantially. A makes as much sense as any other if we apply lines 905-06 to line 904 only and not to line 903.
- 910 *vermyn*. A: *verym*; G, following B, C, P, R: *vermyn*. See note to lines 799, 801.
- 916 *rygh fylled*. A: *fell negir to*; C: *rygh filled*.
- 933-34 *Her tayles . . . the oddes*. A: *Her nayles wer bothe gret and longe / All hene hulys wer ther hand*. G's reconstruction from B, C, P, R fits the descriptive and narrative situation better — and preserves the rhyme.
- 963-64 *For monkes . . . Holy Kyrke*. B, C, P, R all provide metrically smoother lines with better rhyme, but the specificity of A in line 963 and the inclusion of *women* in line 964 makes me prefer to leave A intact. Line 963 is missing in C.
- 969 *þer*. A: *hwer*; G, following B, C, R: *hei*. The sentence needs a subject.
- 971 *the*. As a reminder of my procedure, A: *that* is probably an error for *the* of the sort I do not ordinarily mention.
- 973 *thus*. A: *this*; C: *thus*, which the rhyme requires.
- 1002 *dowgyll*. A: *dowgyll* is unattested, but since A also uses it at lines 1029, 1031, I believe it is the word intended. See explanatory note.
- 1020 *longe*. A: *narrow*; G, following C, P, R: *longe*. Some change is necessary to avoid the awkward repetition from line 1019.
- 1035 *þe*. A: *ðys*; G, following B, C, R: *the*. The noun is plural.
- 1062 *as hem liked best*. A: *at that best kant*; G, following R: *as hem liked best* not only preserves the rhyme but agrees in sense with B, C, P.
- 1079 *dre*. A: *dyre*, with *y* canceled.

Textual Notes

- 1085 *Ter ther.* A: *This peyn*; G, following B, C, R: *Ter ther* avoids the repetition of *peyn* in A.
- 1094 *oder mynther.* A: *now boldy*; G, following C, R: *oder mynther*. A does not make sense without great contortions. C, R fit the context perfectly.
- 1097 *ynoghe.* A: *ynoght*.
- 1114 After line 1114, I have omitted two lines from A: *For why that same company / Foloydlyn the in foly.* These lines virtually duplicate lines 1115–16.
- 1148 *greyd.* A: *gyyd*, with *e* written superscript.
- 1188 *they con falle.* A: *they dy con falle*, with *dy* canceled.
- 1192 *Have turned.* A: *Had ben*; emended by G, following C, P, R: *Have turned*.
- 1195 *clomryd.* A: *cloyd*; G, following C, P: *clomryd*. This appears to be a simple omission of *m*, but I mention it because R also has *cloyd*.
- 1198 *toryve.* A: *toryvy*; G, following C, P, R: *toryve*. A appears to have been distracted by "toryv" in line 1197 and spoiled the rhyme.
- 1234 *Too Satanas.* A: *too sunat satanas*, with *sunat* canceled.
- 1259 *on her krocas.* A: *on her he krocas*, with *he* canceled.
- 1262 *The.* A: *ther*; C: *the*.
- 1270 *than fast.* A: *than a fast*, with *a* canceled.
- 1288 *wold.* A: *wold*, with *r* superscript.
- 1297 *Satanas.* A: *sator*, with a superscript.
- 1356 *hit had he.* A: *his tyle war*; G, following R: *hit had hr*. The *tyle* in A in this line as well as in lines 1355 and 1357 suggests some confusion. G, R provide a significant improvement without changing meaning or rhythm.
- 1363 *glozed.* I have retained A: *glound*; G, following R: *tatred*; P: *tatredr*; C: *kyt were tatred*.
- 1376 *hondes.* The *d* is obscured.
- 1392 *asde.* A: *armas*; G: *asne* (meaning "breath"), based on R: *ensle*, P: *?nsl*, and C: *breath*, seems to make the best of a difficult situation. Certainly it is hard to see *armas* as suitable in A's own context.
- 1393 *the sowly.* A: *the sowl sowlys*, with *sowl* canceled.
- 1407 *angill.* A: *anglyll*; C: *angell*.
- 1420 *Adames.* A: *adnes*, with a superscript.
- 1430 *That.* A: *And*, G, following C, P, R: *That*.
- 1447 *fayne.* A: *faynd*; C: *fayne*.
- 1457 *sumtyme.* A: *hor tyme*; G, following C, P, R: *sun tyme*. The A scribe may have had his eye on "hom" in line 1456.
- 1464 *Cheffe.* A: *Thyff*; G, following P, R: *Cheffe*. Some word indicating leadership or authority is necessary.
- 1487 *have.* A: *hve*; C: *have*.

