

Three Purgatory Poems

*The Gast of Gy
Sir Owain
The Vision of Tundale*

*Edited by
Edward E. Foster*

Published for TEAMS
(The Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages)
in Association with the University of Rochester

by

MEDIEVAL INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS
College of Arts and Sciences
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
2004

Three Purgatory Poems

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 revisit 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?

Three Purgatory Poems

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 Machabees 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.

Introduction

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.³ 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.⁴ 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).⁵ 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

³ 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.

⁴ For the translation of Enoch, see Genesis 5:23–24.

⁵ See Le Goff, pp. 46–47, 52–57.

Three Purgatory Poems

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 notions 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 Pauline 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. Arand's translation of the *Enchiridion*, cited in the Bibliography, followed by the Latin citations from the *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne.

Introduction

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 *mali*, the unmistakably evil, who are damned to eternal punishment in the retributive fires of Hell. The two middle groups are the *mali 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 / *PL* 40.283), 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 purgatorial 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 purgatorial 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 purgatorial 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.”

Three Purgatory Poems

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 Furseus,” 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 infernal 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’

Introduction

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 theologians, 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 (*purgatorius, -a, -um*) 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 origin 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–xxxiii.

Three Purgatory Poems

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 Damian, 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 *Limbus Infantum*, where unbaptized children were placed. See Le Goff, pp. 220–21.

Introduction

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

Three Purgatory Poems

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 Owain* and *The Vision of Tundale*, are fourteenth-century works in Middle English that preserve and also put their own imprint on doctrines from twelfth-century Latin sources; one, *The Gast 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.

General Bibliography

Anderson, Heather Jerrim. “The Terrestrial Paradise: A Study in the ‘Intermediacy’ and Multi-Levelled Nature of the Medieval Garden of Eden.” Ph.D. Dissertation: SUNY Buffalo, 1973. *DAI* 34.9A (1974), p. 5830A.

Andersson, Otto, et al. *The Bowed-Harp: A Study in the History of Early Musical Instruments*. Ed. Kathleen Schlesinger. London: W. Reeves, 1930; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1973.

Introduction

Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Summa contra Gentiles*. Trans. Anton C. Pegis, James F. Anderson, Vernon J. Bourke, and Charles J. O'Neil. 4 vols. published as 5. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975.

———. *The Summa Theologica*. Trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province. 5 vols. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981.

Augustine, St. *Faith, Hope, and Charity*. Trans. and annotated Louis A. Arand. *Ancient Christian Writers* 3. New York: Newman Press, 1947; rpt. Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1963. [*Enchiridion de fide, spe et caritate*.]

Becker, Ernest. *A Contribution to the Comparative Study of the Medieval Visions of Heaven and Hell*. Baltimore: John Murphy Co., 1899; rpt. 1976.

Bliss, A. J. "Notes on the Auchinleck Manuscript." *Speculum* 26 (1951), 652–58.

Burrows, Jean Harpham. "The Auchinleck Manuscript: Contexts, Texts and Audience." Ph.D. Dissertation: Washington University, 1984. *DAI* 45.12A (1985), p. 3633A.

Carter, Henry Holland. *A Dictionary of Middle English Musical Terms*. Ed. George B. Gerhard. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1961.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Riverside Chaucer*. Gen. ed. Larry D. Benson. Third ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.

Cursor Mundi: A Northumbrian Poem of the XIVth Century in Four Versions. Ed. Richard Morris, et al. EETS o.s. 57, 59, 62, 66, 68, 99, 101. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co., 1876; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Delumeau, Jean. *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture, 13th–18th Centuries*. Trans. Eric Nicholson. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990.

Easting, Robert. "Peter of Bramham's Account of a Chaplain's View of Purgatory (c. 1343?)." *Medium Ævum* 65 (1996), 211–29.

———. *Visions of the Other World in Middle English*. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 1997.

Fenn, Richard K. *The Persistence of Purgatory*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Three Purgatory Poems

- Gardiner, Eileen, ed. *Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante*. New York: Italica Press, 1989.
- Harley, Marta Powell. "The Origin of a Revelation of Purgatory." *Reading Medieval Studies* 12 (1986), 87–91.
- Jeffrey, David L., ed. *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1992.
- Keiser, George R. "The Progress of Purgatory: Visions of the Afterlife in Later Middle English Literature." In *Zeit, Tod und Ewigkeit in der Renaissance Literatur*. Vol. 3. Ed. James Hogg. Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1987. Pp. 72–100.
- Le Goff, Jacques. *The Birth of Purgatory*. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Matsuda, Takami. *Death and Purgatory in Middle English Didactic Poetry*. Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1997.
- Mumford, J., and Richard Ashby. *Two Ancient Treatises on Purgatory*. London: Burns and Oates, 1893.
- Murphy, John Lancaster. "The Idea of Purgatory in Middle English Literature." Ph.D. Dissertation: UCLA, 1994. *DAI* 56.3A (1995), p. 944A.
- Oakden, J. P. *Alliterative Poetry in Middle English*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1930; rpt. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1968.
- Ombres, Robert. *Theology of Purgatory*. Dublin: Mercier Press, 1978.
- Os, Arnold Barel van. *Religious Visions: The Development of the Eschatological Elements in Mediaeval English Religious Literature*. Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1932.
- Pantin, W. A. *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1955; rpt. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980.
- Patch, Howard Rollin. *The Other World, According to Descriptions in Medieval Literature*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950.

Introduction

Spearling, A. C. *Medieval Dream-Poetry*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Taylor, Michael J. *Purgatory*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publications, 1998.

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 purgatorial 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 gruesome, 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 Alés, 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 Alés 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 Rosse, 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-heretical flirtation with

The Gast of Gy

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 (Alexty 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 XXII'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 Pryor 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 Pryor, 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 Pryor, 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.

Introduction

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 beneficent 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 Gast 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 Paschanus doing penance in the Roman baths at Angulus where Paschanus had committed an unnamed sin. In a few days the prayers of Geronimus deliver Paschanus 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 *Trental 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

The Gast of Gy

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 parsons. 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 Beaucaire." 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 "common" 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 Gawain: 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, 1050–1500*, 3.698–700.

Introduction

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 ertow ane ill gast or a gud?” (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 catechetic), 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 context 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 noght right, and here now whi” (line 252) and “Me think thou ert noght stabill, / Bot thou ert 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

The Gast of Gy

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 bi 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.

Introduction

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 ert noght trew.
Of Requiem I sang, certaine,
For Cristen saules, that er in Payne.
Tharfor thou says noght sothfastly. (lines 812–15)

The Gast’s lengthy response (lines 817–997) allows the spirit to expatriate 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 Heaven 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

The Gast of Gy

sympathetic than expedient and is a small but direct suggestion of how the living can improve the condition of purgatorial 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, scho 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:

Gud Gy, for luf of me,
Say if I sall saved be
Or I sall dwell in dole ever mare
For that syn that thou nevend are,
Wharof, I wate, God was noght payd. (lines 1467–71)

sorrow
mentioned before
know; requited

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.

Introduction

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 lufed mare my wyfe
Than any other man on lyfe,
And tharfor first to hir I went. (lines 1497-99)

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 "mervaire" (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

The Gast of Gy

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.

Select Bibliography

Manuscripts

Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson Poet. 175 (SC 14667), fols. 96r–108v. [c. 1350]

British Library MS Cotton Tiberius E. vii, fols. 90r–101r. [c. 1325–50]

Editions

Horstmann, Carl, ed. *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, an English Father of the Church, and his Followers*. Library of Early English Writers 2. London: S. Sonnenschein and Co., 1895–96. Vol. 2, pp. 292–333.

Schleich, Gustav, ed. *The Gast of Gy: Eine englische Dichtung des 14. Jahrhunderts nebst ihrer lateinischen Quelle De spiritu Guidonis*. Palaestra 1. Berlin: Mayer and Müller, 1898.

Commentary

Bowers, R. H. *The Gast of Gy: A Middle-English Religious Prose Tract Preserved in Queen's College, Oxford, MS. 383*. Beiträge zur englischen Philologie 32. Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1938.

Eleazer, Ed. “*The Gast of Gy*: An Edition of the Quatrain Version with Critical Commentary.” Ph.D. Dissertation: Florida State University, 1984. *DAI* 45.9A (1985), p. 2868A.

Gobi, Jean. *Dialogue avec un Fantôme*. Trans. Marie-Anne Polo de Beaulieu. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. [Paperback rpt. 2002.]

Introduction

Hartung, Albert E., ed. *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050–1500*. Vol. 3. New Haven, CT: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1972. Pp. 698–700.

Kaluza, Max. Rev. of *The Gast of Gy*, ed. Gustav Schleich. *Literaturblatt für germanische und romanische Philologie* 10 (1900), 330–34.

Schmitt, Jean-Claude. *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society*. Trans. Teresa L. Fagan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Wells, John Edwin, ed. *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050–1400*. New Haven, CT: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1916. Pp. 170–72.

The Gast of Gy

	Saint Michael, the aungell clere,	<i>angel bright</i>
	And Saint Austyn, the doctour dere,	<i>Augustine</i>
	And other maisters mare and myn	<i>masters greater and lesser</i>
	Sais that men gret mede may wyn	<i>Say; reward</i>
5	(And namely clerkes, that kan of lare),	<i>know of learning</i>
	If thai thair connyng will declare	<i>understanding</i>
	Unto lewed men, that kan les,	<i>uneducated; know less</i>
	And namely thing, that nedfull es,	<i>needful is</i>
	That whylk may ger tham sese of syn	<i>which; prepare them [to] cease</i>
10	And help tham unto Heven at wyn;	<i>to win</i>
	And Saint Paule, Godes apostell dere,	
	Says till us on this manere:	<i>to</i>
	“All, that clerkes in bokes rede,	<i>books read</i>
	Es wryten all anely for our spede,”	<i>only; benefit</i>
15	That we may thareof ensaumple take	<i>example</i>
	To save our saules and syn forsake,	<i>souls</i>
	And lede our lives, both mare and les,	<i>more and less</i>
	Als haly bokes beres witnes.	<i>books; bear witness</i>
	And for that God of His gret grace	<i>because; great</i>
20	Will His pople in ilk a place	<i>people; every</i>
	Trow in thinges that er to come,	<i>Believe; are</i>
	Of ded and of the Day of Dome,	<i>death; Judgment</i>
	And how ilk man sall have his mede,	<i>each; shall; reward</i>
	Be saved or dampned after thair dede,	<i>damned according to; deeds</i>
25	Tharfor He schewes ensaumpels sere	<i>shows various examples</i>
	On this mold omang us here,	<i>earth among</i>
	To ger us in oure trowth be stabill	<i>To prepare; fidelity [to] be steadfast</i>
	And lif in faith withowten fabill.	<i>live; deception</i>
	And so in world He will us wys	<i>guide (advise)</i>
30	To kepe us clene and com to blys.	<i>bliss</i>
	So it bifell in a sesoune	<i>season</i>
	Efter Cristes Incarnacioune	<i>Incarnation</i>
	A thowsand wynter, be yhe bald,	<i>be you assured</i>

The Gast of Gy

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

The Gast of Gy

	For in that chaumbre oft herd was he,	chamber
	Whare hir lord was wont to be,	accustomed
75	To spyll that bed wald he noght blyn, That Gy, hir lord, and scho lay in.	make desolate; would; cease she
	“Tharfor,” scho said with symple chere,	open manner
	“That hows dar I no mare com nere;	house
	Bot hyder I come to ask counsaile,	hither; counsel
80	What thing myght in this case availe.”	
	When the Pryor herd all this case,	made
	Gret mournyng in his hert he mase;	so she should not
	Bot, for scho suld noght be affrayd,	
	Unto the woman thus he sayd:	
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 falles omang mankynde.	dread you not at all difficulty; shall no marvel
	Forwhy,” he said, “als kennes thir clerkes,	circumstances; among
90	God is wonderfull in His werkes; And wele I wate, that He will now Ordain som poyn特 for our prow To schew omang His servandes dere	Therefore; as these clerks know works well I know
	Till thair helping, als men sall here.	Set some point; testing
95	Tharfor, dame, gyf thee noght ill, Bot be blythe and byde here stylle, For to my brether I will a space To ask thair counsail in this case;	show among; servants dear For; shall hear
	For omang many wytty men	do not distress yourself (be troubled)
100	Som gud counsail 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.”	But; glad; stay brothers; a while counsel among; intelligent good advice; know
	Than gert he ryng the chapter bell	more certainly; accepted
105	And gedyrd his brether all togyder, And hastily when thai come thider, He declared tham all this case, Als the woman said it wase,	by himself alone shall not delay
	And prayd tham for to tell him to	began; chapter
	Tharof what best es to do?	gathered; brothers; together there
110	Unto this tale thai tuke gud tent	told them; situation As; was asked listened carefully

The Gast of Gy

	And ordaind be thair comon assent,	decided by
	That the Pryor sone suld ga	soon should go
	And with him other maisters twa,	masters two
115	That wyest war in thair degré	
	Unto the mayre of that ceté	
	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 tham 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 tham, if it war nede.	
125	And thus thai did with al thaire maine:	
	The woman was thareof ful fayne.	
	When the mayre had herd this thing,	
	Twa hundred men sone gert he bring	
	And armed tham fra top to ta	
130	And bad tham with the Pryor ga	
	And baynly do, what he will byd.	
	And, als he bad, ryght swa thai dyd.	
	The Pryor bad tha men bidene,	
	That thai suld all be schryven clene	
135	And here Messe with devocyoune,	
	And sithen baldly mak tham boune.	
	Of Requiem he sang a Messe	
	For Cristen saules both more and lesse,	
	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 noght tham fere	
	Ne in thair dedes do tham no dere.	
145	And than the Pryor full prevely	
	In a bost tok Godes body	
	Under his gere with gud entent,	
	Bot na man wist, that with him went.	
	He and his forsayd brether twa	
150	Unto Gy hows gon thai ga.	