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- 1534 After line 1534, A omits two beautiful lines that appear in C, R and are accepted by G:
Sone they fold a swete ayre / And [C. They] fonde a feld was wonder foyre.
- 1545 *That.* Omitted in A.
- 1570 *soo clere.* A: *soo here clere*, with *here* canceled.
- 1600 *and.* A: *and*, G, following C, R: *dyde* make the line clearer, but I have left A since it is intelligible and the pejorative adjective is with *Coym*.
- 1613 *a vaw.* A: *aw vaw*, with *w* canceled.
- 1628 *Therefor marcy behovas hem have.* A: *Therefor behovas hem to have marcy.* This line is a real oddity. I have replaced it with C.
- 1640 *ther.* A: *ther*, G, following C: *gud mon.* A can stand if one assumes that anyone who had reached that place was welcome. C, however, does make the situation clearer.
- 1643 *wowys.* A: *wowys*, C: *wones.*
- 1654 *Cornale.* A: *Cornale*; G, following C, R: *Cormake.* A makes the same error at line 1663, thereby suggesting that he genuinely mistook the name.
- 1690 *lege.* A: *lyke*; G, following R: *lege*.
- 1698 *of.* A: *of*, R: *ofte*, C: *oft.*
- 1699 *And sum wer.* A: *and wer*; G, following R: *and sum wer.* The *sum* is necessary to distinguish between the "pilgrims" and the "religious."
- 1706 *safforyd.* A: *had safforyd.* I have omitted *had*. A seems to have moved from indirect discourse to a quotation. Omitting *had* makes the whole a quotation.
- 1724 *hayre.* A: *ysow*; G, following C, R: *hayre*.
- 1731 *brest.* A is missing a verb. I have supplied *brest* from R.
- 1738 *hayre.* A: *peye*; G, following C, R: *hayre.* Perhaps A did not know what a "hairshirt" was?
- 1744 *longe.* A: *lonke.*
- 1750 *thore.* A: *thirare*; C: *thow.*
- 1861 *schyre.* A: *cler*; G, following C, R: *schyre.* I have accepted the change to avoid the repetition with line 1859.
- 1868 *wold.* A: *wold*, with *r* superscript.
- 1899 *whylk.* A: *walle* does not make sense in this description. G, following R: *whylik*, or C: *whych* does.
- 1901–02 *And all . . . eyne myght see.* A: *And with all oader ryches hit was overwent / That noo eyne myght see ne hart myght thynke.* These lines are simply so ugly that I have substituted R, though I have retained A's second *myght* in line 1902.
- 1907 *On.* A: *And*; C: *On*.
- instruments. A: *instrumentas*; C: *instrumentes*.
- 1923 *So much myrthe as ther made within.* This line is repeated in A.
- 1955–56 *But this . . . of ther zyng.* These lines are reversed in A.
- 1980 *swete.* A omits, but G, following C, R, accepts.

Textual Notes

- 1995 *hyng*. A: *theng*; I have accepted G's emendation to *hyng*, which improves intelligibility greatly.
- 2034 *flowres*. A: *frayt*; G, following C, R: *flowres*. The change must be accepted because tradition encourages and the context demands "flowers."
- 2053 *They*. A: *He*; G, following R: *They*.
- 2054 *He had hem*. A: *hym he had*; C: *he had hem*. The plural is needed.
- 2089 A makes sense but might be clearer without *wyr feyr*.
- 2102 I have left the greatly imperfect rhyme. C and R have variants of lines 2099-2102 which provide a rhyme at line 2102, but require drastic changes in the names and order of the gods.
- 2132 *honne*. A: *twe*, with *ar* superscript.
- 2136 *angelles*. A: *angeil*; C: *angelles*.
- 2142 *Renne*. A: *And renne* destroys the syntax.
- 2147 *angelles*. A: *angeil*; G, following C, R: *angelles*.
- 2148 *dwellers*. A: *dwell*; G, following C, R: *dwellers*.
- 2157 *world*. A: *wold*, with *r* superscript.
- 2168 *syde*. A includes an ill-formed letter between *d* and *e*, which may simply be an error.
- 2181 *And seyd*. G, following C, R: *And seyd*. A omits *seyd*, and a verb is needed.
- 2189 *thes*. A: *this*; G, following C, R: *thes*.
- 2200 *namly*. A: *ma namly*, with *ma* canceled.
- 2220 *hym noȝt*. A: *hym noȝt*; G, following C, P, R: *bat fytelle*. I have retained A, though the alternative makes more sense and better translates the Latin original.
- 2223 *lyons*. A: *lysse*; G, following C, R: *lyons*.
- 2224 *possessyon*. A: *possessyon*; G, following C, R: *possessions*. I have accepted the changes on the grounds that the plural is better in line 2224 and the name of the diocese in line 2223 is in some doubt. See explanatory note to line 2223.
- 2276 *holely*. A: *helely*; G, following C, R: *holily*.
- 2284 *body*. A: *bog body*, with *bog* canceled.
- 2304 *Thy marce*. G, following C, R: *have on me marce*, but the nature of the outcry seems to allow the omission of the verb.
- 2360 *He repreved hem ar Gouldar lawe wold*. A: *How ther schuld be withdrawen ar Goddes wyll wold*. I have rejected this line for its sheer ugliness and substituted C.
- 2381-83 *Explicit Tiendale . . . coopy was*. These lines, the indication of the conclusion of the poem, are indented in A.

Glossary

abadde <i>hesitated</i>	anelli, anely <i>only, specifically</i>
abayd, abayst <i>humiliated, abashed</i>	angwis, angwyssse <i>anguish</i>
abite <i>habit</i>	ankyr <i>anchor</i>
aby <i>pay</i>	annamelyd <i>decorated</i>
ac <i>but</i>	antem(e)s <i>antennae</i>
acordand <i>fitting</i>	aperceived <i>realized, perceived</i>
acordance <i>accordance, parallel</i>	apert <i>open</i>
afred <i>afraid</i>	apertly, apertliche <i>openly, plainly</i>
adrede <i>to dread</i>	aptight <i>tensed; assuredly, indeed</i>
aferd <i>afraid, frightened</i>	aswold <i>destroyed (spiritually)</i>
aflight <i>afflicted, affected</i>	arrayd <i>arranged, arrayed</i>
aight <i>ought</i>	arane <i>arose</i>
aga <i>gone</i>	ar(e) <i>before; already</i>
agrise <i>dread</i>	artiche <i>early</i>
agrose <i>terrified</i>	arn <i>horned</i>
alblast <i>siege engine</i>	aros <i>arose</i>
ald <i>old</i>	aseth <i>reparation</i>
aldermost <i>most of all</i>	askus <i>ashes</i>
aleggo(d) <i>relieve(d)</i>	astone(y)d <i>astonished</i>
alkyn(s) <i>all kinds of, everything</i>	at, ate <i>at</i>
all and som <i>all and some, every one</i>	an(t) <i>that</i>
allane, all ane <i>alone</i>	an(t)e(o)nus <i>at once</i>
alls <i>as</i>	altering <i>poisonous</i>
allwa <i>also</i>	auber <i>alb</i>
alitha(u)ff <i>although</i>	Austyn <i>St. Augustine</i>
almosdede, almudede(s) <i>almsdeeds</i>	Austyns <i>Augustinians</i>
als <i>as, also, as if, when</i>	auter <i>alter</i>
alther hattest <i>hottest of all</i>	aventure <i>adventure, occurrence, experience, event</i>
alther maste <i>most of all</i>	avils <i>advice, opinion; report</i>
amayde <i>amazed</i>	avostry, vostry <i>adultery</i>
amorne <i>morning</i>	avysede, avysad <i>considered</i>
ande <i>breath</i>	an <i>ought; befits, is fitting for (impers.)</i>
ane <i>an, one, someone; alone</i>	