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:	<i>then arranged about; house</i> <i>All set around on every side event would occur</i>
155	Som 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 howses ryg,	<i>by; by the door</i> <i>weapons; sturdy and strong</i> <i>he caused to lie</i> <i>house's roof</i>
	And ever in ilk a place bot thre In takenyng of the Trinité;	<i>And always in each place just three</i> <i>token; Trinity</i>
160	And, thus, when thai war sett obout, He bad that thai suld have no dout. Than entred he into that place, And his twa brether with him gase,	<i>set about</i> <i>ordered; should</i>
165	And thir wordes he said in hy: “Pax huic domui!”	<i>two brothers; went</i> <i>these; immediately</i> <i>Peace to this house</i> <i>is in English</i> <i>Peace; house always</i>
	That es on Ynglysch thus to say: “Pese be to this hows allway!”	<i>chamber</i>
170	To chaumber he went withouten rest, And haly water obout he kest With “Vidi aquam” and than said thus: “Veni, Creator Spiritus”	<i>holy; about; cast</i> <i>I have seen water</i> <i>Come, Creator Spirit</i>
	With the Colett, that sall efter come, “Deus, qui corda fidelium”;	<i>Collect; should after</i>
175	And haly water obout kest he Eftstones and said: “Asperges me.”	<i>O God, who the hearts of the faithful . . .</i>
	He cald the wyfe withouten mare; Scho come wepand wonder sare.	<i>holy; about cast</i>
180	He said: “Dame, teche me unto the stede And to the bed, whare Gy was dede.”	<i>Soon after; Sprinkle me</i>
	The woman was full mased and mad: Scho trembyld than, scho was so rad.	<i>called; without more [delay]</i>
185	Unto the bed sone scho him tald; The care was at hir hert full cald, Bot in hir wa, yhit als scho was, Scho said: “Sir Pryor, or yhe pas,	<i>She came weeping very bitterly</i>
	I pray yhow for the luf of me, And als in dede of charyté, That yhe wald byd som haly bede	<i>show; place</i> <i>where; died</i> <i>distraught; beside herself</i> <i>She trembled; frightened</i> <i>soon she; took</i> <i>worry; cold</i> <i>But; woe, as yet she was</i> <i>before you leave</i> <i>you; love</i> <i>also as an act of charity</i> <i>you would make some holy petition</i>

The Gast of Gy

190	And mak prayers in this stede For Gy saule, that noble man."	place <i>Gy's soul</i>
	And than the Pryor thus bigan And said: "Dominus vobiscum"; His brether answerd all and som.	<i>The Lord be with you</i> <i>every one of them</i> <i>afterwards; at once</i>
195	And efterward he said onone The fyrst gosspell of Saint Jone ("In principio" clerkes it call). When it was said, than satt thai all Doun on a burde the bed besyde	<i>John</i> <i>In the beginning</i> <i>sat</i> <i>Down; bench</i>
200	And said the servyce in that tyde, That for the ded aw for to be: "Placebo" with the "Dirige," And after the Laudes thai said in hy The seven Psalmes with the Letany.	<i>service of that season</i> <i>ought to be</i> <i>I will please (i.e., appease); Guide [me]</i> <i>immediately</i> <i>Litany [of the Saints]</i>
205	"Agnus Dei" than said thai thryse, And ane than answerd on this wyse: A febilly voyce than might thai ken Als a child sayand: "Amen." Tharfor war thai all affraid,	<i>thrice</i> <i>someone; manner</i> <i>feeble; apprehend</i> <i>As; saying</i>
210	And the Pryor thusgate sayd: "I conjure thee, thou creature, In the vertu of our Saveoure, That es a God of myghtes maste, Fader and Son and Haly Gaste,	<i>said as follows</i> <i>command you</i> <i>By the power; Savior</i> <i>of greatest power</i> <i>Father; Holy Ghost</i>
215	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	<i>shall; always</i> <i>whatever; ask for</i> <i>As far as</i> <i>louder tone</i>
220	Said to him on this manere: "A, Pryor, ask sone, what thou will, And I sall tell it thee untyll, Als fer als I have myght or mynde Or als I may have leve be kynde."	<i>in</i> <i>quickly</i> <i>shall; unto you</i> <i>As far as; power or understanding</i> <i>as; allowance by nature</i>
225	This ilk voyce than herd thai all (The armed men obout the hall), And in thai come full fast rynand, Ilk ane with wapen in thair hand;	<i>same</i> <i>running</i> <i>Each one; weapon</i>

The Gast of Gy

	For wele it was in thair trowyng That thai suld se som gastly thing. Bot nevertheless yhit saw thai nane, Ne noght herd bot a voyce all ane. The Pryor bad tham all stand styll, And thus he spak the voyce untyll: “Whether ertow ane ill gast or a gud?” He answerd than with myld mode, “I am a gud gast and nane ill, I may thee prove be proper skyll. For Haly Wrytt thus beres witnes:	<i>opinion</i> <i>should see; ghostly</i> <i>yet; none</i> <i>Nor heard; alone</i> <i>unto</i> <i>are you an evil spirit or a good</i> <i>mild manner</i> <i>good spirit; none evil</i> <i>to you; reason</i> <i>Holy Writ (i.e., Scripture); bears witness</i> <i>more and less (i.e., everything)</i> <i>works; every one</i> <i>wonderfully good each one</i> <i>made</i> <i>since; one of those</i> <i>good spirit; therefore</i> <i>as; spirit</i> <i>understand</i> <i>by nature</i> <i>evil according to my deeds</i> <i>pain for reward</i> <i>quickly</i> <i>say not; hear now why</i> <i>shall I show you here quickly</i> <i>say; are</i>
230	When God had made both more and les, He loked His werkes in ilk a wane, And thai war wonder gud ilk ane. All war gud, that He gan ma, And, sen that I am ane of tha,	
235	A gud gast I am forthi. And, als I am the gast of Gy, Tharfor may thou have in mynde, That I am a gud gast be kynde, Bot I am evell after my dede,	
240	And tharfor have I pyne to mede.” The Pryor answerd him in hy: “Thou says noght right, and here now whi: That sall I schew thee here in haste.	
245	Thou sais, thou ert a wicked gaste For the payn that thou has here. I answerthee on this manere:	
250	All payns er gud (that prove I thee), That ordaind er in gud degré, That es to say, that punysch syn Of tham that in erth wald noght blyn,	
255	For it es gyfen thurgh Godes will. Tharfor I say, it es noght ill, Ne thou es noght wicked thereby.” And than answerd the gast of Gy:	
260	“Ilk Payne es gud, I graunt wele, For fra God es gyfen ilk a dele Bi judgement and bi reson clere	
265		<i>pains are; you</i> <i>ordained are; degree</i> <i>punish sin</i> <i>would not stop</i> <i>given by</i> <i>Nor are you</i> <i>Each</i> <i>from; given every bit</i> <i>By; by clear reason</i>

The Gast of Gy

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| | For evell dedes men has done here. | evil |
| | Bot nevertheless yhit es it ill | yet |
| 270 | For tham, that it es gyfen untyll.
Mi Payne es yvell to me all ane,
For me it ponysch and other nane;
And, sen I have swilk evelle Payne
For my syns, als es sertayne, | given unto
<i>My; evil; alone
punish; none other</i>
since; such evil
as is certain |
| 275 | Ane evelle spirytt thou may call me
Unto tyme that I cleensed be
Of evelle dedes, that I have done.”
And all thus said the Pryor sone:
“Tell me apertely, or thou passe, | An evil
Until; cleansed
evil
<i>plainly, before; go away</i> |
| 280 | Whase man spirytt 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.” | <i>Which man's; were</i>
immediately
<i>place
as you know</i> |
| 285 | The Pryor sayd: “Than wele I fynd
Be reson, that thou ert noght kynd,
That thou makes slyke sklaunder and stryf
Both to thiself and to thi wyf;
For, whils that Gy was lyfand man, | <i>By reason; not natural</i>
<i>such scandal; strife</i> |
| 290 | Ryghtwis was he halden than
And trew in fayth, of noble fame
And his wif allso the same;
And for thir mervails that thou mase, | <i>while; living</i>
<i>Righteous; considered then</i>
<i>true in faith</i> |
| 295 | Now will men say in ilk a place,
That Gy was evelle in all his lyfe,
And tharfor turmentes he his wife,
For lawed folk in ilk a land | <i>these marvels; make</i>
<i>everywhere</i> |
| 300 | Says evelle men er oft walkand,
And Gy was halden gud allway.
Tharfor thou ert unkynd, I say.”
The voyce answerd, als him thoght, | <i>torments</i>
<i>uneducated; every</i>
<i>are often walking [after death]</i>
<i>considered; always</i> |
| 305 | And said: “Unkynd ne am I noght
Nouther to my wyf ne to Gy;
And, sir, that shall thou here in hye
Be sawes that thou shall noght forsake; | <i>are unnatural (unkind)</i>
<i>as it seemed to him</i>
<i>Unkind (i.e., unnatural)</i>
<i>Neither</i>
<i>shall; hear immediately</i>
<i>By words; shall not ignore</i>
<i>such a proof</i> |

The Gast of Gy

	If thou have gyfen a man to were Cote or hode or other gere And he, that so thi cote has tane, Wald suffer for thi luf all ane In gud and evell to lyf and dy, War he noght kynd to thee forthi?" The Pryor said: "Yhis, for certaine." And than answerd the voyce ogayne	given; wear Coat; hood; clothing taken Would; your love alone to live and die Were; thereby Yes, for certain again
310	And said: "Sir, trewly I thee tell, In Gyes body whils I gan dwell, Of him I toke none other thing Bot his cors to my clethyng. This cors, that I dedely call,	while; did dwell body; clothing body; mortal
315	Gert us bath in folyes fall; And for the wickednes that he wrought, Am I in all thir bales broght; And his doyng was it ilk a dele. Als Haly Wrytt witnes full wele	Made us both fall into sin (folly) these sufferings every bit
320	And says, that lykyng here of fles Contrary to the saule es. And, if I suffer noght this payne, Both Gy and his saule, for sertayne, Suld suffer payne withouten ende	desire; flesh soul is Should fiend
325	In fyre of Hell with many a fende. For ilk a man both more and myn Sall suffer penaunce for thair syn In this erth here, whare thai dwell, Or els in Purgatori or in Hell.	every man; more and less Shall where else
330	And Gyes body has 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	no harm pained; both later; bliss Whatever joy; shall then
335	In body and saule everilk a man. And, sen I suffer thir payns grym, I am noght unkynd to him. And, sir Pryor, allso thou says, That I of Gy suld sklaunder rays.	soul every since; these; grim unkind (unnatural)
340	Tharto I answer on this wyse,	should scandal raise manner
345		

The Gast of Gy

	That I ger no sklaunder ryse. Skläunder es that kyndely kend That sownes in evel or hase evel end.	<i>cause no scandal to arise Scandal; sort of knowledge leads to; has; intent</i>
350	Wha som it dose, mon dere aby; For Haly Wryt says openly, 'Wa unto that man sall be, Thurgh whame sklaunder comes,' sais He.	<i>Whoever; does, must dearly pay Holy Writ (i.e., Scripture); clearly Woe</i>
	Tharfor if I answer for Gy, I do him no velany.	<i>whom scandal</i>
355	Mi spekyng es all for his spedē, That I may neven to yhow his nede; And als my speche may gretly gayn Till other saules that suffers payn. That may thou, syr, thiself se,	<i>My; well-being explain to you also; greatly benefit For; souls see</i>
360	For all folk of this cetē 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 saules thai pray allswa; And prayers that men prayes for ane, May help unto the other ilk ane; And allso tha that er onlyve	<i>your brothers did already make one each one those who are alive</i>
370	Sall soner of thair syns tham schryve And gyf tham unto penance hard, That thai be noght pyned afterward. Tharfor I sklaunder noght, say I, Gyes wyf ne his body.	<i>sooner; be shriven give themselves pained scandalize</i>
375	Bot all the sauwes, that I say now, Es for thair honour and thair prow."	<i>words benefit</i>
	The Pryor said: "This ask I thee, How any man may evel be, When he es ded, sen that he was	
380	Schryven clene or he gan pas, And was in will gud werkes to wirk And ended in trouth of Haly Kyrk And toke his sacramentes ilk ane."	<i>after before; pass intended truth; Holy Church</i>
	The voyce answerd sone onane	<i>at once</i>

The Gast of Gy

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

The Gast of Gy

	To blys of Heven er thai ordand.	<i>are they destined</i>
425	Tharfor tham aw noght for to say, Bot at thai may warand allway; ¹ And soth hereof may na man tell,	<i>truth; no</i>
	Bot thai had bene in Heven and Hell And sene what sorow es in the tane,	<i>the one</i>
430	And in the tother welth gud wane; Thus, in tham both wha som had bene, Might say the soth, als he had sene.	<i>the other well-being well earned</i>
	And, sen I am the spirit of Gy And suffyrs Payne in Purgatory,	<i>whoever</i>
435	The saules in Hell may I noght se. I was never thare ne never sall be. Ne into Heven may I noght wyn,	<i>truth, as</i>
	Till I be clensed clene of syn.	<i>since</i>
	Tharfor I may noght sothely say	<i>truly</i>
440	Whilk er saved or damned for ay."	<i>Which are; forever</i>
	Than the Pryor with gret will Spak ogayne the voyce untyll	<i>again; to</i>
	And said: "Me think thou ert noght stabill, Bot thou ert fals and desayvabill,	<i>stable (i.e., orthodox)</i>
445	And in this matere makes thou lyes. That may I prove thee on this wyse.	<i>deceitful</i>
	Be Haly Wrytt full wele we knew How prophetes in the Ald Law	<i>lies</i>
	Spak and tald in feld and toune	<i>in this way</i>
450	Of Cristes Incarnacioun, And how He suld tak flessch and blode	<i>Old Law</i>
	In Mary, mayden myld of mode;	<i>Spoke and told in field and town</i>
	And als thai tald in many a stede How He in erth suld suffer dede,	<i>Incarnation</i>
455	And of His ryseyng tald thai ryght, And yhit thai saw Him never with sight.	<i>should; flesh and blood</i>
	And sen thai war men bodily And tald swilk thinges in prophecy	<i>mild of manner</i>
		<i>told; place</i>
		<i>should; death</i>
		<i>resurrection told</i>
		<i>yet</i>
		<i>since</i>
		<i>told such</i>

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 Gast of Gy

	And kend the folk how thai myght knaw Things that thamself never saw, Bi this reson, thinketh me, A clene spirit, als thou suld be, Suld have mare force swilk thing to tell Than any that war in flesch and fell.	taught
460	Tharfor thee aghst to witt bi this, Whilk er in bale and whilk in blys." The voyce answerd to him in hast: "Sir Pryor, thir wordes er all wast, I may wele prove thee in this place.	<i>By; I think should Should; more; such flesh; skin ought to know by this Which; misery; which</i>
465	It es na lyknes, that thou mase, Betwix prophetes, that standes in story, And sawles, that er in Purgatory. The prophetes had, whils thai war here, Of God and of His aungels clere	wasted (i.e., useless)
470	And of gyftes of the Haly Gaste, All thair maters, least and maste, That thai myght tell and preche over all Before what thing suld fall. Swilk power was gyfen tham tyll,	<i>no similarity; make souls; are while; were bright gifts; Holy Ghost matters; least and most</i>
475	And all was for this certayn skyll: For lawed folk in ilk a land Bi thair stevens myght understand And better trow, how Crist was born, Be sawes that thai had said biforn.	<i>In advance; should occur Such; given; to reason uneducated By; voices believe By sayings since believe</i>
480	For, sen thair sawes fra God war sent, Men sall tham trow with gude entent. And I am sett for certayne space, Till God will gyf me better grace, Thus for my syns to suffer Payne.	
485	And, sir, I say thee for certayne, That I may now nane aungels se Bot tham that has kepeyng of me, And to me will thai tell ryght noght Till I out of this bale be broght.	<i>no; see Except those who have keeping misery</i>
490	Tharfore I may noght say certaine, Whilk er in blys or whilk in Payne." The Pryor than said sone onane:	<i>Which are; which at once</i>
495		