Glossary

awed <i>own</i>	besantes <i>coins</i>
ay, ey <i>always, ever</i>	beson <i>swishing (round)</i>
ayre <i>air</i>	best <i>beast</i>
bac <i>back</i>	bete <i>beaten, hammered</i>
bad <i>bade, ordered; prayed</i>	beth, beys <i>is</i>
baelys <i>rods</i>	beton <i>remedy, relieve; bite</i>
bagges <i>bags, pouches</i>	betyde <i>hende, occur</i>
bald <i>assured, sure, certain, strong</i>	bevereche <i>drink, beverage</i>
baldier <i>bolder, more confident</i>	beymas <i>beams</i>
baldli, baldly <i>boldly, quickly,</i> <i>confidently</i>	bi <i>by; according to; at the time of</i>
bale(s) <i>distress, torment(s), suffering</i>	bicom(e) <i>become; became</i>
baly(w)s <i>bellows</i>	bidene <i>immediately, at once, forthwith</i>
bandes <i>bonds</i>	bifell(e), byfyll <i>befell, occurred</i>
bare <i>bore, carried</i>	bilieve <i>benefit</i>
bareyt <i>distress</i>	bilove(s), byhovus <i>behove(s); obliges,</i> <i>must</i>
baseynus <i>bares</i>	bin <i>gray</i>
bath(e) <i>both</i>	bilknewe <i>revealed</i>
bathi <i>bathe</i>	bileft <i>left</i>
basme <i>balm</i>	bilieve <i>believe; to remain</i>
bayde <i>abided</i>	bilieve <i>left</i>
bayli(r), bayly <i>country</i>	biltaught <i>commanded, enquired</i>
baynly <i>obediently</i>	bithenche, bithinke <i>consider, imagine</i>
be, bi <i>by</i>	bitsen, bitsix <i>between</i>
bede(s) <i>prayer(s)</i>	bityd <i>occurred</i>
bede <i>to pray; bade</i>	bilwent <i>went</i>
bedene <i>completely</i>	blamed <i>blamed, convicted, found guilty</i>
Bedless <i>Bethlehem</i>	bileryd <i>stuck out</i>
behoves <i>must; it behoves, it is fitting</i> <i>for (impers.)</i>	blew(e) <i>blue; blew</i>
benne <i>beams</i>	bliane, blyn <i>cease, stop</i>
besedes <i>bonds</i>	blo(e) <i>blue, livid</i>
bes(e) <i>be; would be; been; are</i>	blithe <i>glad, happy</i>
bere <i>commotion, uproar; time; burden</i>	blytheliche <i>happily</i>
berell <i>beryl</i>	bocchere <i>butcher</i>
beret(s) <i>bear(s), wear; bore, wore</i>	boltand <i>boiling</i>
berth <i>bears</i>	ben <i>bound</i>
	bond <i>bonds</i>

Glossary

bone help, gift, boon	
baron horn	
barowide borrowed, redeemed	
bast box (usually a pendant), pyx	
bastas boustiers	
bat but, except, only	
bonne, bowne ready; board, obligated	
boniti(s) beauty; benefit; virtue	
bowsonly obediently	
boxum courteous	
brae broke	
brad(der) broad(er)	
bras brass	
braste overcome	
brawneschedyn threatened	
brayd struck	
bred(e) bread; breadth; (all on) bred far and wide	
breder brother	
breeke broke; trifled	
brening burning	
brend(on), brent burnt, burned	
brengle barn	
breerde rims	
brigge bridge	
breithe birth	
brochys skewers	
brocking calls of distress	
broddys picks	
brood brood	
bryd woman	
brygigje bridge	
brymton, bromton, brunton, brimstone	
brynand burning	
bryn(s) barn(s); brynt burnt	
bryst breast	
burde board, bench	
	burd would; would have to; must
	burdous, burdown bar; pilgrim's staff
	burges burgess, citizen
	bus mast
	busum ready
	bwones bones
	byd bid, pray
	byde abide, stay
	bystad afflicted
	bytend hoved
	caghe cage
	cald(e) called, named; cold
	card cared
	caroly sing (caroly)
	castell possession
	caustelmes chalcedony
	cawdoron coalitions
	celesties celestial, heavenly
	cessand ceasing
	ceti city
	chanoun(e)s canons
	chantryse chantries
	chapiter chapter (meeting of friars)
	charbekall, charbakelton carbuncle
	chargyd, chargytt laden, burdened
	chaumber, chaumbre chamber, room
	chaundelers candle-holders
	chekas, chekys cheeks
	chele cold, chill
	chere, chyr manner, disposition; countenance; cheer
	cheryschyd took good care of
	chymné furnace, chimney
	chyne chin(s)
	chynus chains
	clarkys clerks
	clothes clothes

Glossary

clen(n)es(w) <i>purity</i>	expression
cleped <i>called (out), named; clepeing</i> calling	cours <i>part, course, iteration</i>
clepeth, clepi <i>call (out), name</i>	courtelage <i>garden</i>
clere <i>bright, clear, shining</i>	couthe <i>knew, understood;</i> <i>could</i>
clethyng <i>clothing</i>	covand <i>promise</i>
cleyne <i>pure</i>	cova(l)tise, covatysse, covetys(e)
clomben <i>climbed</i>	covetousness, greed
clomyd <i>enfeebled</i>	coevent <i>content</i>
colagys <i>college</i>	covetand <i>coveting</i>
cole <i>coal; colis, colys coals</i>	cewpes <i>bowl; cup</i>
Coletti(es) <i>Collect(s) (short prayer)</i>	cracched <i>scratched</i>
columbin <i>columbine</i>	creaunce <i>faith</i>
combret <i>clammy</i>	crepaad <i>creeping</i>
comfort <i>comfort, comforted</i>	eresolyte <i>chrysolite</i>
command <i>coming</i>	Cristen <i>Christian</i>
commonaliche <i>commonly, generally</i>	croice, crayce <i>cross</i>
compeynie <i>company, group</i>	crouses <i>crowns (of the head)</i>
con <i>did</i>	crouthe <i>crowd (stringed instrument)</i>
conjure <i>command, order</i>	cryand <i>crying</i>
con(ve)n(e)(s) <i>began to</i>	cultorus <i>ploughshares</i>
connyng <i>understanding, comprehension</i>	contray, contré <i>country</i>
conscioum <i>conscious</i>	dart(es) <i>attack(s); barb(s)</i>
contakt <i>dissemination</i>	de(d)id(e) <i>death; dead</i>
conteyni <i>sustain</i>	dede <i>did; caused to (happen)</i>
contré <i>country</i>	dede(s) <i>deed(s), action(s), occurrence(s)</i>
contynante <i>gesture</i>	ded(e)ll, dedell <i>deadly</i>
copy <i>copy, text</i>	defygard <i>disfigured</i>
cap <i>summit</i>	degrese <i>degrees</i>
coper <i>copper</i>	del <i>times</i>
cornound <i>crowned</i>	dole <i>bit, piece; dole, distress (see also</i> <i>dole)</i>
corbunes <i>crowns</i>	deme(d) <i>Judge(d), deem(ed), direct(ed)</i>
cors <i>corpse, body</i>	departabill <i>set apart for an individual;</i> <i>separate, individual</i>
cosyn <i>cousin, kinsman</i>	deepest <i>deepest</i>
cote <i>coat</i>	deray <i>uproar</i>
co(u)nsaille, couseilly, coassell,	
conseyl(e), cownsel(l) <i>counsel, advice</i>	
co(u)ntynance <i>countenance, (facial)</i>	

Glossary

dere(s) harm(s), injure(s)	deefull sorrowful
derk dark	dregh suffer
derur more expensive	dreyn drenched
desayrabill deceitful	Dright Lord
desery reveal, proclaim, announce	drof(f)(e) drove, pursued
dyscryve describe, explain	droghe, drogh, drawyn pulled, drew
desmay dismay; be dismayed	drury woeful
desseyres misleads	dud(de) did
det determined	dueling delay
det, deyt debt, obligation	duelle remain
develling sprawling	dwelland dwelling
devine figure out, divine	dyamondas diamonds
devise(d) describe(d); look(ed), examine(d)	dy(e)(y)(d) die(d)
de(y)th(e) death	dyllall doleful
diamante diamonds	dyppe deep
diche ditch	dysayrabill deceitful
dight, dyght set; built; ordered	dyscryvyna describe
dispenses to use, dispense	dytte fill up
dispysede despised	
divynour wise man	edderys, eddrys adders
do, dos do; cause to	ee(ne) eye(s)
doctor doctor, learned theologian	eft after; again
dole sorrow, pain, suffering	eftsoones soon after
dome judgment	eger sharp, brusque, eager
Domesday, Domunday Judgment Day	egge edge
dominical Scriptural reading	eightene eighth
dong beat	eglentere briar rose
dongyll deep valley	eighen eyes
dorrus doors	eke also
dose does	eld age
dotance doubt, uncertainty	elles otherwise
doabti dough	emastycce bloodstones
deut, dewt(t)(e) doubt, unease, confusion	emer guardian (angel)
dewmpe dumb	emeraudos emeralds
drad dreaded	emperis, emperys empress
dredaad dreading	enchesen reason, intent
	encres(e) increase
	ensamelyd decorated

Glossary

enpayred impaired, broken
ensample(s), ensampel(s)

example(s), lesson(s)

entent intention, purpose

erbers gardens

erbes, erbys plants

er(e), erward before

er(t) are

ertheliche, erthely earthly

ertow you are

es it, are

eutes news

evill, evyll evil

even, even straight, exactly, directly;
evening

evenchristen fellow Christian(s)

evensang(e) evensong (*Vespers*)

everilk each, every

eydur either

cyn(e) eye

cyr(us) ear(s)

fahill, fabyll fable, false story;
deception

fairhede excellence, fairness

fall deadly

felon felon

falshede falsehood, deceit

fand(e) endeavor, undertaking; to
tempt; looked after; found

fandyn temptation, troubling

farly, ferly wonder

fasland falling

fawe livid, angry

fay faith; source of doctrine

faym(e), feyn glad, happy, pleased;
eager(ly); like to

febull, febyll feeble

felfed endowed

felut fickle

fell fall, fell

feld felt, sensed

fele many; avail

fel(l), fyll skin; destroy; feel; deadly

fellowered company, group, fellowship

felness evil, treachery

felyschep fellowship

feud defend

fende(s), fend(us) fiend(s)