The Guest of Gy

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | "Ryght in thi wordes thou sall be tane.
Thou sais, na spirit may tell me,
Wha sall saved or dampned be;
And bokes beres witnes, be thou bald,
That fenes somtyme to men has tald
And said the soth, als thai had sene,
Of tham that saved and dampned had bene." | <i>caught</i> |
| 500 | The voyce answerd and said ogayne:
"That spirit that dwelles in payne,
Ne na fenes that dwelles in Hell,
Has no power for to tell
Ne unto no man here at neven
That towches the prevetese of Heven,
Bot if it be thurgh Godes suffraunce,
Or other aungels tham tell per chaunce.
And unto me thai tell nathing.
Tharfor I may noght have knawyng
Of hevenly blys, how it es thare,
Ne of Hell, how the fenes fare.
The sawles, that thare sall suffyr pyne,
Thair penaunce es wele mare than myne;
For I have hope to be in blys,
And tharof sall thai ever mys.
Tharfor es no lyknes to tell
Betwene me and the fenes in Hell." | <i>Who
assuredly
fiends; have told
truth, as</i> |
| 505 | Than said the Pryor: "I pray thee now,
Tell me in what stede ertow?"
The voyce answerd and said in hy:
"I am here in Purgatory."
Than said the Pryor: "Proved thou hase
That Purgatory es in this place.
For ryght als thou es purged here,
So may other saules in fere;
And, whare saules may be purged all,
Purgatory men may it call.
Tharfor bi thir sawes that thou says,
Purgatory es here always." | <i>Nor any
to explain (name)
What touches on the hidden matters
Unless; permission
knowledge
pain</i> |
| 510 | The voyce answerd and said in hy:
"I am here in Purgatory."
Than said the Pryor: "Proved thou hase
That Purgatory es in this place.
For ryght als thou es purged here,
So may other saules in fere;
And, whare saules may be purged all,
Purgatory men may it call.
Tharfor bi thir sawes that thou says,
Purgatory es here always." | <i>miss
similarity
place are you
immediately</i> |
| 515 | The voyce answerd and said in hy:
"I am here in Purgatory."
Than said the Pryor: "Proved thou hase
That Purgatory es in this place.
For ryght als thou es purged here,
So may other saules in fere;
And, whare saules may be purged all,
Purgatory men may it call.
Tharfor bi thir sawes that thou says,
Purgatory es here always." | <i>in company
these accounts</i> |
| 520 | The voyce answerd and said in hy:
"I am here in Purgatory."
Than said the Pryor: "Proved thou hase
That Purgatory es in this place.
For ryght als thou es purged here,
So may other saules in fere;
And, whare saules may be purged all,
Purgatory men may it call.
Tharfor bi thir sawes that thou says,
Purgatory es here always." | <i>There; several</i> |
| 525 | The voyce answerd and said in hy:
"I am here in Purgatory."
Than said the Pryor: "Proved thou hase
That Purgatory es in this place.
For ryght als thou es purged here,
So may other saules in fere;
And, whare saules may be purged all,
Purgatory men may it call.
Tharfor bi thir sawes that thou says,
Purgatory es here always." | <i>in company
these accounts</i> |
| 530 | The voyce answerd and said in hy:
"I am here in Purgatory."
Than said the Pryor: "Proved thou hase
That Purgatory es in this place.
For ryght als thou es purged here,
So may other saules in fere;
And, whare saules may be purged all,
Purgatory men may it call.
Tharfor bi thir sawes that thou says,
Purgatory es here always." | <i>in company
these accounts</i> |
| 535 | The voyce answerd and said in hy:
"I am here in Purgatory."
Than said the Pryor: "Proved thou hase
That Purgatory es in this place.
For ryght als thou es purged here,
So may other saules in fere;
And, whare saules may be purged all,
Purgatory men may it call.
Tharfor bi thir sawes that thou says,
Purgatory es here always." | <i>in company
these accounts</i> |

The Gast of Gy

	Ane es comon to mare and les, And departabill aneother es."	<i>One is; to all And another is set apart for an individual</i>
540	The Pryor said: "Now wate I wele That thou ert fals in ilk a dele. A saule may noght in a tyme ga To be ponyst in places twa; For, whils he sall be in the tane, Of the tother he may have nane, For in a place he suffers Payne."	<i>know on every point at one time go punished; two the one the other; none one place</i>
545	The voice than said: "This es certayne, For I am here, withouten fabyll, In Purgatory departabyll Ilk a day, als God vouches save.	<i>fable separate allows</i>
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."	<i>must be inflicted upon me [it] behooves me be pained agonizing</i>
555	The Pryor said: "Kan thou me wys, Whare comon Purgatori is, Whare thou of payns has swilk plenté?" "In mydes of all the erth," says he, "Thare es that place ordand for us."	<i>Can; explain such plenty the middle established</i>
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 aneother es right;	<i>reason In the middle; place is set another</i>
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 telles, Twa stedes in ane than burd be thare,	<i>one erred would</i>
570	And that sall thou se never mare. Tharfor so es it noght arayd." The voyce answerd sone and sayd: "Stedes er ordand here full rathe, Bodily and gastly bathe.	<i>arranged</i>
575	The saule es gastly, and forthi	<i>Places are assigned; quickly both therefore</i>

The Gast of Gy

- It occupyes na stede bodily.
 That es to say, be it all ane
 When mans body tharfra es tane.
 This ilk stede, als thou may se,
 580 Haldes both the saule and thee,
 And yhit er noght here stedes twa.
 And herebi may thou se allswa
 How rayne and slete, haile and snaw,
 Er in the ayre, kyndely to knaw,
 585 And ilk ane has his cours be kynde.
 So es that place whare we er pynde.”
 The Pryor said: “Tell us in fere,
 Whi that thou ert ponyst 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.
 Tharfore here sall I penaunce have
 For that syn, till I be save.”
 595 The Pryor said: “Telle, if thou kan,
 What thing noyse mast a man
 In tyme of ded when he es tane.”
 The voyce answerd sone onane
 And said: “The syght sall mast him dere
 600 Of foule fendes, that him wald fere;
 For than thai sall obout him be
 Defygurd all in foule degré,
 And grysely sall thai gryn and gnayst
 Out of his witt him for to wrayst;
 605 And than befor him sall be broght
 All wickednes that ever he wroght.
 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 braste.”
 The voyce said: “Thare es som man
 That thar noght 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; most*
- troubles (annoys) most
 death; taken
 at once
 most; 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 Gast of Gy

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 615 | For if a man here lede his lyve
In syn and sithen will noght him schryve,
Na in hert will have no care
For the dedes he has done are,
Than sall his aungell to him tell | <i>afterwards</i>
<i>Nor</i>
<i>in the past</i> |
| 620 | How Crist suffyrd payns so fell,
And how He dyed for his bihove.
And that sall be to his reprove
To schew him how he was unkynde
Here on this mold, whils he had mynde, | <i>deadly</i>
<i>benefit</i>
<i>reproof</i>
<i>unnatural</i>
<i>earth, while</i> |
| 625 | And how that he was mysavysede,
Godes sacramentes when he dispysede,
That wald noght schryve him of his syn,
Bot lyked it ever and ended tharein.
And, when thir sawes er thusgate sayd, | <i>ill-advised</i>
<i>despised</i>

<i>enjoyed</i>
<i>these accusations are thus</i> |
| 630 | Than sall the fendes obout him brayd
And manase him with all thair myght
And say: ‘Com forth, thou wretched wight!’
So sall thai harl him unto Hell
Withouten end in dole to dwell. | <i>shriek</i>
<i>menace</i>
<i>creature</i>
<i>hurl</i>
<i>grief</i> |
| 635 | And, if a man be cleansed clene,
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 noght done, | <i>shriven; completely</i>
<i>every one</i>
<i>death; taken</i> |
| 640 | His gud aungell sais to him sone:
‘Comforth thee wele, I sall thee were,
That the devels sall thee noght dere’;
And to the fendes than sall he say:
‘Yhe wicked fendes, wende hethen oway, | <i>Be well comforted; protect</i>
<i>harm</i> |
| 645 | For yhe have na part in this man.’
And the fendes sall answer than
And say on this wise: ‘Oures he es
Be reson and be ryghtwisnes,’
And thare than sall thai schew ful sone | <i>You; go hence away</i>

<i>justice</i> |
| 650 | All evell dedes that he has done,
Bath in eld and als in yhowth,
Sen first he kyndely wittes couth,
And say: ‘He synned thus and thus: | <i>Both; age; also in youth</i>
<i>Since; human understanding knew</i> |

The Gast of Gy

	Tharfore him aw to wende with us.'	
655	His gude aungell sall mak debate 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 clensed clene,	<i>it is fitting for him to dwell</i> <i>know</i> <i>way as you; told</i> <i>redeemed, be you assured</i>
660	And toke his sacramentes all bidene, And sorow he made for his synnyng. To clensyng fyre that sall him bring, And the meryte of Cristes Passyon now Sall be betwix him and yhow	<i>fully</i> <i>Passion</i>
665	And serve him for scheld and spere, That yhour dartere sall him noght dere; And Cristes hend and als His syde, That thirled war with woundes wyde, Sall be bitwix him and yhour hende,	<i>shield and spear</i> <i>your barbs; harm</i> <i>Christ's hands; also His side</i> <i>pierced</i> <i>hands</i>
670	And fra yhour fernes him defende; And Cristes face, that buffett was, Betwix him and yhour face sall pas, So that he sall noght on yhow se Ne for nathing abaysed be;	<i>treachery</i> <i>buffeted</i> <i>Between; shall pass</i>
675	All Cristes body spred on the Rode Sall be unto him armoure gude, Swa that yhe sall have no powere Him for to dere on na manere; All the lymes of Jhesu fre,	<i>humiliated</i> <i>Cross</i>
680	That for mankynd war pyned on Tre, Sall clenys him of that foly He dyd with lymys of his body. The saule of Crist, als yhe wele ken, That yholden was for erthly men,	<i>So</i> <i>harm</i> <i>limbs; generous</i> <i>pained; Tree (i.e., the Cross)</i>
685	Sall purge him now of all the pligght That saule dyd thurgh his awen myght, So that in him sall leve no gylt Forwhi he suld with yhow be spylt, Ne no payn unto him sall stand	<i>cleanse</i> <i>limbs</i> <i>know</i> <i>oppressed</i> <i>guilt</i>
690	Bot Purgatory, that es passand. Thare sall he suffer certaine space, Till he be purged in that place,	<i>own power</i> <i>guilt</i> <i>For which; destroyed</i> <i>passing (transitory)</i>

The Gast of Gy

	And sithen sall he with us wende And won in welth withouten ende.'	afterwards live
695	And thus es Cristes Passyoune Sett bifor us redy boune For to defend us fra the fende, Out of this world when we sall wende; Tharfor us aw, if we be kynde,	Passion already prepared
700	To have that Passyoune mast in mynde. And als men may have helpyng gude Of Mary, that es myld of mode. If we ought for hir here have done, Baldli may we ask hir bone,	go <i>it befits us; natural</i> most also <i>mild of disposition</i> anything <i>Confidently; help</i>
705	And us to help scho will hir haste, In ded when our myster es maste. For if a man, or he hethen fare, Be schryven clene, als I said are, That blyssed bryd will be full boune	death; need; greatest <i>before he travels away</i> before woman; ready succor
710	To socoure him in that sesoune And fend fro the fendes in fere And say to tham on this manere: 'Mayden and moder both am I Of Jesu, my Son, God allmyghty,	protect; fiends gathered together
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;	crowned entirely empress
720	And for that I am quene of Heven, Unto my Son thus sall I never That He sall deme for luf of me This man in Purgatory to be Till he be clenched clene of syn,	because say <i>judge; love</i>
725	And so to Heven I sall him wyn. In als mykell als I am lady Of all the erth, this ordaine I Thurgh the will of my Son dere, That ilk a bede and ilk a prayere,	<i>Inasmuch as</i>
730	That now in all this warld es sayd, Untyll his profett be purvayd, And all the messes and almusdede	every petition world To; profit <i>masses; almsdeeds</i>

The Gast of Gy

- May turne this man now unto mede; reward
 And bi tha dedes and be tha messe by those deeds; those masses
 Sall his penaunce be made lesse,
 That to him es ordaind for his syn, assigned
 That yhour falshede gert him fall in.
 For I am emperis of Hell, your; made him fall in
 Tharfor yhour force now sall I fell. strength; destroy
 I comand yhow yhe hethen fare, you [that] you go away
 735 And at yhe noy this man no mare, that you bother; more
 That ended in my Son servyse.'
 And, when scho has said on this wyse, saints high
 All the halows hegh in Heven Gather; right up to her
 Hyes all unto hir full even together
 740 And unto Jesu all in fere, And thus than mak thai thair prayere:
 And thus than mak thai thair prayere:
 'Lord Jesu, God allmyghty, saints high
 Fader of Heven, Man of Mercy, Gather; right up to her
 Have mercy of this man that es together
 745 Our awen brother and als our flesch. own; also; flesh
 Sen Thou wald com fra Heven on hight Since; from; high
 And suffer payn for mans plignt, plignt
 Thou meng Thi mercy with this man.' join
 Thus sall man saule be saved than, a man's soul
 750 And his gud aungell sall him take reparation
 To Purgatory aseth to make, pay attention
 And to him he sall tak tent
 Till he have sufferd his turment.
 And than the wicked gastes sall ga go
 755 Thethen oway with mykell wa. Thence; great woe
 On this wyse may gude prayere In these ways
 And almusdedes, that men dose here, almsdeeds; do
 And meryte of Cristes Passyoune
 And of halows gud orisoune saints' beneficent prayers
 760 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
 765 Or of Mary, His moder bryght,

The Gast of Gy

	Or els the halows verrailly In thair fourme, when thai soll dy. The voyce answerd and said: "Nay, Bot on this wise, als I soll say, Bot if it be so haly a man That has na nede of purging, than Ne for to dwell in Purgatory, Thai soll se tham openly, And synfull men soll nocht tham se."	saints truly shape <i>Except; as</i>
775		
780	The Pryor said: "Than think me, That thou says now thiself to skorne Ogayns the sawes thou said beforne; For thou said, Cristes Passyoune And also Mary suld be boune And other halows, that er in Heven, To pray for him with myld steven. Than semes it that he se tham may." The voyce answerd and sayd: "Nay;	<i>mock yourself</i> <i>Against; claims</i>
785	Thai soll be thare, I grant thee wele, Bot he soll se tham never a dele In thair lyknes verrailly. And this es the encheson whi: For the grettest blys of Heven it es For to se Crist in His lyknes,	<i>prepared</i> <i>saints</i> <i>mild voice</i>
790	That es to say, in His Godhede; Than thurt men have nane other mede Than in thair dying Him to se, And in that blys than thai suld be Sodainly at thair ending,	<i>not a bit</i> <i>truly</i> <i>reason</i>
795	And that war nocht acordand thing." Than the Pryor of him asked, If spirytes, that war hethen passed, May kyndely knew be morn or none The dedes that here er for tham done,	<i>in His own image</i> <i>Divinity</i> <i>need; reward</i>
800	Or prayer that we for tham ma? The voyce answerd and said: "Yha." The Pryor said: "Than kan thou say, Wharof I sang Mess this day?"	<i>Suddenly</i> <i>fitting</i>
805	The voyce answerd ogayne full tyte	<i>thither</i> <i>by nature; noon</i> <i>deeds</i> <i>make</i> <i>Yes</i>
		<i>Of what; Mass</i> <i>quickly</i>

The Gast of Gy

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 810 | And said: "Thou sang of Saint Spiryte."
The Pryor answerd, als he knew,
And said: "I se, thou ert noght trew.
Of Requiem I sang, certaine,
For Cristen saules, that er in payne. | <i>Holy Spirit</i> |
| 815 | Tharfor thou says noght sothfastly."
The voyce answerd to him in hy:
"I graunt graythely, or I gang,
Of Requiem full ryght thou sang;
Bot yhit I say thee, nevertheless, | <i>truthfully</i>
<i>immediately</i>
<i>readily, before I came</i> |
| 820 | Of Saint Spirytt was the Messe.
That sall thou be ensaumple se:
For, custom es, in ilk contré,
If any man outher ald or yhing
Of aneother suld ask a thing, | <i>yet; [to] you</i>
<i>the Holy Spirit; Mass</i>
<i>example</i>
<i>every</i>
<i>either old or young</i>
<i>another</i> |
| 825 | What thing so lygges his hert most nere,
That in his speche sall fyrst appere
And first be in his wordes always.
For God thus in His gospell says: | <i>lies; near</i> |
| 828a | 'Ex abundancia cordis os loquitur';
'That of the fulnes of the hert' | <i>(see note)</i> |
| 830 | Spekes the mowth wordes smert.'
And for the Messe of Saint Spiryte
To my profytt es mast perfyte
And allso of the Trinité. | <i>boldly</i>
<i>Mass; [the] Holy Spirit</i>
<i>profit; most perfect</i> |
| 835 | Thir messes mykell amendes me;
Bot the Mess of the Haly Gast,
In my mynde es althir mast.
And tharfor I say thou sang | <i>These masses greatly</i>
<i>Holy Ghost</i>
<i>the best of all</i> |
| 840 | Of Saint Spirit, I say noght wrang,
And here now the encheson whi:
For, whils I lyfed here bodily,
I spended my wyttes and my powere | <i>wrong</i>
<i>hear; reason</i>
<i>while; lived</i>
<i>spent; wits</i> |
| 845 | Full ofte sythes in synnes sere,
When I suld have tham spended ryght
To Godes worschepe with all my myght
And mensked the Fader with all my mayne; | <i>Very many times; various</i>
<i>worship</i>
<i>honored; strength</i>
<i>fully</i> |
| | For of Him comes all power playne
That men has here, whils att thai lyf, | <i>while that they live</i> |