fer(e) far; healthy; frighten; take as a
companion; companion; fire; (in) fire

in a company, as a group

ferrede company, crowd

fetherfoy chrysanthemum

fe(y)l(l) feet

fine amur perfect love; refined love,
courtly love

fithel fiddle, violin

flaumand flaming

flaumbe, flaum(m)e flame

flayd frightened

flight flew

fles(s)(ch)(e) flesh

fleyng flying

flowe fled, flew

flowre delice fleur-de-lis

flytte moved, removed

folowand following

folaydden followed

foly(e)(s), foli(es) sin(s), folly/folies

fond found; tempt

fonston baptismal font

forbrent burnt severely

force strength, power

forde prevent

fore assaulted

Glossary

forgift(he) forth	gavelers answer
forlast lose, lost	gederd , gedered , gedryd , godynayd
forlor(n)(e) lost, loss	<i>gathered; re-formed</i>
fornaise furnace	gent delicate
forsayd aforementioned	ger prepare; cause to
forst frost	gere clothing
for that because	gert began to; caused to
forthi therefore	gyrr equipment
forthynkow repeat	ghate gate
foryt forth	gif gives
foules, fouldys, fowles birds; bird's	giane engine, contrivance
fewrite fourth	gle joy, glee
fra(m), fro from	glow(e)and glowing
frayne ask	gnayst gnash (teeth)
fre generous, gracious	gaowe gnawed
Frere Aastines Augustinians	gabedys, gobetos goblets, chalices
Frere Carmes Carmelites	godspelle gospel(s)
Frere Menours Franciscans	go(l)mf(a)(l)mean banner
Frere Prechours Dominicans	gan ga began to go
frere(s) friar(s)	ganas open (<i>his</i>) mouth
fresand freezing	gowle(yng) hawling; gowlyd hawled
frete, freted bit; ate	gras grace
freyt fretted; decorated	grayd troubled
fryst(yng) delay(ing)	grayde prepared; performed; conveyed;
frytte fruit	given
fergoss pokers	graythely readily
fire, fayr, fyre fire	grede crying, lamentation; cry out
fysolys bowls	grediris gridiron
 	greyreya gridiron
ga go	grenned, greanyd growled, grimaced;
game(n) game(s), delight, playing	bared teeth
gan go; did; became; began to;	gretaaed, gretiyng moaning, weeping;
proceeded to	lamentation
gang go; came; went	grete great; wept
gapas gapes; gaped gaped open	gretton greet
gase go, goes; went	grevd(d)e grieved
gast(e) ghost, spirit	griseil(che) , grysele gruesome
gatys gates	ground

Glossary

groans	groans	henge	hang
grueched	grumbled	hennes	hence
grym	grimace	hest	seize; taken, seized
gryuely, gryusly	horribly	herd, hard	heard; praised
gud	good	here	here; hear
gun	began to; did	hereyng	hearing
gy	guide	herre	higher
gyandys	giants	hert	heart
gyf(en)	give(s)	herust	hear
gylt	guilt	her(y)s	their; here
gyn	means; engine	hete, heyt	it, heat
haddestow	had you	hete	commanded
haight	have	hetheling	abuse; to hetheling with abuse
hidden	held; considered; bound	hethen, hetton	hence, away; here
hole	whole; full; healthy	heved	head
halidem	relics	hewe	bow; color; bright (of complexion)
halows	saints	hye	haste, quickness
halvendel	half, a half part	hider, hyder, hydour	hither, here
ham	home	hideous, hydous, hydwys	hideous, dreadful
han	have	hight	high; height
harl	harl	hight, hyght	was named, was called
harneys	armor	hing, hyng	hang
has(e)	has, have	hir	her; their
hast	has, have; haste	ho	she
hate	hot	hokes, hokys	hooks
hatter	hotter	hole	hole; healed, whole
hautain	arrogant	holt	hold
haylised	greeted	hamerus	hammers
hayre	hairshirt	hondryt	hundred
hedder, bedur	hither, here	hanget	hung
hede	behead	hanging	hanging
hedous	heads	heatte	hot
hegh,	height	her	their
heighe	harry, hic	hessall, hessall	give the Eucharist;
hem(selv)e	them/selves	howsyld	gives the Eucharist
hend	hands	hewege, hegy, hegy	huge
hende	courteous; gentle	hewsell	Holy Communion (Eucharist)

Glossary

hous(es), houssus house(s)	teach
huppe hidden	knows; know(s)
hund(e)reth, hundryd, hundryt hundred	kest cast
hus(y)e her	kevered, keverdyn, keveryd recovered
hwand bound	knaw(yng) know; knowledge
hy(e) quickly, hastily; haste; he; listen; hear	kneland kneeling
hyde hidden	kneld kneeled
hyes hie, gather	knetye, kness knee
hyld held, believed	knottes (decorative) knots
iacynthus zircon	krocas crook
ich, yche (she) very; each	kyd(de) known
ich /	kyndam kingdom
ichave I have	kynde nature; kind; like
ichill I will	kyndeli, kyndely natural; naturally;
icly comfort	properly; according to nature
ik, ylike each, every; same, very	kyn(ne), kynsus kind; kinds of
ill evil	
intill, intyll into; unto	ladde led
ires iron	lane grace
ise ice	lased concealed, overlooked
Jacobins Dominicans	lappod surrounded
jogelars deceivers; enterizers	lare teaching; learning
jewellys jewels	lastend lasting
Jowes Jews	lat(es) let(s); leave(s)
jugged judged	lawed uneducated (see also lewed)
kalendas calends (the first day of the Roman month)	lectornes, lettornes lecterns
kan know, understand; can	led(d)e lead (metal)
kele cool	lede nation, country, area
kelyng cooling	lede(s) lead(s)
kend(e) taught, explained; knowledge	lef leaf; willing, eager
kene, keyn sharp	legge lie, lay; place
ken(ne) know, understand, apprehend;	lem gleaming
	lende remain, reside
	leryd learned
	les lies; lost
	lesing lying
	lesse less
	lest last; least

Glossary

test and maste fully	low flame
letany litaney	laff(ed) love; loved
lete let; had; avoid, give up; leave out	lak look, see
leten forgiven; leave, give up	lychery lechery
lett relieved; hindrance, obstruction, delay	lye fire
levand living	ly(e)s lie(s)
leve dear, beloved; permission, leave, allowance	lyf(land) living; to live
levedust lived	lyfed lived
levedy lady	lyf(f)(e) life
levenyng lightning	lygand lying
lever rather	lyg(ges) lie(s)
leven live	lykkyayd blessed, compared
lewed, lewyd uneducated	lym(es) limb(s)
leyd placed	lythe lies; joost
leyn lend	lythur evil
le(y)ve leave; believe	lyveryt delivered
libbe live	 ma to make; more
lic(c)hour lecher	mack match
liif live	maine, mayne strength, power, might
ligge, lygge lay	maister(s) master(s)
lightning lightning	malycoly melancholy
likeing, lykand, lykyng liking, enjoyment	manant menaced
liif life	manhede manhood
liii fly	maskinne, maskyn(d)(e) mankind
lite little; light	mannes men, people
loddar louder	manslaughter manslaughter
lod(d)ly, lightly terrifying, horrible, loathsome; angrily	marcē, marcē mercy
lond land	mare delay; more, greater
lo(ō)gh(s) laughed	more and lesse more and less, all
lopes leapt	margarites pearls
lore teaching	marke mark
lorne(s) lost	mase make(s), made
lotheliche, lothly loathsome; hideously	mased amazed
louken lock	maste most
	maygrey despite
	mayn(e) strength, power
	maynwerryng perjury

Glossary

maynese(d), mayntyn(iod)	man(men)
maintain(ed), support(ed), sustain(ed)	
mayre mayor	mead night
mede reward, solace; beverage; (to)	montayn, monteyn(us), montheys
mede for reward	mountain(s)
mele meal	mo(s) more
mene to mean, signify; melody (middle	more and less more and less, everything
part)	morwe, moran morning
menegh means	mossel morsel
meney company, group	most, mett must
meng joie, urine	mot motes
Mensurs Franciscans	myddelerd, mydylerde (middle-) earth,
mensk(ed) honored, worship(ed)	the world
menstracle menstruity	mydes middle
merkaes darkness	myght, myghtes, myghtus night,
merre mar	strength, power
mervall(i)e(s), merwyle(s) marvel(s),	mylie miles
miracle(s)	myn less, lesser
meschance adversity, bad experience	myne mine
messe mass	mys mis
mett performed	mysavysede all-advised
mett(e) food; to dream; appropriate	myngane err'd, gone astray
(adj.)	mys(s)e sin
mevand moving	myster need, needful
meye mean, middle part; company	nadder adder, snake
michel, mekyll, mikell, mockyll,	nakyn, nanskyn no kind of
mykell, mykyll greatly), large, much	nam took
midnerd (middle-) earth, the world	name none, no
milde, myld(de) mild, gracious	naru narrow
mirke(m) merry	nas was not
misbileve false belief(s)	navylle navel
misganging straying, going wrong	nawgernes augers
misgit sin	ne not, no, nor
misours sinners	neddren adders, snakes
missays misery	neghand nearing, approaching
mode manner; mind, state of mind	negben nine
molde(s) earth, world	neighe near; nearly
mon must; attend to, mind	nemon name

Glossary

acompne call out, name	amell among
acerte nearer	an on, in; one
nesche flaccid, soft	anacles, onacles oxen
nether deeper, farther down	and spite fierce
neven explain, say, tell; (st) never	anlyve alive
comparable, on a par	anone at once
nevend mentioned, explained	ansys once
nis is not	or or; before
nite not know	ordaine, ordeyn(yd) command, arrange, ordain(ed)
nithe malice	ordaind ordained, established
no no; not; nor; did not	ordains ordainer; guides
nold(en) would not	ordenance guidance
neither, nouder, neuther neither	order religious orders
nom(e) look, taken	ore pardon
none none	orissun(e), orysounne prayer
none, for the bones indeed	orybly horribly
non(e)skines none at all	ought ought, at all
nonnes nuns	ourn arranged
nother no other	oas as
nowre nowhere	oather either
nays noise	outrage outrageous
nay(e) annoy(i), trouble(i), bother(i)	owtan except
nyt nearly	overbrewe knocked over
o of; one; on	overfle pass over
obedyens obedience	overschakes passed by, overcome
obedyand obedient	over over
ocur weary, high interest rate	owhen own
oddes point	owrys, oyres hours
odur, sodur other	
of off	payen(s) pagan(i)
off of	par(a)cel(l)s parcels, pieces
oflok overtook	parfyte, perfylte perfect
ogain again; back	parti portion, part; period (of time)
ogain, againes, agayne, agayns	party, ta party one side
against; up to; towards	partysse parts
oight ever, at all; anything, aught	parwink periwinkle
okering money-lending	

Glossary

pas(s), passe <i>pass, leave, go away, go on; (at) pass to pass, to go</i>	privately <i>secretly</i>
Pasch <i>Easter; Passover</i>	preveteſe, priveteſe, priueté <i>secret, hidden knowledge, obscure matter; secrecy</i>
passaad <i>passing, temporary</i>	prevy(t)y <i>close, privy, confidential, secret</i>
Pasiſſe <i>Easter; Passover</i>	prevyté <i>privacy</i>
payne <i>pain</i>	prevytys <i>private parts</i>
pays <i>peace</i>	pris <i>value, price</i>
pen(y)s <i>ponce, coin</i>	primul <i>primrose</i>
perced <i>pierced</i>	proved <i>tried, attempted</i>
pere <i>peer, equal</i>	prov <i>testing, proof, benefit</i>
persayved <i>perceived</i>	pryd <i>pride</i>
pes(e) <i>peace</i>	parvayd(e), parveyed <i>provided; offered; conveyed; prepared</i>
petē <i>pity</i>	pall <i>pil</i>
pevertiſſe, pevertiſſi <i>poverty</i>	patton <i>pushed</i>
peyne <i>pain</i>	pyne(d) <i>pain; to pain, to be pained</i>
piche, pyc(c)he, pykke <i>pitch</i>	pysses <i>pains</i>
pilars, pylers <i>pillars, columns</i>	quarel <i>musile</i>
pine, pyne <i>pain</i>	quainte(r), quyste <i>clever; (more) skilful</i>
pittes <i>pits</i>	quayntaunce <i>acquaintance</i>
plas <i>place</i>	quic <i>casotic</i>
playne <i>full</i>	quic, quyk <i>alive, quick</i>
playne pase <i>brisk pace</i>	rad(de) <i>frightened</i>
playndan <i>lamented</i>	raght <i>reached</i>
plough <i>land</i>	rampyng <i>leaping</i>
plight <i>pligie</i>	rasour <i>razor</i>
ponyſt <i>punished</i>	ratho(r)ij(s) <i>(more, most) quickly; (more, most) promptly; soon(er)est</i>
pople <i>people</i>	raw, on raw <i>in order (in a row)</i>
pore <i>poor</i>	rays <i>noise</i>
poudre <i>powder</i>	reckys <i>care</i>
Paul <i>Paul</i>	rede(s) <i>read(s); advise(s); to study</i>
powre <i>blameless, steadfast</i>	re(e)de <i>red</i>
powerper <i>purple</i>	
po(u)nſi <i>power</i>	
powwere <i>power</i>	
pover <i>poor</i>	
poynſt <i>point (of doctrine)</i>	
prechaurs <i>preachers</i>	
prede <i>pride</i>	