The Gast of Gy

	After His grace als He will gyf.	as; give
	Tharfor, what man so dose unryght	does
850	Thurgh his power or his myght Or be his strenkith, if that it be, Ogayns the Fader, than synnes he; For al power He weldes allways, Als David in the Psauter says:	strength Against; then wields <i>Psalter</i>
854a	‘Omnia, quecunque voluit, Dominus fecit.’	(see note)
855	He says: ‘The Fader may fullfyll In Heven, in erthe, what som He will.’ And to Crist, God Son, es gyfen full ryght All wysdom both bi day and nyght. Tharfor God Son thai syn ogayne,	whatever
860	That here dispendes thair wittes in vayne And settes them so on werldly gude, That ryches es mare in thair mode Than Crist, God Son, that boght them dere. I have synned on the same manere.	against uses; vain worldly goods mind <i>bought (i.e., redeemed) them dearly</i>
865	Till the Haly Gast es gyfen all grace And all bountes in ilk a place. Ogayns Him oft allos synned have I, When that I used in foule foly The gyftes, that He me gaf of kynde,	To virtues; every Against <i>in my nature</i>
870	And wald noght mensk Him in my mynde. My gud favor and my fairhede Have I oft used in synfull dede, And vertus have I turned to vyce. Thus have I wrought als wryche unwyse.	honor excellence <i>virtues; vice</i>
875	Tharfore aseth now bus me make To the Thre Persons for my syn sake. And my gud aungell has me sayd The prayers that er so purvayd, And messes of the Trinité,	<i>done; wretch</i> <i>reparation; must</i> <i>provided</i>
880	May gretely help now unto me. And, for that I have synned maste Ogayns the gyftes of the Haly Gast, Covetand here mare ryches Than He me gaf of His gudnes,	Against <i>Coveting; more</i>
885	Or than He vouched safe me to sende;	<i>promised</i>

The Gast of Gy

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

The Gast of Gy

925	Tharfor in a Messe may be tane All Cristen sawles als wele als ane, And better may it part tham tyll. That prove I thee be proper skyll. For gret difference may men fele	encompassed as well as one reason perceive
930	Bitwene spirituall thing and temporele. Temporall thing, that thou sese here, When it es parted in paracels sere, In the ma parcels it parted es, Itself leves ay wele the les,	temporal see various pieces more leaves always; less
935	That es, for porcyoun partyse thar fra. Als if thou ane appell ta And part it into many hende, With thiself sall lytell lende. Als wele may thou understand,	for [a] portion parts therefrom one apple take divide; hands yourself; remain
940	That spirituall thing es ay waxand. That may thou se be ryght resoune, Als if thou tak this orysoune, The Pater Noster, and forth it ken Kyndely to all Cristen men.	always growing prayer (i.e., the Lord's Prayer); make known
945	And so when that it teched es, In itself it es noght les; In understandyng es it mare, When ma it kan than couth it are. So es the Messe and the prayere	taught 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 degree.” The Pryor answers and says: “Haly Wryt witnes allways	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 ane	deeds friends do; reward those; do more; one
960	Than for other saules ilk ane. Than think me that his mede sall fall Mare than it war done for all, And mare alegge him of his Payne.”	each one reward relieve

The Gast 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 mast 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 mast fro bale tharby.
 And on the same manere am I
 Delyverd of my penaunce here,
 That I suld have sufferd foure yhere,
 For mysdedes als it was dett.
- 970 reward
 whom; directed
 most; suffering
- 975 years
 determined
 living friend; relieved
 kinsman
 poor friar; find
 when
- 980 When; schools went
 later; friar
 looked after; years
- 985 most
- 990 farther; from now to Easter
 understand
 Easter; again
 hear
- 995 taken up
 promised; exactly
 Easter; house
- 1000 believed; before
- Bot in that tyme he asked mare

The Gast of Gy

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

The Gast of Gy

- That specyall messes may mast amende,
 Whilk other prayers withouten tha
 May tyttest saules fra penaunce ta?"
- 1045 The voyce answerd and said in hy:
 "The seven Psalmes with the Letany."
 The Pryor said: "That war noght ryght;
 For God the Pater Noster dyght
 Als of all prayers pryncipall,
- 1050 And aungels made the Ave all
 Unto myld Mary for our mede,
 And twelve apostels made the Crede.
 And the seven Psalmes er ertly werkes
 Ordand of byshopes and other clerkes,
- 1055 Men for to say that has mysgane,
 And David made them everilk ane;
 And nouther David, wele we ken,
 Ne byshopes ne nane other men
 Unto God er noght at neven,
- 1060 Ne yhit unto aungels of Heven,
 Ne tyll apostels er thai noght pere.
 Tharfore me think that thair prayere
 May noght of slyke bounté be
 Als the Pater Noster and the Ave
- 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 hede,
 In thamself, this es sertayne,
- 1070 And for thair makers mykell of mayne.
 We sall tham wirschepe, als worthi es,
 Bifor all the other, outtane the Messe.
 Bot nevertheless, sir, certainly,
 The seven Psalmes with the Letany
- 1075 For to say es mast suffrayne
 Unto saules, that suffers Payne;
 For thai er ordaind, mare and myn,
 Ever a Psalme for a syn,
 And so thai stroy the syns seven.
- 1080 Tharfor thai er nedefull to neven.
- Which; besides those
 most quickly; from; take*
- Litany [of the Saints]*
- established*
- Ave [Maria] (i.e., Hail Mary)*
- reward*
- the [Apostles'] Creed*
- Made by*
- gone astray*
- neither; know*
- not to be compared*
- to; equal*
- benefit*
- These; great of help*
- take heed*
- great of power*
- worship*
- except*
- Litany [of the Saints]*
- beneficial*
- destroy*
- explain*

The Gast of Gy

	The fyrst Psalme gudely grayde Ogayns pryde es purvayde; And thus to understand it es: ‘Lord, deme us noght in Thi wodenes, Als thou dyd Lucifer, that fell For his pryde fro Heven to Hell.’	<i>well performed</i> <i>Against; offered</i> <i>judge; fury</i>
1085	For his pryde fro Heven to Hell.’ And so the other Psalmes on raw Ilk ane a syn oway will draw Thurgh help of halows in fere, That ordaind er in that prayere.”	<i>in order</i> <i>Each one</i> <i>saints in company</i>
1090	The Pryor eftstones him assayls And said: “Tell me, what it avayls, Or if saules the better be, Of ‘Placebo’ and ‘Dirige’	<i>immediately; attacks</i> <i>avails</i>
1095	With the Offyce that for the ded es dyght.” The voyce answerd him on hyght (With gret force out gan he bryst) And said: “A, Pryor, and thou wyst How gretly that it may tham gayne,	<i>I will please (i.e., appease); Guide [me]</i> <i>prescribed</i> <i>immediately</i> <i>burst</i> <i>if you knew</i>
1100	Than hope I that thou wald be fayne Oft for to bede that blyssed bede For thi brether that er dede. And, for thou sall it better knaw, The privatese I sall thee schaw.	<i>eager</i> <i>offer; prayer</i> <i>obscure matters</i>
1105	In ‘Placebo’ es purvayd Fyve Psalmes, that sall be sayd Aneli for the evensang, With fyve antems als omang. Tha ten togeder, when thai er mett,	<i>Only; evensong (i.e., vespers)</i> <i>anthems (i.e., antiphons)</i> <i>performed</i>
1110	For the saul er thusgat sett, For to restore, wha to tham tentes, Unto the saule ten comandementes; And makes in mynde, how He tham dyd, So that His mede sall noght be hyde.	<i>appointed</i> <i>who; pays attention</i>
1115	Tha fyve Psalmes when thai er mett For fyve wittes of the saule er sett, Tharfor to schew, be reson ryfe, How he tham spended in his lyfe And that he spended tham noght in vayne	<i>performed</i> <i>wits (senses); appointed</i> <i>rigorous</i> <i>used</i>

The Gast of Gy

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 1120 | That sall lett parcells of his Payne.
The fyve antems sayd bitwene,
Fyve myghtes of the saule may mene
That sall bere witness on thair wyse
How he tham spended in Godes servyse. | <i>remit portions</i>
<i>anthems</i>
<i>powers; mean</i>
<i>in their way</i>
<i>used</i>
<i>Nine</i> |
| 1125 | Neghen Psalmes than sayd sall be
Afterward in the ‘Dirige,’
And thai sall signify full ryght
Neghen orders of aungels bryght,
The whilk orders the saule sall be in, | <i>which</i> |
| 1130 | When he es purged of his syn;
That order sa he sall fullfyll,
When tha Psalmes er sayd him tyll.
The neghen antems next folowand
And thre versikles, thou understand, | <i>so</i>
<i>those</i>
<i>nine anthems; following</i>
<i>three versicles</i> |
| 1135 | The twelve poyntes of trouth thai bring ful chere
To him, that thai er sayd fore here,
And telles how he trowed tham ryght
Here on this mold, when he had myght,
Als Haly Kyrk him kyndely kende. | <i>trusted</i>
<i>earth; ability</i>
<i>Holy Church; properly taught</i> |
| 1140 | And so thai may him mykell amende.
The neghen lessons bi tham all ane
For the neghen degrē er trewly tane;
For ilk a saule, bus nedes be,
Som of thir neghen in his degré, | <i>much</i>
<i>nine</i>
<i>accepted</i>
<i>must needs be</i>
<i>these nine</i> |
| 1145 | That es to say, outher yhong or ald
Or pore or of pousté bald,
Outher in clennes lyfe to lede,
Outher in wedlayke or in wydowhede,
Outher clerk or lawed man— | <i>either young or old</i>
<i>poor; power strong</i>
<i>purity</i>
<i>wedlock; widowhood</i>
<i>uneducated</i> |
| 1150 | In som of their sall he be than:
Thir lessons sall to welth him wyn
In whilk degré sa he was in.
And the neghen respons for to rede
Sall mak him tyll have mykell mede. | <i>these</i>
<i>These; well-being</i>
<i>so</i>
<i>responses</i>
<i>to have great reward</i> |
| 1155 | The fyve Psalmes of the ‘Laudes’ all ane
For fyve wittes may wele be tane
That ilk a saved saule sall fele.
And thai sall bere witnes full wele | <i>all together</i>
<i>accepted</i>
<i>avail</i> |

The Gast of Gy

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1160 | And fullfyll it with mayn and myght,
That the saule tham used ryght.
The fyve antems than folowand
In witnes for the saul sall stand
And faythly help for to fullfyll
Fyve strenthes, that God gyfes saules untyll. | <i>power and might</i> |
| 1165 | For God gaf, when this world bigan,
Thre strenthes of saules to ilk a man,
The whilk strenthes of myght er slyke,
That unto God man saule es lyke,
And allso other strenthes twa | <i>anthems; following</i> |
| 1170 | Unto mans bodyse gan he ma,
That to the saule dose na socoures,
Bot makes tham lyke Godes creatures.
First I say, bi strenthe of thought
That saule lyke unto God es wrought; | <i>men's bodies; make</i>
<i>provide no succor</i> |
| 1175 | The secund es strenthe of understandyng,
That es lyke Godes Son in that thing;
The thred thingh, strenthe of will,
The Haly Gast it es lyke tylle;
And bi mysgangyng and unwytt | <i>third</i>
<i>like unto</i>
<i>straying; error</i> |
| 1180 | Lyke ane unskylfull best es it.
Forwhi the saule dwelles als a stane
And feles als a best all ane
And lyfes als tres, thus clerkes telles,
And understandes als gud aungels. | <i>non-rational beast</i>
<i>Because; stone</i>
<i>feels; beast</i>
<i>lives; trees</i> |
| 1185 | Thir strenthes er thus ryght arayd,
When this servyse for saules es sayd.
Allso the psalme of 'Benedictus'
And of 'Magnificat' helpes thus
For to save the saules fra skathe | <i>These</i> |
| 1190 | Thurgh Godhede and manhede bathe,
Wharof thai sall be certayne
To se, when thai er past thare Payne,
And lat tham witt, how thai sall wende
And be in blys withouten ende. | <i>from harm</i>
<i>both</i> |
| 1195 | The twa antemes, that er purvayd
With the Psalms for to be sayd,
May be tald the company | <i>know</i>
<i>two anthems; provided</i>
<i>recited [by]</i> |

The Gast of Gy

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 1200 | Of aungels on the ta party
And of halows on the tother syde,
That with the saules in blys shall byde.
The colettes, that men efter mase,
Er demed for dedes of grace,
That saved saules to God shall yeld
With all wirschip that thai may weld. | <i>one side</i>
<i>saints; the other</i>
<i>abide</i>
<i>collects; make (i.e., say)</i>
<i>directed</i>
<i>yield</i>
<i>wield</i>
<i>so; sin</i>
<i>reside; lasting</i>
<i>these</i> |
| 1205 | And sa when thai er mended of mys,
Than shall thai lende in lastand blys.
Tharfor, sir Pryor, thir prayers
Helpes saules thus, als thou heres.”
Thus when he had declared this thing, | |
| 1210 | All that it herd had gret lykyng,
And mery made he, ilk a man.
Bot than the gast full sone bigan
To morne and mak full simple chere,
And sayd to tham on this manere: | <i>downcast expression</i> |
| 1215 | “Askes of me sone what yhe will;
Mi tyme es nere neghand me tyll
That me bus gang, als es my grace,
To suffer Payne in other place.
To gretter grevance bus me ga.” | <i>approaching to me</i>
<i>must go</i>
<i>must; go</i> |
| 1220 | The Pryor said: “Sen it es swa,
This wald I witt, first ar thou wende,
If we may ought to thee amende.”
With symple voyce than answerd he,
And sayd: “If yhe wald say for me | <i>Since; so</i>
<i>know; before; go away</i>
<i>anything; help</i> |
| 1225 | Fyve sithes specially
The fyve joyes of Our Lady,
That myght help mykell me untyll.”
Thai graunted all with full gud will,
And on thair knes thai sett tham doune | <i>times</i>

<i>much for me</i>

<i>knees</i> |
| 1230 | And said with gud devocyoune
“Gaude, virgo, mater Christi”
With the fyve vers folowand fully,
Bowsomly, als he tham bad,
And tharfor was the gast full glad. | <i>Rejoice, virgin, mother of Christ</i>
<i>verses following</i>
<i>Obediently; bade</i> |
| 1235 | He thanked tham with wordes fre
And said: “Wele have yhe comforth me; | <i>gracious</i> |