Glossary

regnes reigns	sall shall
reles(e) release	saled saluted, greeted
religious religious orders	samen together
rennand running	sampull example
renneth runs	saphere sapphire
repenti repent	sare sadly, sorely, agonizing
repreved reproved	sartus rarely
reprove reproof	sary sorry
resayved received	sawl(e)(y), sawl(e)(s) soul(s)
respyt respite, relief	saunfayle without fail, without doubt
reuthe, rewthe pity, regret	Saunter Psalms
revescyd vexed	sautry poultry
rew(eful) rueful	sau(u)wes sayings, teachings, words
rewle rule	saw word
rey(y)d(e) advice, teaching	sayand saying
reymyng reigning	schake hurry
ribaudie foolishness	schaltow shall you
ribes rabies	schape escape
rigge, rygge back	schappud created
rinneth runs	scheld shield
rode cross: red	schew must
rong rong	schend(e) destroy
ron rose, arose	schent overcome
rout bellow, shout	schet shar
rowte rabbit	schewus sheaves
ragged torn (xp)	schew(es), (ed) show(s), (ed)
ryfe rigorous; well-known	scheynod shone
ryg roof	schire entirely; brightly
ryghtwes(s)omes, ryghtwines justice	schis she
ryghtwis righteous	schon shone
rynamd running	schorpionys scorpion
rynamd rising	schriche shrieking
rysing rising, Resurrection	schrive, schryve forgive; be forgiven (in the sacrament of Penance)
ryve tear; ryven ripped	schul shall
sa so, soever	schuld should
saferstones sapphires	schrevon shriven
salidoises celadon	schrist skirted

Glossary

schryfen, schryven driven, forgiven	seyn seem
schryft (sacrament of) <i>Penance</i> , Confession	seymer sooner
schryll clearly, brightly	seyntwary sanctuary
schynand shining	seyrwyse in various ways
schyre shining	seyt say
scole(s) school(s)	seytt seated; seat
scrattyn scratching	side spacious
scriche screech, shriek	sigge dry
scrippē pilgrim's bag or pouch	sikelatoun silk woven with gold
scryve confess; renounce	siker(liche), siker(bly), sycer(bly) sure(ly), certainly, firmly
se sea; to see	sithen afterwards, then
secularis diocesan priests	sithe(s), sythes time(s)
sede said, taught	skathe harm
seett set, established	sklaunder, sclauder scandal, slander; slandersyd slandered
sege seat	skorne scorn, mock
seighē, seyghē saw	skyll reason, rational capacity
seke sick	slane slain
selly remarkably; skillfully	slavyn pilgrim's cloak
semound appearing	slete sleet
semounde appearance	slewthe stock
semblance comparison, resemblance	slowe slow, sluggish
semly pleasing	slyke such
sen since	smal, smyll(e) smell, odor, aroma; piece, bit
senawrys censers	smal(e) small, fine, slender
septurus scepters	smert painful, sharp; be pained
se(e)jr(e), seet various, diverse	smiche smoke
serewyse apart	smylland swelling
seriaunce servant	smythes, smythus forges, blacksmith shops; smythy forge
sertaine, sertayne certain	smythus blacksmiths
servydyst deserve	snow snow
sese(s) cease(s), stop(s), remit(s); see	sober sobered, calmed
sesoun season, time	sogettus, suggestus subjects
sesow do you see	solemyte celebrant
sete sat	send help
sethen, sethyn, seythan since, later, afterwards	
sett set, built	

Glossary

sorfer sister	stare powerful, potent, fierce
soth(e)(ly), soth(fastly), seghth, sathely truth; truly, correctly	stowt stoutish, sturdy
sotyll subtle	stounde time
soke sacked	strem(es) stream(s)
sor agonized	strenkith, strynthe strength
sownes leads (to)	stroy destroy, overcome
spac, spak spoke	stryft strife
space a while, period of time	styf sturdy, strong
sparthe spear, battle ax	styr stir, move
spede benefit, help, well-being; to progress	suende oppressed, afflicted
spelle teaching	suffrayse (spiritually) beneficial; main, principal
spended spent, expended	suffri suffer
spyr despair	suld should
sponne spin	sum a; some
spourged purged, cleansed	sumdele somewhat, a bit
spousage marriage	sunstyme at one time, once upon a time
spylle(e) kill, ravage, shake	swe so
spylt killed, destroyed	swart, swert black
spytill ferkes pitchforks	sweepand sweeping
stabill, stabyll stable, steadfast, reliable, orthodox	swere neck; swear
stane stone	swete adj., adv. sweet; sweetly;
stark strong	comfortably
sted situated; treated	swetter sweater
sted(d)(e)(s), styd place(s), location(s)	sweening dreaming
stell steal	swiche such
stell(l)(e), styl steel	swilk such
stely steal, sneak	swithe, swythe very, greatly; quickly;
ster(res) star(s)	firmly
steven(s) voice(s), speech(es), sound(s)	swolo, swolewe swallow; swollen
stighe climbed, went up	swallowed
stille firmly	swowysg groaning
stin(c)kand stinking	sybbe kinship
stint stopped	syde side, boundary
stor possessions	syde-lipped wide-lipped
	sykaade sighing
	sykerer more surely, more certainly
	sykad, sykyd sighed