The Gast of Gy

	Mi Payne es somdele passed now, That I may better speke with yhow."	somewhat
1240	The Prior said: "Kan thou ought tell What deres mast the fendes of Hell?"	harms most the fiends
	The gast answerd and said in hy: "The sacrament of Godes Body; For, in what stede Goddes Body ware,	place
	And the fendes of Hell war thare,	
1245	Unto it burd tham do honoure, And so sall ilk a creatoure."	must
	The Pryor said: "Than think me That all spirites suld it suthely se,	truly
	When it es on the auter grayed."	altar set
1250	The voyce answerd sone and sayde, That spirites may it kyndely ken Mare verrailly than other men.	by nature know
	The Pryor asked him this skyll: "May devels do any dere tharetyll	More truly
1255	Or disturbe it be any way?"	reason (i.e., question)
	The voyce answerd and said: "Nay, Bot if that a prest be unclene,	harm thereto
	In dedly syn, that es to mene,	
	Or other syn, what som it be.	by
1260	In swilk prestes has the fende pousté For to merre tham in thair Messe,	Unless; impure
	If thai dwell in thair wickednes.	say
	And yhit he comes noght comonly	whatsoever
	To ger tham be abayst thereby.	power
1265	Bot, when he wate that thai lyf wrang,	mar
	The ofter wald he that thai sang,	remain
	And that es to encrese thair Payne,	commonly (i.e., ordinarily)
	For of thair evel fare es he fayne."	cause; humiliated
	The Pryor asked withouten lett	knows; live wrong
1270	And said: "Es thare nane aungell sett To yheme the auter fra evel thing,	more often
	Whils Godes Body es in makynge,	increase
	And als the prest wisely to wys?"	behavior; pleased
	He answerd and sayd: "Yhis.	delay
1275	And gude aungels war noght biforne,	protect; altar
		wisely to inform
		Yes
		If

The Gast of Gy

- With evyll spirytes myght all be lorne, *lost*
 For thai wald sone disturbe the prest
 And putt vayne thoghtes into his brest,
 So that he suld noght worthily
- 1280 Have myght for to mak Godes Body *ought*
 With honoure, als it aw to be.
 So suld he think on vanyté.”
 The Pryor said: “I wald witt fayne
 What remedy war here ogayne
- 1285 For to defende the fendes fell.” *like to know
against
evil*
 Than said the voyce: “I sall thee tell.
 If that the prest in Godes presence
 Be clene in his awen conscience, *own*
 And mak his prayers with clene thoght,
- 1290 Than the devels may dere him noght.” *harm
these words*
 The Pryor said to him thir sawes:
 “Es thare na prayer that thou knawes,
 A prest to say byfore he syng,
 That myght fordo swilk evell thing?” *prevent such*
- 1295 The voyce said: “What prest so hade *Augustine*
 The prayer that Saint Austyn made,
 That ‘Summe Sacerdos’ es calde,
 And he than with devocyoune walde
 Say it ilk day, or he sange, *Highest Priest’ is called*
- 1300 To Messe than myght he baldly gang, *before
confidently go*
 For wathes it wald so wele him were,
 Unnethes suld any devels him dere.” *From perils; protect
Lest; harm*
 The Pryor asked him yhit full ryght,
 If he saw oght that solempne syght, *ever; solemn*
- 1305 Of Godes Body the sacrament, *since*
 Out of this world sen that he went.
 The voyce said: “Yha, I se it yhit, *Yes; now*
 For on thi brest thou beres it
 In a box thou has it broght,
- 1310 Als it was on the auter wroght.” *altar*
 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 itt,
 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 honourd 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 gud entent
 Toke the Blyssed Sacrament
 Out of his clathes, whare it was layd, *clothes*
 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, *know*
 Bihoves unto Godes Body bow;
 And sen it es of swilk pousté, *since; such power*
 In vertu thareof I comand thee,
- 1335 That thou ga with me playne pase
 To the uttermost ghate of all this place.” *go; at a brisk pace*
- 1340 The voyce answerd: “I am boune,
 Bot noght to folow thi persoune.
 Bot with my Lord fayne will I wende, *eagerly*
 That thou haldes betwix thi hende.”
- 1345 Than the Pryor toke the gate *way*
 Fast unto the forsayd ghate,
 And also his brether twa
 With him went and many ma. *aforementioned gate*
- 1350 He loked obout and saw ryght noght,
 Bot in his hereyng wele he thoght,
 That a noyse after them come
 Lyke a besom made of brome, *swishing; broom*
 That war sweepand a pavement. *sweeping*
- 1355 Swilk a noyse ay with them went. *always*
 And than spak the Prior thus:
 “Thou spirytt, schew thee unto us
 Witerly als thou ert wrought!” *show yourself*
- Truly; are

The Gast of Gy

- Hereto the spiryt answerd noght.
 1355 The Pryor than ogayne gan pass
 Unto the wydow, whare scho wass
 Lygand sare seke in hir bed,
 So had scho lang bene evel led.
 The voyce folowd, als it did are,
 1360 Untyll thai in the chaumbre ware.
 Than sone the woman gan bygyn
 Gryselly for to gnayst and grym
 And cryed loud, 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 swounyng dounes 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 Passyoun
 Say me the soth in this sesoune,
 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 gud 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 noght,
 And so obout the bed thai stode
 1390 To luke, if oghyt myght mend hir mode.
 And many for hir wa gan wepe.
 And sone than scho bigan to crepe
- Lying sorely sick*
before
Horribly; gnash (teeth); grimace
as [if]; insane
astonished
pity
followed
understand; circumstance
lead
swooning down
at this time (season)
makes such mourning
sorrowfully
knows
look; state of mind
woe

The Guest of Gy

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

The Gast of Gy

- Now als ferre als falles tharetyll.”
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.”
The voyce said: “God will it noght,
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 forgyven
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 noght ryght,
Bot if it war, als God forbede,
1450 Eftsones so done in dede.
Bot unto wedded men sall thou say
And warn tham that thai kepe allway
The rewle of wedyng with thair myght
And duely 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 omang all witty men.
This was the suffrayne point,” sais he,
1460 “Whi God lete me speke with thee,
That thou suld trow this stedfastly
And other men be mended thareby,
So that thai may thair syns forsake
And in thair lyve amendes make.”
1465 The woman, wepan als scho lay,
With sary hert thus gan 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,
- as far as falls thereto
before; go away*
- confession; removed
forgiven*
- assured
touching; told*
- Reparation must
Before; well-being
away from*
- duly
instances
trespass*
- natural to understand
earth; intelligent
main*
- believe*
- weeping
sorry*
- sorrow
mentioned before*

The Gast of Gy

- Wharof, I wate, God was noght payd." *know; requited*
 The spirit 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 *glad*
 And sayd thare kneland on hir kne *kneeling*
 A Pater Noster and ane Ave.
 Scho loved God with word and will.
 1480 And than the Pryor said hir tyll:
 "Dame, whils thou this lyf may lede,
 Ilk day, luke thou do almusdede, *almsdeeds*
 For almusdede may syns waste." *take away*
 Unto that word answerd the gaste:
 1485 "Dame," he said, "par charyté,
 When thou dose almus, think on me,
 For to alegge som of my Payne." *for charity*
 And the Pryor than gan him frayne,
 Whi he come noght in that sesoune *do alms*
 1490 Unto men of religioune *alleviate*
 For to tell to tham his lyfe *ask*
 Titter than unto his wyfe,
 Sen that he wist thai war mare nere
 To God than any wemen were,
 1495 And mare wisely thai couth him wys. *More readily*
 The voyce answerd than unto this *nearer*
 And sayd: "I lufed mare my wyfe *women*
 Than any other man on lyfe, *could understand him*
 And tharfor first to hir I went;
 1500 And when me was gyfen the jugement *loved more*
 To suffyr penance in this place,
 I asked God of His gret grace *alive*
 That my wife myght warned be
 For to amend hir mys bi me. *sin*
 1505 And of His grace He gaf me leve *grieve*
 On this wise hir for to greve
 And for to torment hir biforne,
 So that scho suld noght be lorne, *lost*
 Ne that scho suld noght suffyr pyne

The Gast 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.” *Easter; coming*
The Pryor said: “I mervail me
- 1520 How thou to speke has swilk pouste
And has na tong ne other thing
That instrument es of spekyng.”
The voyce answerd on this manere:
“Ne sese thou noght, a carpentere, *Do you not see*
1525 That diverse werkes oft sythes has wroght,
Withouten ax may he do noght?
The ax ay will redy be *always*
With him to hew on ilk a tré,
And it may nouther styr ne stand *neither move nor*
- 1530 Withouten help of mans hand.
Ryght swa a man here yhow omell
Withouten tong may nathing tell.
And with his tong yhit spekes he noght,
Bot thurgh the ordenance of the thought: *guidance*
- 1535 That es, of the saule allways,
That ordans all that the tong says. *guides*
And forthi be this tale tak tent,
The body es bot ane instrument
Of the saule, als thou may se,
- 1540 And the saule in himself has fre *freely*
Alkyns vertuse, myght and mynde.
Swilk gyftes er gyfen to him be kynde.
Tharfor he may speke properly
Withouten help of the body.
- 1545 And whare thou says a man may noght
Speke the thing that comes of thoght,
Bot he have mowth and tong als,
In that, I say, thi sawes er fals. *mouth; tongue*
sayings are false

The Gast of Gy

- For Haly Wryt witnes full ryght
 1550 That God and all his aungels bryght
 Spekes wisely to als and yhong,
 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 soll witt sone
 Whether thai soll to joy or Payne.”
 The gast than answerd sone ogayne
 And said: “A lytell while beforne
 Or that the erthly lyf be lorne,
 1565 The saule soll se and here unhyd
 All the dedes that ever he dyd.
 The ugly devels and aungels bryght
 And after the porcyon of his plyght
 In that same tyme soll he se,
 1570 Whider that he soll jugged be
 To comon 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 broght whare it soll be,
 Als thou may be ensaumple se.
 Thou sese, 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*
- lost*
- hear unhidden*
- afterwards; affliction*
- stable (i.e., permanent)*
- separated*
- courteous*
- sun is rising*
- goes quickly*
- Unless; anything in the way*

The Gast of Gy

- Al 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 noght so sone,
And that es for thair profett done:
If thai have any faythfull frende *profit*
In this world here, when thai wende,
- 1595 That for tham will ger syng or rede *prepare to; read*
Or els do any almusdede,
Thai may so do for tham that tyde, *at that time*
That in the ayre the saule sall byde, *bide*
Untyll it have the medes tane *benefits taken*
- 1600 Of thair prayers everilk ane.
And so bi help of thair gudenes
May his penaunce be made les.
The dedes that er so done in haste
Unto the saule es helpyng maste,
- 1605 On the same manere als I say *city*
In this ceté was done this day.
A frere dyed and demed he was
Till comon Purgatory at pas, *to pass*
Bot in the tyme of his transyng, *passing over*
- 1610 Of his brether he asked this thing, *word*
That thai suld do in dede and saw *bound by*
For him als thai war bon bi law. *ought*
And the messes that tham aght for to say, *For charity*
Pur charyté he gan tham pray,
- 1615 That thai suld be said in hy
And everilk ane of Our Lady.
And, als he bad, ryght so thai dyd,
And afterward than thus bityd: *occurred*
When he was dede in flessch and fell, *flesh; skin*
- 1620 His aungell demed his saule to dwell *ordered*
In comon Purgatory playne
Thre monethes to suffer Payne,
Als worthy was efter his dede. *As*
Bot than Our Lady Mary yhede, *went*
- 1625 And tyll hir Son scho prayd that tyde, *at that time*
That the saule in the ayre might byde *air*

The Gast of Gy

- Untyll it had the mertyte 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 fre
 And thurgh the dedes that here was done,
 That he sall be in blys full sone.
- 1630 hours
- 1635 In Payne he has no lengar tyme
 Bot fra now unto to morne at pryme.”
 Than sayd the Prior till him sone:
 “Whilk dedes of all, that here er done,
 May tyttest help a saule to Heven?”
- 1640 prime (about 6:00 a.m.)
- 1645 The voyce answerd and said full even:
 “Parfyte werkes of charyté
 That er done als tham aw to be,
 That es to say, to Godes bihove,
 And our evencristen if we love.
- 1650 most quickly
- 1655 Than of our werkes will God be payd.”
 The Pryor answerd sone and sayd:
 “If that thou kan, tell us in haste
 What maner of men that now er maste
 In Purgatory to suffyr Payne.”
- 1660 Perfect
 befits them
 according to God's will
 fellow Christians
 be requited (satisfied)
- 1665 The gaste answerd sone ogayne:
 “Na man comes that place within
 Bot anely thai that has done syn;
 And all that syns and saved sall be,
 Er pyned thare of ilk degré
- 1670 pained
- 1675 Efter 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.
- 1680 According to
- 1685 found
 living
- 1690 The voyce said: “Sir, soth it es
- 1695 And Haly Wryt wele beres wytnes,
 That na man aw other to prayns,
 Whether he do wele or evell always;
 For mans lyfe es to prayse nathing,
 Bot if he may have gud ending.
- 1700 ought; praise
- 1705 For na man in this world here wate,
- 1710 knows

The Gast of Gy

- Whether he be worthi to luf or hate,
 Ne whether his werkes war evell or wele,
 Unto the dome be done ilk dele.
 Than sall he se himself, certayne,
 1670 Whether he be worthi joy or Payne.” *judgment; every bit*
 The Pryor said: “This ask I thee:
 Whilk es maste parfyte degré
 Of all that in this ground es grayde?”
 The gast answerd sone and sayde:
 1675 “I se in ilk state,” he says,
 “Som thinges to lak and som to prays.
 Tharfor I will prayse na degré,
 Ne nane sall be disprayed for me.
 Bot nevertheless this wald I rede,
 1680 To ilk a man in ilk a stede
 To serve God with all thair myght
 In what degré so thai be dyght.”
 The Pryor asked with wordes stabyll,
 If that God war oght mercyabyll
 1685 To saules that war in Purgatory.
 The gast said: “Yha, sir, sykerly.
 For unto som, this es certayne,
 Relese He ferth part of thair Payne,
 Of som the thred part He releseſ,
 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 Lyfand frendes thus may tham lett
 Of payn that thai suld dregh be dett,
 And als the prayers of aungels
 And of halows, that in Heven dwelles.”
 The Pryor said: “This wald I crave:
 1700 Whatkyn payn thiself sall have,
 In Purgatory whils thou sall dwell?”
 The voyce said: “I sall thee tell.
 In flawme of fyre thus bus me stand,
 That alther hattest es brynard,
- arranged*
- each*
- lack; praise*
- advise*
- assigned*
- resolute*
- at all merciful*
- Releases; one-fourth*
- one-third*
- one-half; remits*
- Living; relieve*
- suffer by obligation*
- flame; must*
- hottest of all; burning*

The Gast of Gy

1705	And have na comforth me to kele."	<i>cool</i>
	The Pryor said: "Now se I wele, That thou ert no sothfast gaste.	<i>true spirit</i>
	That sall I prove thee here in haste. This wate thou wele, if thou have mynde,	
1710	God dose nathing ogayns kynde. For, if He dyd, this dar I say,	<i>contrary to the laws of nature</i>
	His werkes wald sone be wast oway.	<i>destroyed</i>
	And bodily thing the fyre I call, And thou a gast spirytuall;	
1715	And bodily thing may have no myght In gastyng bath day and nyght. Than be ensaumple may thou se, That fyre may have no myght in thee, All if thou tharein graythely gang."	<i>properly</i>
1720	The voyce answerd: "Sir, thou has the wrang, That thou me calles sa dyssayvabyll, Sen thou has fon in me no fabyll. Bot nevertheless, sire, whare thou says	<i>deceitful</i>
	That bodily thing be nakyn ways	<i>caught, fable</i>
1725	In gastely thing may have powere, I answer thee on this manere. Thou wate wele that the devels shall lende	<i>no kind of</i>
	In fyre of Hell withouten ende,	<i>dwell</i>
	And that fyre es als bodily	<i>as</i>
1730	Als the fyre of Purgatory, And yhit pynnes it the devels in Hell, Als God says in His awen Gossspell, And als He to the fendes shall say	<i>As</i>
	And to the dampned on Domesday:	<i>pains</i>
1735	'Yhe weryed gastes, I byd yhow wende To fyre that lastes withouten ende, That ordand es for nathing els	<i>own</i>
	Bot to the devell and his aungels.'	<i>ordained</i>
	And, whare thou says, that God does noght	
1740	Ogayns kynde in thinges He wrought, I say, He dose, als folk may fynde, Bi miracle ogayns kynde, Als whilom fell of childre thre,	<i>once befell</i>

The Gast of Gy

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| | That ordand war brynt to be. | <i>ordered; burnt</i> |
| 1745 | In Haly Wrytt er thai named so:
Sydrac, Misaac, and Abdenago.
Thai war done with full gret ire
Intyll a chymné full of fyre;
And, als it was Our Lordes will, | <i>put</i>
<i>furnace</i> |
| 1750 | The fyre dyd nanekyn harme tham tyll,
Bot hale and sounde thai satt and sang,
Lovand the myght of God omang.
Thus war thai saved in that stede
Fra fyre and fra that kyndely dede. | <i>no kind of</i>
<i>healthy</i>
<i>Loving</i>
<i>place</i>
<i>natural death</i> |
| 1755 | Ryght so has God ordand in me
That the fyre has no pousté
To wast me, if I stand tharein,
Bot for to pyne me for my syn.”
Than sayd the Pryor: “Sen thou says, | <i>power</i>
<i>destroy</i>
<i>pain</i> |
| 1760 | That fyre obout the bryns allways,
Than think me that this hows and we
Suld 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> |
| 1765 | That in thee es full lytell skyll.
For ryght now tald I thee untyll
That God may withdraw thurgh His myght
The strenthe of fyre both day and nyght
So that it no harme may do | <i>hot; sharp</i> |
| 1770 | In thing that it es putt unto,
Als He dyd of the childre thre,
Of whame bifore I tald to thee.
Allso thou sese, fyre of levenyng
Wendes obout be alkyn thing | <i>is; rational power</i> |
| 1775 | Kyndely, als clerkes declare it kan,
And nouther bryns it hows ne man.
And als thou sese, the son may passe
Thurgh wyndows that er made of glasse,
And the glass noght enpayred tharby. | <i>see; lightning</i>
<i>all kinds of</i> |
| 1780 | So may a spiryt, sikerly,
In ilk a place com in and out
And bryn noght that es him obout, | <i>sun</i>
<i>harmed (impaired)</i>
<i>surely</i> |

The Gast of Gy

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

The Gast of Gy

	Trow Cristes Incarnacyoune."	<i>Believe</i>
	Than the voyce answerd him tyll:	
	"It es na questyoun of Godes will;	
1825	And tharfor neven it noght me to To ask whi God dose so or so Of thing that touches to His Godhede, Bot fande to do His will in dede.	<i>mention</i>
	I wate noght whi tham lyf es lent,	<i>Divinity</i>
1830	Bot if it be to this entent: That Cristen men may on tham fyght In the fayth for to defend thair ryght; For, on tham bataile for to bede,	<i>endeavor</i>
	May Cristen men encres thair mede,	
1835	If faith be fully in thair fare."	<i>Unless</i>
	And than the Pryor asked mare: "Kan thou ought tell me, whilk manere of syn Er used mast omang mankyn?"	<i>increase; reward</i>
	The voyce answerd on this wise:	<i>expedition</i>
1840	"Pryde and lychory and covatyse And usury, thir foure in fere With thair braunches many and sere That er full wlatson day and nyght Bifor God and His aungels bryght.	<i>mankind</i>
		<i>lechery; covetousness</i>
		<i>these; together</i>
		<i>diverse</i>
		<i>disgusting</i>
1845	And thre syns er, if thai be done, For whilk God will tak vengance sone: Ane es, if man and woman here Won samen, als thai wedded were,	<i>Live together</i>
	And wandes noght thair will to wirk	<i>fear</i>
1850	Withouten the sacrament of Haly Kyrk, Or if thai be wedded that tyde And outhier syn on outhier syde To breke thair spowsage in that space:	<i>Holy Church</i>
	To God this es a gret trispase.	
1855	The tother syn es noght to say, Bot clerkes full kyndely knew it may. The thred syn es full evell thing, That es manslaughter with maynsweryng."	<i>either; either</i>
	Thus when all thir sawes war sayd	<i>marriage</i>
1860	The woman to the Prior prayd,	<i>trespass</i>
		<i>The other</i>
		<i>third</i>
		<i>manslaughter; perjury</i>
		<i>these teachings</i>

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 ane *command*
 And bi His halows everilk ane,
 If thou may schon, that thou sese
 And lat thi wyf now lyf in pese
 And persue hir no more with Payne."
- 1870 Than the gast answerd ogayne:
 "That may I noght for nanekyns nede,
 Bot scho lyf chaste in wydowhede
 And allswa ger syng for us twa
 Thre hundereth messes withouten ma:
- 1875 A hundreth of the Haly Gast sall be
 Or els of the Haly Trinité,
 And a hundreth of Our Lady
 And of Requiem fyfty
 And other fyfty als in fere *together*
- 1880 Of Saint Peter, the apostell dere."
 The woman herd thir wordes wele
 And graunted to do ilk a dele,
 And went with gud devocyoune
 Till all the freres of the toune
- 1885 And prestes and monkes of ilk abbay
 And gert tham syng all on a day
 Thre hundreth messes gudely grayde
 On the covand bifore sayde.
 And so when that thai songen ware,
- 1890 The gast of Gy greved hir no mare.
 Bot yhit the Pryor in that place
 Unto the gast twa resons mase
 And asked, if he wist on what wyse
 Or in whilk tyme Anticrist suld ryse
- 1895 And tak ogayn trew Cristen men.
 The gast on this wise answerd then
 And said: "It falles noght unto me
 To tell noght of Godes preveté.
 It es na question us unto *assail*
- 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 ogayne:
- 1905 “Than has thou eres to thi hereyng,
 Forwhi thou ert a bodily thing
 And noght gastly, als thou has tald.”
 The voyce answerd with wordes bald:
 “Haly Wryt schewes us this skyll:
- 1910 The Spirit enspires whare it will,
 And His voyce wele may thou here,
 Bot thou may noght on na manere
 Witt what place that it comes fra
 Ne unto what place it sall ga.”
- 1915 And, ryght als he thir wordes gan say,
 Sodainly he went oway,
 So that thai herd of him no mare
 In that tyme, whils thai war thare.
 And be than was tyme of evensange,
- 1920 And the Prior bad ilk man gang,
 In the name of God, whare thai wald be:
 “And, whare yhe com, in ilk contré,
 If yhe be asked of this case,
 Says the soth, ryght als it wase
- 1925 And als it es here proved in dede.”
 And hastily than hame thai yhede.
 The Pryor than withouten faile
 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 synge
 Contynuely thare in that place
 For Gy saule fro thethen to Pase.
- 1935 With full gud will the woman dyd
 Als the Pryor gan hir byd.
 A prest sho gat with full gud chere.
 Bot hir hows durst scho noght com nere;
- confident explanation*
- these*
- by; evensong (vespers)*
- bade*
- home; went*
- As*
- then to Easter*

The Gast of Gy

	Scho was so dredand ay for dole.	dreading always
1940	And on the twelft day efter Yhole, That clerkes calles Epiphany,	<i>Yule (Christmas)</i>
	Untyll the freres scho went in hy,	<i>went</i>
	And tyll the Prior sone scho yhode,	<i>such great</i>
	That had done hir so mykell gude.	<i>determined; power</i>
1945	And he ordaind with all his mayne Untyll hir hows to wend ogayne	<i>hear; listen once more</i>
	For to here and herken mare,	<i>wonder done</i>
	If thai myght fynd that ferly fare.	
	He toke of other orders twa,	
1950	Of Austyns and Menours allswa, So that thai war twenty freres	<i>Augustinians; Franciscans also</i>
	All samen outtane seculeres.	<i>together not counting diocesan priests</i>
	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 brether did are.	
	When thai had sayd in gud degré	
1960	Till “Requiescant in pace,” Thai herd a voyce com tham besyde,	<i>time</i>
	Als it did at that other tyde.	<i>broom</i>
	Lyke a besom bi tham it went	<i>sweeping</i>
	That war swepand on a pavement.	<i>frightened</i>
1965	Tharfor som of the folk war flayd,	<i>strength and courage</i>
	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 styl	
1970	And answer, what we say thee tyll.”	
	And than the voyce with wordes meke,	
	Als a man that had bene seke,	<i>sick</i>
	Untyll the Pryor thus gan say:	<i>Unto</i>
	“Whi deres thou me thus ilk a day?	<i>trouble</i>
1975	It es noght lang sen I tald thee What thing so thou wald ask of me,	
	What suld I now say to yhow here?”	

The Gast of Gy

- | | | |
|------|---|--------------------------------|
| | And than answerd aneother frere,
A divynour of gret clergy, | |
| | | <i>wise man</i> |
| 1980 | And said: "Tell here till us in hy,
Whether that thou of payn be quytt,
Or els what Payne thou suffers yhit."
The voyce answerd sone onane
And sayd: "Love God all His lane!" | |
| | | <i>grace</i> |
| 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 payns hard
In comon Purgatory thare I was are. | <i>conveyed</i> |
| 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." | |
| | | <i>passed</i> |
| 1995 | The voyce answerd at the laste:
"I suffer flawme of fyre full hate."
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>flame; hot
know</i> |
| 2000 | Yhit than the Prior to him says:
"Lo, how have I gederd here
Freres and other folk in fere
Of thi wordes to bere witnes
And of thir mervayls mare and les, | |
| | | <i>I must</i> |
| 2005 | That we may all this case declare
Bifor the pape, when we com thare.
And tharfor tell us som mervaile
That we may trow withouten fayle."
The voyce answerd to thir sawes: | |
| | | <i>pope</i> |
| 2010 | "I am noght God, that wele thou knawes,
And mervayls falles to na man els
Bot unto Him and His aungels.
And nevertheless thus I yhow teche:
Bot if yhe better the pople preche | |
| | | <i>believe</i> |
| | | <i>these requests</i> |
| 2015 | Than yhe have done this tyme beforne,
Lightly may yhe be forlorne; | <i>Unless; people
lost</i> |

The Gast of Gy

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

The Guest of Gy

	Tharfor all men that thare ware Went and tald thir thinges ilk one Playnly unto the Pape John The twa and twenty, I understand.	<i>these</i>
2060	And at the Pasch next folowand That same pape sent men of his For to seke the soth of this. The hows of Gy oft sythes thai soght, Bot of the gast ne fand he noght,	<i>following</i> <i>truth</i> <i>many times</i> <i>found</i>
2065	And thareby myght men witt full even That he was went up intyll Heven, Whare comforth es withouten care, Als himself had said them are. Untyll that comforth Crist us ken	<i>into</i> <i>before</i>
2070	Thurgh 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 Austyn*. 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 Paule*. 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:

The Gast of Gy

For Seint Paul seith that al that writen is,
To oure doctrine it is ywrite, ywis. (*CT VII[B²]*3441–42)

Or, again, in the Retraction: “For oure book seith, ‘Al that is writen is writen for oure doctrine,’ and that is myn entente” (*CTX[I]*1083).

- 28 *withowten 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 getest fable noon ytoold for me,
For Paul, that writeth unto Thymothee,
Repreveth hem that weyven soothfastnesse
And tellen fables and swich wrecchednesse. (*CTX[I]*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 kalendes*, 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 Pryor 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 Alés), in the Department of Gard, seems most likely.

- 38 *Bayoune*. 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.

Explanatory Notes

- 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 *Eightene*. 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 *freres . . . 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 *Pryor*. 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 *spyll*. 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 *brether*. Friars were referred to as "brothers," emphasizing the communal basis of the mendicant orders.
- 104 *chapiter 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.

The Gast of Gy

- 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 Pryor 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 recurs 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 *Howsell . . . howsyld*. 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 Pryor 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 *allway* is, strictly speaking, superfluous. The Pryor continues (lines 169–205) to say prayers appropriate to entering the house of one recently deceased.
- 171 *Vidi aquam*. 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 Ezechial 47:1, where Ezechial has a vision of waters pouring from under the Temple. Although the *Vidi aquam*, with its sprinkling of holy water, is an appropriate introductory prayer, it is out of season on December 27. The Pryor seems to be mounting a powerful introduction to the ceremonial prayers that follow.

Explanatory Notes

- 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 Pryor 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 *Colett . . . fidelium.* A Collect, or Oratio, is a short prayer consisting of an invocation, a petition, and a glorification of Christ or God. This Collect, *Deus, 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 Eastertide (when the *Vidi Aquam* was used). Like the *Vidi Aquam* it is a responsorial between priest and choir. The prayer is based in the Vulgate on Psalm 50:9. By using both the *Vidi Aquam* and the *Asperges*, the Pryor 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 Pryor 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

The Gast of Gy

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 Isaiahs 53:7. In the Requiem Mass and in the Office of the Dead the second half of the line could be *dona eis requiem* (grant them rest). Some other variations were allowable. Thus, the Pryor and his two brothers effectively recite the Office of the Dead when they enter Gy’s house.

- 208 *Als a child sayand: “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 *was and es and sall 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 Filio, 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 *kynde.* 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 (*kynde*, line 248) and only evil according to sinful deeds performed in life for which he is now making satisfaction.

Explanatory Notes

- 297–98 *For lawed folk . . . oft walkand.* 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 purgatorial 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 *Wa unto that man . . . whame sklaunder 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 ane.* The Pryor asks the crucial purgatorial 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 *culpa*, 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 . . . reles 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 Haly Wrytt . . . mayden myld of mode.* The Gast of Gy refers to statements by the Hebrew prophets that were taken by Christians to foretell the Incarnation of Christ (e.g., Isaías 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. Smeltz (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 es 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

The Gast of Gy

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.

- 475 *gyftes of the Haly Gaste*. The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are *sapientia* ("wisdom"), *intellectus* ("understanding"), *consilium* ("counsel"), *fortitudo* ("might"), *scientia* ("knowledge"), *timor 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 destroith the seven deadly sins" (see Jeffrey, p. 307).
- 498–504 *Ryght in thi wordes . . . dampned 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.
- 536–38 *Thare er Purgatoryes sere . . . aneother es*. The distinction between "comon" Purgatory (see line 556) and *departabill* (line 538) Purgatory was not universally accepted. Gregory the Great in his *Dialogues* has an *exemplum* 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 *departabill* Purgatory by night — just the reverse of the Gast's situation.
- 556–58 *comon 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 "*departabill*" Purgatory. In *Sir Owain* and the whole tradition of St. Patrick's Purgatory, it is below ground and can be entered at Saints' 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 es tane*. 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

Explanatory Notes

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

- 662 *clensyng 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 *Cristes 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 *armoure gude*. 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 *Mayden 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 Saupe (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, *CTVII(B²)467*.
- 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 Eastertide 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.

The Gast of Gy

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

- 731 *almusdede*. 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 gude prayere . . . unto cleنسyng fyre 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 blys . . . war noght accordand thing*. 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 “Whatsoever 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 Saint Spiritt thou sang . . . thou has the wrang*. That prayers for an individual are efficacious for all the departed is attested by the use of the plural *dona 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 voyce / 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).