Glossary

sykernes security	thi your, thy
symple frank, open, simple	thider thither, there
syngant singing	thilke these
sythe(s) time(s)	thin thine, your
tae toe; take	thir these
tak take; took	thirk(ed) pierced
tak(e)(gud) tent pay (close) attention	the then; those
takenyng tokening, sign	thole endure, bear, suffer
tald told; counted; recounted	thunder thunder
tane taken, caught; accepted,	thank(ed) thanked
encompassed: the one	thrattie threatened
tapaces topaz	thrawe thrust
teche(d) teach (taught), show	thred, thridde third
teight, test teeth	threw dangerous
tempore temper	thrust thrust
teme suffering; tax	thurgh through
tenates pays attention, attends	thurt need
tenyd accused	thurh(out) through(out)
terestri terrestrial, earthly	thungate thw: thashly; as follows
teythe tithe	thydes thighs
tha those	tiding tidings, news
thai they	til(l), tyll to, until
thair their	time, tyme lone, harm, destroy; harmful,
thaire these	damnable
tham them	titter more quickly, quite quickly
than then	to tow; tow; to
thare, thore there	toberent burnt fiercely
thaw(ye) though	todes toads
the the; thee, you, thyself; prosper	todrawyn, todrawe torn apart
theude country, land	toforn before, in front of
thefus, theves thieves	tokening premonition
thel they; even if; although	tolys tools
their these	ton the one
thenche(n); think	tong(as) tongue; tong(y)
thennes, thennes thence	tonicles vestments, albs
ther where; there	topes topsaz
thethen rhence	torrent lone, torn to bits
	toryfe tear apart

Glossary

toskes, toskys tools	uncouth uncivilized, savage
tothe teeth	undede opened
tother the other	undername unnamed, put on
totare sore up	unkynd, unkynedly unnatural, unkind
toucheth, touches touches; is relevant	unleylic unfaithful
tourn turn	unsaethe frighten; scarcely
tourten arises	unsæthes lest
transyng passing over, trance (unconscious state)	unryghtwyse unjust
travaild troubled	unskyfull non-rational
travayll travail, hardship	untyll unto, to
tremblyd trembled	urn flow
trent turned	valay valley
tre(u)(s) tree(s); wood	varely verify
tripas(s)e trespass, sin	virtu power
trone throne	vayne vain, useless, proud
trow(ed) believed, trusted	velany villainy
trowestow do you believe	venjans vengeance
trouth(e) truth, fidelity	versickles vericiles (short, repeated prayers)
trouwing opinion, belief	verba(s) power(s), strength(s), virtue(s)
true true	vochensaffe, vachesave, vochesave promise, allow, grant
tuk took	volenté desire
tuk (gud) wat paid (close) attention	voutry see avoutry
tormentri(e) torment	vys vice
tormentowrys, tormentowrys tormenters	 wa woe
twouched touched	walt know
twybyll pickax(es)	wald(e) would
twyne part	walkand walking
tyd, tyte quickly	walland boiling
tyde time, liturgical seasons	walle walled
tyre attire	wan dim
tyses entices	wandes fear
tyttest most quickly	wane wot, earned; one
 uggod shuddered	wanshape despair
umlapped, umsett set around, surrounded	wapen weapon(s)

Glossary

war war, were; aware; wary	winne salvation; to win, prevail
warand (<i>be</i>) cursed	wirschepe, wirschip worship
warkus, warkys, werkes works	wiscliche wisely
ward world	wist, wist knew
wast wasted, useless	wite, wytte know, understand
wasted washed, wasted	witerly, wyterly truly
wat(e), wet know, understand	withalle without, completely
wathes perils, dangers	withdrawe withdraw from, forsake;
wawys waves	withdrawn, taken out
waxand waxing, growing	witt, witt, whytt know
wayly wail	witten wit, intelligence
wedla(y)ke wedlock, marriage	whansom disgusting
weld(es) wield(s), control(s)	wode(e)(nes) mad, crazy; fury, madness
welth wealth, well-being, abundance	wode waded
wemen women	wold would
wend(e),wendust, wendyst go, travel; lead; thought, knew	woll will
wene doubt; know, expect	wombe belly
wennas whence	won one
wenson believe, think	wond moved; wonder
wepand weeping	won(ne)(eth) live(s); used to
weryed troubled, wearied	woanynq dwelling
wether bekys shepherds' crooks	word(lyche) world(ly)
wetton tell	west would
weved quenched	welt knew
whare where	wex grew, became
whase whose, which	wrayst wrest, wrench
wha som whoever	wreche vengeance
whatkyn what kind of (sort of)	wrenche wiles
whole wheel	wretyn, wryten written
whilk(e), whylk(e) which	wrought wrought
whilom once, at one time	wryche wretch
whys wise	wyle, wylie, wyls while, times
wiche what	wyn wit, achieve, reach; winning, achievement; (<i>at</i>) wyn to wit
wick(e), wykud wicked	wys know; explain, inform
wif(e), wif(e) wife, woman	wyse manner, way
wight(es) creature(s), person(s)	wyty intelligent, learned
wimen women	

Glossary

Y J

yala yellow
yardys rods
yatys gates
ybe, ybyn be, been
ybest best, carved
yblisced blessed
ybore, yborn borne, carried
ybonade bound, imprisoned
ybrought brought
yche(e)on each one
ycheled called, named
yeristned christened, baptized
ydeit dealt, distributed
ydight, ydyght fixed out, constructed,
 shaped
ydo(n) done, placed
yede(n) come, went, stood
yeff(e) of
yeffitus gift
yeme note, nounce, care
yemer guardian
yfere gathered together
yfeyll fool
yfill filled
yha yes
yhe ye, you
yhede went
yhemne protect
yherd heard; praised
yher(e) year(s); hear
yhing young
yhit yet

yheld held
Yhole Yule (Christmas)
yhang young
yheur your
yheue you
yheuth youth
yif if
ykaawe known
ylete let, undertaken, done
yliche like, equal to
ylik(e)on each one
ymelt melted, molten
ymayled nailed
ynece eyes
ynome taken
yellow yellow
yo(o)di(e) went
ypilt thrust
yrke troubled
yschewed showed
ysc ice
ysc, gan ysc (began to) see; seen
yselghe saw, had seen
ysett arrived
yseyd said, explained
yseye saw
yvill evil
yward protected
ywib indeed
ywreked compelled
ysc eye