Explanatory Notes

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 resoune.* 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 *Haly Wryt witnes . . . dose here for thair mede.* The “speciall prayers and speciall dede” (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 tenuously based in Scripture (2 Machabees 12:46 and 1 Corinthians 3:13). See explanatory note to lines 447–52.
- 978 *sufferd foure 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 sall have penaunce in this place / No ferrer bot fra hethen to Passe.* 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

The Gast of Gy

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 mare.* 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 aungell to me tald.* 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 penance be.* The Gast reiterates 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 Letany.* 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 prayere . . . And the Crede, that the apostels purvayde.* 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

Explanatory Notes

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 avayls . . . for the ded 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. *Dirige* 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 *antems.* 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* 1.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” (Isaias 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 *Forwhi the saule dwelles als a stane . . . understandes als gud aungels.* 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 *Benedictus.* 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

The Gast of Gy

(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 Cisyle*.

- 1216–18 *Mi tyme es nere neghand 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 “departabill” Purgatory by night, though in this poem the pattern seems reversed.
- 1226 *fype 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 “Gaude, 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 salutacioune till our lady of hir fype Joyes.” See Karen Saupe, *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 gude aungels war noght biforne . . . the devels may dere him noght.* The advice to priests in these lines echoes the subject of the 384 lines from *Cursor Mundi* intruded into this poem after line 1012.
- 1297 *Summe Sacerdos.* Here attributed to St. Augustine, this was more commonly identified as the “Prayer of St. Ambrose” (*PL* 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 hirself, als wele als I.* The Gast makes clear that he cannot confess for someone else, a point that the Pryor is slow to understand, perhaps because of his bias against women. But when, after the third attempt to get her to speak, the Pryor 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 Pryor suggests she give almsdeeds.

Explanatory Notes

- 1426–29 *ane unkyndely syn . . . Of whilk we bath war schryven sone.* 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[I]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 will it noght . . . we bath war schryven.* 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 soll 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 gan 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 *vertuse.* The plural of *vertu*, “a particular mental faculty or power of the soul necessary for thought, imagination” (*MED*).
- 1620–36 *His aungell demed his saule to dwell . . . fra now unto to morne at pryme.* 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 dede.* “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

The Gast of Gy

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

- 1673 *grayde*. From *greithen*, “to arrange . . . salvation” (*MED*). Earthly time is seen as a preparation for the ultimate goal, salvation.
- 1675–78 *I se in ilk state . . . nane sall be disprysed 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 nathing ogayns kynde*. The Pryor 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 *Yhe weryed gastes . . . to the devell and his aungels*. Matthew 25:41: “Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.”
- 1742–54 *Bi miracle ogayns kynde . . . Fra fyre and fra that kyndely dede*. The story of the three young men in the fiery furnace is related in Daniel 3. Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, refusing to bow down to Nabuchodonosor’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 *Wha trewly trowes . . . sall be broght*. 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 trowes noght . . . have bale withouten blys*. Probably John 3:36: “He that believeth in the Son hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see

Explanatory Notes

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 *Sen the Sarzyns and the Jewes . . . Cristes Incarnacyoune.* 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 *pagens* (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 tham lyfes lent . . . encres thair mede.* The Gast 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 . . . maynsweryng.* 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

The Gast of Gy

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

- 1898 *Godes preveté*. 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 *eres to thi hereyng . . . als thou has tald*. 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.
- 1940 *Yhole*. 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 Aelfred*).
- 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 *orders*. 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.
- Menours*. Franciscan friars; i.e., the Order of Friars Minor.
- 1952 *seculeres*. 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.

Explanatory Notes

- 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 papes . . . tyll the Day of Dome*. The Pryor 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 *Pape John . . . The twa 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 Pryor 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 inimical 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 Diez 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 3939), the Vernon Manuscript (**V**), printed in the **H** edition of **N**, one in Oxford, Queens 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 poem.

- 17 *lede our lives*. **R**: *Trewly trow*; **N**: *lede thair liues*; **S**: *lede our lives*. I have accepted **S** because **R** rarely uses double formulas (*Trewly trow, mare and les*) in the same line and the sense of **S** fits line 18. **S** modification of **N**: *thair* to *our* fits the surrounding use of the first person.
- 22 *Of ded and of the Day*. **S**, following **H**, **N**: *Als in dede 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 us wys*. So **R**, **S**, following **H**, **N**: *And so he will us wisely wys*. 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:

The Gast of Gy

*Tharfore who so will lyke to lere
A soth ensampill sall ye here;
How it bifell byfor this day
And therefore beres 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 *Bayoune*. So R. H correctly reads N as *ba* with the rest of the word obscured. V: *Bayon*; Q: *Bayone*; P: *avynon*; L: *auiniona*. 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 *suede*. R: *psuede*, 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.
- his. So R. S, following H, N: *hir* makes sense by pluralizing the pronoun, but R: *his* highlights that the room is Gy's, perhaps a better emphasis at this point.
- chaumber. R: *chumber*; N: *chamber*; S: *chaumber*. I have accepted S. The MED does not list *chumber* as a possible variant.
- 51 *oft*. So S, H, N. The *ft* 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 *thai*. R: *he*; S, following H, N: *thai*. The plural pronoun is required by the grammar of the lines.
- 114 After this line S inserts two lines from H, N:
- The tone maister of geomettri
And the tother of philisophie.*
- 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: *arme*; 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 brether twa*. R: *and his forsayd brether twa*; S, H, N: *he and the men and the maisters twa*. I have done less violence to R by simply inserting *He* at the beginning of the line.

Textual Notes

- 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: *eger*. The mildness, patience, even compassion of the Gast’s response suggests that *myld* is preferable to *eger* (“eager,” but with a sense of sharpness and censure).
- 280 *Whase man*. So R, S, H, N: *Whilkmans*. I have retained R because the genitive in the relative adjective is grammatical.
- 285 *Than*. R: *that*; 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: *mi bodi*.
- 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: *Gyes bodi*. There is some merit in S, but I think the distinction between body and self is clear enough without the change.
- 375 *the sauwes*. R: *the saules*. S misreads R as *thir saules*, but the change to S, H, N: *sauwes* (sayings, truths) is necessary to the sense of the line.
- 428 *thai*. S, H, N: *he* is, strictly, correct, but I have retained R: *thai*, 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: *than*, but I have accepted S, H, N: *that*. The demonstrative makes more sense than the conjunction.
- 455 *tald thai*. R: *tald he*, but I have accepted S, H, N: *tald thai*, 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.

The Gast of Gy

- 497 *The Pryor than said.* So R, S, H, N: *than said the prior*. This phrase recurs 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 *gastly.* R: *gastily*, but I prefer S, H, N: *gastly* for consistency with line 575.
- 609 *sayne.* So R, S, H, N: *frayne*. *Frayne* makes sense: “to inquire about or ask something” (*MED*), but I have retained *sayne*: “desirous of, or eager for something” (*MED*).
- 653 *synned.* R: *synnes*; H, N: *sinned*; S: *synned*. I have accepted S because it provides the necessary past tense without otherwise changing R.
- 666 *dartes.* So R, S, H, N: *desaytes*. *desaytes* is possible: “deceit or treachery” (*MED*), but *dartes* seems more to the point in context: “an attack or assault, as of the Devil, of death, of hunger, etc.” (*MED*).
- 674 *abaysed.* R: *abaysted*; H, N: *abaist*; S: *abaysed*. 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 *penaunce.* R: *penaune*, but the *c* in S, following H, N: *penaunce* is clearly necessary.
- 735 *es.* R: *er*; but S, H, N: *es* is necessary to agree with *penaunce*.
- 740 *at.* So R, S, H, N: *that* is tempting, but the *MED* notes *at* as a variant for *that* and R uses the variant often.
- 750 *flesch.* So R, S changes to *fless* without explanation but apparently for rhyme. *MED* lists *fless* as a possible variant, but the imperfect rhyme at lines 801–02 inclines me to retain R.
- 758 *his.* R: *This*, but I prefer S, following H, N: *his*, because there is no previous reference to a specific *turment*.
- 759 *gastes.* R: *gast*; but I prefer S, following H, N: *gastes*, 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 abundantia enim cordis os loquitur*.
- 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 *oſte.* R, S: *oſt*; H, N: *oft*. I have changed to *oſte*, 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.

Textual Notes

- 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: *Omnia quae voluit Dominus 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 foule.* S, H, N insertion of *in* 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 *sungen.* R: *syngyng*, but I have accepted S, H, N: *sungen*, 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 word wha tham may thou myn
What man it es at dose the syn
That es whether it kar man be
Woman or barn thrall or fre.
- 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 *att* 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 *tham 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 *us.* R lacks the *us*, which S, following H, N, properly inserts.

The Gast of Gy

- 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 Placebo. (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.
- 1150 *he*. R lacks *he*, which S, following H, N, properly inserts.
- 1165 *world*. R, S: *word*; H, N: *werld*. 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: *man*; S: *tres*. The substitution of *tres* (trees) for *man* 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 “stane” (line 1181), “sentience” with a “best” (line 1182), “life” (i.e., plant life) with “tres” (line 1183), and “understanding” with “aungels” (line 1184). The use of *als 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 *fendes*. R: *fende*; S, H, N: *fendes*. The plural is necessary.
- 1329 *thou*. R: *that*; S, H, N: *thou*. The second person pronoun is necessary.
- 1334 *In*. Initial R: *that* 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 Pryor.
- 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 *oyres*. So R, S, H, N: *owres*. I have found no attestation elsewhere of *oyres*. The variants *ouris* and *owrys* appear in the *OED* and *MED*. Still, the meaning is clear, so I have let the oddity stand.
- 1858 *That es*. R: *ffor* (common doubling of initial *f*); S: *that es*. I have accepted S, even though it is based on a problematic reading of an initial *b* in N.
- 1925 *proved*. R: *pued*; 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: *thai*; but S, following H, N: *we*, is necessary for consistency of person.
- 2026 *Grevouse*. 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 saules*. R: *for all payns*; but S, following H, N: *saules*, 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 these 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 priveté,” 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-Michael 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. ix–xv.

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 Machteni and one by Tirechan, 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).

Sir Owain

episcopal authority, but Giraldus 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 Mannini 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 Sawtrey. Here we are on firmer historical ground, at least in the origins and

Introduction

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 Sawtrey (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 Sawtrey (or Saltrey) to commit the narrative to writing. The *Tractatus* itself merely identifies the author, the first H., as a monk of Saltereia, 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 Wardon.

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 *boni* (the saved), the *mali* (the damned), the *non valde mali* (the “not completely evil” in a middle state), and the *boni 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 *boni 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*

Sir Owain

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 Gast's certainty in *The Gast 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 *Purgatorio 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), *Espurgatoire S. Patriz.* 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 Hearne 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 *Owayne Miles*. 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

Introduction

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 purgation, 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 gridirons. 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

Sir Owain

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 "money-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 "dominical" 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.

Introduction

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 Desputisoun bitwen the Bodi 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*, *Bevis of Hamtoun*, *Amis and Amiloun*, 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 unmotivated 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 1 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 Cleges, but the familiar “reprieve 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 rime" (line 174). Similarly, the narrator addresses us with direct exhortations: "Jhesu ous 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>listen</i>
Ichil thou tel of other thing,	<i>I will</i>
Yif ye it wil yhere. (lines 166–68)	<i>If; hear</i>

Although the opening lines are missing, it would not be hard to imagine it beginning: "Listeth, lordes, in good entent . . ." (*CT VII[B²]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 fechen him the joie of Helle	<i>fetch him to</i>
Withouten ani ending. (lines 322–24)	

and:

Hem schal sone com a bevereche,	<i>To them; drink</i>
That schal nougth thenche hem gode. (lines 545–46)	<i>think</i>

and:

This ben our foules in our caghe,	<i>birds; cage</i>
And this is our courtelage	<i>garden</i>
And our castel 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 Chrétien 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.

Select Bibliography

Manuscript

National Library of Scotland Advocates' MS 19.2.1 (Auchinleck), fols. 25r–31v. [c. 1330–40]

Editions

Easting, Robert, ed. *St Patrick's Purgatory*. EETS o.s. 298. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Kölbing, Eugen, ed. "Zwei mittelenglische Bearbeitungen der Sage von St. Patrik's Purgatorium." *Englische Studien* 1 (1877), 57–121.

Introduction

Laing, David, and William B. D. D. Turnbull, eds. *Owain Miles and Other Inedited Fragments of Ancient English Poetry*. Edinburgh: [s.n.], 1837.

The Auchinleck Manuscript. National Library of Scotland Advocates' MS 19.2.1. Facsimile with an introduction by Derek Pearsall and I. C. Cunningham. London: The Scolar Press, 1977.

Commentary

Curtayne, Alice. *Lough Derg: St. Patrick's Purgatory*. Monaghan, Ireland: R & S Printers, 1962.

Easting, Robert. "The Date and Dedication of the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*." *Speculum* 53 (1978), 778–83.

———. "Owein at St. Patrick's Purgatory." *Medium Ævum* 55 (1986), 159–75.

———. "Purgatory and the Earthly Paradise in the *Tractatus de purgatorio Sancti Patricii*." *Citeaux* 37 (1986), 23–48.

———. "The Middle English 'Hearne Fragment' of *St. Patrick's Purgatory*." *Notes and Queries* 35 (1988), 436–37.

———, ed. *St. Patrick's Purgatory*. Pp. i–xciii.

Haren, Michael, and Yolande de Pontfarcy. *The Medieval Pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory: Lough Derg and the European Tradition*. Enniskillen: Clogher Historical Society, 1988.

Leslie, Shane. *St. Patrick's Purgatory: A Record from History and Literature*. London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1932.

McGuinness, Joseph. *St Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg*. Dublin: Columba Press, 2000.

McKenna, J. E. *Lough Derg: Ireland's National Pilgrimage*. Dublin: Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, 1928.

O'Connor, Daniel. *St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg*. London: Burns and Oates, 1895.

Seymour, St. John Drelincourt. *Irish Visions of the Other World: A Contribution to the Study of Mediæval Visions*. New York: Macmillan, 1930.

Sir Owain

Wright, Thomas. *St. Patrick's Purgatory: An Essay on the Legends of Purgatory, Hell, and Paradise, Current during the Middle Ages*. London: John Russell Smith, 1864.

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
Seyn Patrike hadde rewthe St. Patrick; pity
5 Of hir misbileve and untrewthe, their false belief; error
That thai weren inne. they were in

2

Oft he proved sarmoun to make, attempted sermon
That thai schuld to God take should take to God
And do after his rede. follow; advice
10 Thai were fulfild of felonie; full of crime
Thai no held it bot ribaudie They held it but foolishness
Of nothing that he sede. Everything he said

3

And al thai seyd commounliche, they all said commonly
That non of hem wold sikerliche none of them would surely
15 Do bi his techeing, Abide by his teaching
Bot yif he dede that sum man Unless; caused some man
Into Helle went than, then
To bring hem tiding them tidings

4

Of the pain and of the wo
20 The soulen suffri evermo, souls suffer forever
Thai that ben therinne; They who are therein
And elles thai seyd, that nolden hye Otherwise; would not quickly (i.e., soon)

Sir Owain

Of her misdede nought repenti,
No her folies blinne.

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

5

25 When Sein Patrike herd this,
Michel he card forsothe, ywis,
And sore he gan desmay.
Oft he was in afliccioun,
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 fendes bond,
And do hem com to amendement
35 And leve on God omnipotent,
The folk of Yrlond.

*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 praier,
40 And bad for that ich thing,
Sone he fel on slepeing
Toforn his auter.

*while
work
prayed; very thing
fell asleep
Before; altar*

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 Jhesu, that ous dere bought,
To him com, ywis,

*slept quite sweetly (i.e., comfortably)
many; began to dream
Paradise
slept, truly it seemed to him
us 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 godspelle,
Of Heven and erthe and of Helle,
Of Godes priveté.

*It spoke of all manner [of] gospels
secret knowledge*

10

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

*Further he thought; gave
beautiful staff
sleep where
God's Staff
call
Yet; very*

11

- When God him this gif hadde,
Him thought that He him ladde
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 warld no was his mack,
So griselich entring.
70 When that Patrike yseye that sight,
Swithe sore he was aflight
In his slepeing.

*black
world; its match
gruesome to enter
saw
Full sorely; afflicted
sleep*

13

- Tho God almighty him schewed and seyd,
Who that hadde don sinful dede
75 Ogaines Godes lawe,
And wold him therof repenti,
And take penaunce hastily,
And his foliis withdrawe,

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

14

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

*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 no schuld nought be therin ful long,
That he ne schal se the paines strong
90 Ac non no schal him greve

if; faith
Good; blameless without uncertainty
steadfast; belief
see
But none shall; trouble

16

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

what [to] the souls is done
indeed
then see
very joy; forever

17

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

explained
showed
full gracious manner
bought us dearly (i.e., redeemed)
sound
left

18

When Seyn Patrike o slepe he woke,
Gode token he fond and up hem toke
105 Of his svevening.
Bok and staf ther he fond,
And tok hem up in his hond,
And thonked Heven king.

of
Good signs he found; them took
dreaming
Book; staff; found
took them; hand
thanked

Sir Owain

19

He kneld and held up his hond,
And thonked Jhesu Cristes sond
That He him hadde ysent,
Wharthurth he might understand
To turn that folk of Yrlond
To com to amendement.

knelt; hand
Jesus Christ's 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 chant and sing [praises]

21

125 Seyn Patrike maked the abbay:
That wite wele men of the cuntray,
That non is that yliche.
Regles is that abbay name;
Ther is solas, gle, and game
With pover and eke with riche.

made; abbey
knew; country
none; like
abbey's
solace, joy; delight
poor; also

22

130 White chanounes he sett therate
To serve God, arliche and late,
And holy men to be.
That ich boke and that staf,
That God Seyn Patrike gaf,
Yetे ther man may se.

canons; established there
early

very book; staff
gave
Still; see

23

135 In the est ende of the abbay
Ther is that hole, forsothe to say,
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
gruesome
good stone walls all around
lock
had it built

Sir Owain

24

- That ich stede, siker ye be,
140 Is ycleped the right entré
Of Patrikes Purgatorie:
For in that time that this bifelle,
Mani 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 pein for her trespass,
And com ogain thurh Godes gras,
And seyd alle and some,
That thai hadde sen sikerliche
The paines of Helle apertliche,
150 When thai were out ycome.
- pain; their trespasses
returned again through; grace
said every one of them
seen surely
clearly
had come out*

26

- And also thai seyd with heye,
Apertliche the joies thai seye
Of angels singing
To God almighty and to His:
155 That is the joie of Paradys;
Jhesu ous thider bring!
- said with haste
Clearly; joys; saw
joy; Paradise
May Jesus bring us there!*

27

- When alle the folk of Yrlond
The joies gan understand,
That Seyn Patrike hem sede,
160 To him thai com everichon,
And were ychristned in fonston,
And leten her misdede.
- began to
them told
they came every one
baptized; baptismal font
forgiven; sins*

28

- And thus thai bicom, lasse and more,
Cristen men thurh Godes lore,
165 Thurh Patrikes preier.
Now herknes to mi talking:
Ichil thou tel of other thing,
Yif ye it wil yhere.
- became, all of them
Christian; through; teaching
prayers
listen
I will
If; hear*

Sir Owain

29

- 170 Bi Stevenes day, the king ful right,
That Ingland stabled and dight
Wel wiselich in his time,
In Northumberland was a knight,
A douhti man and swithe wight,
As it seyt in this rime.
- In the time of Stephen
stabilized; ordered
wisely*
- doughty; mighty person
says; poem (rhyme)*

30

- 175 Oweyn he hight, withouten les,
In cuntré ther he born wes,
As ye may yhere.
Wel michel he couthe of batayle,
And swithe sinful he was saunfayle
180 Ogain his Creatour.
- was named, without lies
country where; was
hear*
- Very much; understood; battle
quite; without doubt
Against; Creator*

31

- 185 On a day he him bithought
Of the sinne he hadde ywrought,
And sore him gan adrede,
And thought he wold thurh Godes grace
Ben yschrive of his trispas,
And leten his misdede.
- One day; thought to himself
sins; done
sorely; began to dread
would through
Be shriven; trespass
leave; misdeeds*

32

- 190 And when he hadde thus gode creaunce,
He com, as it bifel a chaunce,
To the bischop of Yrlond,
Ther he lay in that abbay,
Ther was that hole, forsothe to say,
Penaunce to take an hond.
- good faith
came, as it happened
bishop
Where
Where; truth to tell
To undertake Penance*

33

- 195 To the bischop he biknewe his sinne,
And prayd him, for Godes winne,
That he him schuld schrive,
And legge on him penaunce sore.
He wold sinne, he seyd, no more,
Never eft in his live.
- revealed
salvation
should shrive
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 ytold,
And seyd he most penaunce take,
Yif he wald his sinne forsake,
Hard and manifold.
- happy
rebuked; at once
must
If; would
Serious; many kinds*

35

- 205 Than answerd the knight Owayn,
“Don ichil,” he seyd, “ful feyn,
What God me wil sende.
Thei 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 schaltow 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
pain
bade; avoid; adversity*

37

- For nought the bischop couthe say,
The knight nold nought leten his way,
His soule to amende.
220 Than ladde 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 afliccioun,
In fasting and in orisoun
225 He was, withouten lesing.
Than the priour with processioun,
With croice and with gonfanoun,
To the hole he gan him bring.
- Fifteen; suffering
prayer
lying
Then; prior
cross; banner*

Sir Owain

39

The priour seyd, "Knight Oweyn,
Her is thi gate to go ful 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

"Thus thou schalt under erthe gon;
Than thou schalt finde sone anon
A wel gret feld aplight,
And therin an halle of ston,
Swiche in world no wot Y non;
Sumdele 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 grounde
In winter sikerly.
Into the halle thou schalt go,
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

"Thritten men ther Schul come,
Godes seriaunce alle and some,
As it seyt in the stori;
And hye thee Schul conseily
Hou thou schalt thee conteyni
The way thurth Purgatori."

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

43

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

*convent
Commended him to; he
shut
taken
[So] that; field; come
Where*

Sir Owain

44

- 260 The halle was ful selly digit,
 Swiche can make no etheliche wight;
 The pilers stode wide.
 The knight wonderd that he fond
 Swiche an halle in that lond,
 And open in ich side.
- wondrouslly constructed
 Such; earthly creature
 pillars stood far apart
 found
 Such
 on each

45

- 265 And when he hadde long stond therout,
 And devised al about,
 In he went thare.
 Thritten men ther come,
 Wisemen thai war of dome,
 270 And white abite thai bere,
- stood outside
 examined
 there
 Thirteen men
 judgment
 habit they wore

46

- 275 And al her crounes wer newe schorn;
 Her most maister yede biforn
 And salud the knight.
 Adoun he sat, so seyt the boke,
 And knight Owain to him he toke,
 280 And told him resoun right.
- crowns [of their heads] were newly shorn
 Their chief master went in front
 greeted
 Down; says
 reason true

47

- 280 "Ichil thee conseyl, leve brother,
 As ichave don mani another
 That han ywent this way,
 That thou ben of gode creaunce,
 Certeyn and poure withouten dotaunce
 To God thi trewe fay;
- I will counsel you, dear brother
 I have done
 have gone
 faith
 true; uncertainty
 true source of doctrine

48

- 285 "For thou schalt se, when we ben ago,
 A thousand fenes and wele mo,
 To bring thee into pine.
 Ac loke wele, bise thee so,
 And thou anithing bi hem do,
 Thi soule thou schalt tine.
- are gone
 fiends; many more
 pain
 But look well, ponder you so
 If; with them
 lose

Sir Owain

49

“Have God in thine hert,

- 290 And thenk opon His woundes smert,
That He suffred thee fore.
And bot thou do as Y thee telle,
Bodi and soule thou gos to Helle,
And evermore forlore.
- think; painful
for you
unless
you go
And [are] lost forever*

50

“Nempne Godes heighe name,

- 295 And thai may do thee no schame,
For nought that may bifalle,”
And when thai hadde conseyld the knight,
No lenge bileyve he no might,
300 Bot went out of the halle.
- Call out; high
disgrace
occur
counseled
No longer remain*

51

He and alle his fellowered

- 305 Bitaught him God, and forth thai yede
With ful mild chere.
Owein bileyf ther in drede,
To God he gan to clepi and grede,
And maked his preier.
- company
Entrusted him to God; went
gracious manner
left
call; cry out
prayers*

52

And sone therafter sikerly

- 310 He gan to here a reweful cri;
He was aferd ful sore:
Thei alle the warlde 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,

- 315 Ther com in a grete ferrede
Of fendes fifti score
About the knight into the halle.
Lothly thinges thai weren alle,
Behinde and eke bifore.
- cry; dread
company
fiends fifty
Loathsome
also*

Sir Owain

54

- And the knight thai yeden abouten,
320 And grenned on him her foule touten,
And drof him to hetheing,
And seyd he was comen with flesche and fel
To fechen him the joie of Helle
Withouten ani ending.
- went about
growled; their foul arses
pursued; with abuse
said they; flesh and skin
fetch him [to]*

55

- 325 The most maister fende of alle
Adoun on knes he gan to falle,
And seyd, “Welcome, Owein!
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 anough,
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,
“Yif thou wilt do bi our rede,
For thou art ous leve 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 beloved; precious
perfect love
Where
fellows gathered together*

58

- “And elles we schul thee teche here,
That thou has served ous mani yer
345 In pride and lecherie;
For we thee have so long yknawe,
To thee we schul our hokes thrawe,
Alle our compeynie.”
- otherwise; you teach
lust
known
Into you; hooks thrust
company*

Sir Owain

59

He seyd he nold withouten feyle:
“Ac 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 hond thai bounde him hard,
And casten him amidward.
He cleped to our Dright;
Anon the fer oway was weved,
Cole no spark ther nas bileded,
360 Thurh grace of God almighty.

*Feet and hands
cast; in the midst
called; Lord
At once; fire away; quenched
Coal nor; was not left
Through*

61

365 And when the knight yseighe this,
Michel the balder he was ywis
And wele gan understand,
And thought wele in his memorie,
It was the fendes trecherie,
His hert forto fond.

*had seen
Much more confident; indeed
treachery
tempt*

62

370 The fendes went out of the halle,
The knight thai ladde with hem alle
Intil an uncouthe lond.
Ther no was no maner wele,
Bot hunger, thrust, and chele;
No tre no seighe he stond,

*led
Into; uncivilized land
no kind of comfort
Only; thirst; cold
tree; saw; stand*

63

375 Bot a cold winde that blewe there,
That unnethe ani man might yhere,
And perced thurh his side.
The fendes han the knight ynome
So long that thai ben ycome
Into a valay wide.

*blew
scarcely; hear
pierced through
taken
valley*

Sir Owain

64

- Tho wende the knight he hadde yfounde
 380 The deppest pit in Helle grounde.
 When he com neighe the stede,
 He loked up sone anon;
 Strong it was forther to gon,
 He herd schriche and grede.
- Then thought; found
 deepest
 near; place
 Hard; further to go
 shrieking; lamentation*

65

- He seighe ther ligge ful a feld
 385 Of men and wimen that wern aqueld,
 Naked with mani a wounde.
 Toward the erthe thai lay develing,
 “Allas! Allas!” was her brocking,
 390 With iren bendes ybounde;
- saw; lay; field
 women; were destroyed
 sprawling
 calls of distress
 iron bands bound*

66

- And gun to scriche and to wayly,
 And crid, “Allas! Merci, merci!
 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 reuthe
 Is for the foule 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; regret
 sloth
 says
 sluggish
 they may dread
 lie*

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

Sir Owain

69

Of men and wimen that ther lay,
That crid, "Allas!" and "Waileway!"
For her wicked lore.
Thilche soules lay upward,
As the other hadde ly donward,
That Y told of bifore,

women
cried
their; conduct
These

410

70

And were thurth fet and hond and heved
With iren nailes gloweand red
To the erthe ynayled that tide.
Owain seighe sitt on hem there
Lothli dragouns alle o fer,
In herd is nought 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

On sum sete todes blake,
Euetes, 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
gluttony
runs all too widely

72

Yet he him thought a pain strong
Of a cold winde 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

430

73

The fendes lopen on hem thare,
And with her hokes hem al totere,
And loude thai gun to crie.
Who that is licchoure in this liif,
Be it man other be it wiif,
That schal ben his bayli.

leapt; them there
their hooks them tore up
began to cry
lecher; life
wife (i.e., woman)
country (dwelling place)

435

Sir Owain

74

- 440 The fendes seyd to the knight,
 “Thou hast ben strong lichoure aplight,
 And strong glotoun also:
 Into this pain thou schalt be dight,
 Bot thou take the way ful right
 Ogain ther thou com fro.”
- lecher indeed
glutton
placed
Unless; right away
Back where*

75

- 445 Owain seyd, “Nay, Satan!
 Yete forthermar ichil gan,
 Thurth grace of God almighty.”
 The fendes wald him have hent:
 He cleped to God omnipotent,
 450 And thai lorn al her might.
- Still further I will go
Through
would; seized
called
lost*

76

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

77

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

78

- 465 And sum in forneise wern ydon,
 With molten ledde and quic brunston
 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*

Sir Owain

79

- 470 And sum on grediris layen there,
Al glowand ogains the fer,
That Owain wele yknewe,
That whilom were of his queyntaunce,
That suffred ther her penaunce:
Tho chaunged al his hewe!
- gridirons lay
glowing upon; fire
recognized
at some time; acquaintance
Then; color*

80

- 475 A wilde fer hem thurthout went,
Alle that it oftok it brent,
Ten thousand soules and mo.
Tho that henge bi fet and swere,
That were theves and theves fere,
480 And wrought man wel wo.
- fire them throughout
overtook; burned
more
Those; feet; neck
thieves; companions
caused; woe*

81

- 485 And tho that henge bi the tong,
That "Allas!" ever song,
And so loude crid,
That wer bacbiters in her live:
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

- 490 Alle the stedes the knight com bi
Were the paines of Purgatori
For her werkes wrong.
Whoso is lef on the halidom swere,
Or ani fals witnes bere,
Ther ben her peynes strong.
- places
their works
willing to; relics swear
false witness bear*

83

- 495 Owain anon him biwent
And seigh where a whele trent,
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; wheel turned
gruesome
Great; moved
burned; brand
hooks; fitted out*

Sir Owain

84

- An hundred thousand soules and mo
 500 Opon the whele were honging tho,
 The fendes thereto arranged
 The stori seyt of Owain the knight,
 That no soule knowe he no might,
 So fast thai gun 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 brening,
 That stank foule withalle,
 And about the whele it went,
 And the soules it forbrent
 510 To poudre swithe smal.
- came lightning
 blue (*i.e.*, livid) fire; burning
 burnt up
 powder very fine

86

- That whele, that renneth in this wise,
 Is for the sinne of covaitise,
 That regnes now overal.
 The coveytous man hath never anough
 515 Of gold, of silver, no of plough,
 Til deth him do doun falle.
- runs in this way
 covetousness
 reigns; completely
 covetous; enough
 land
Until death makes him fall down

87

- The fendes seyd to the knight,
 "Thou hast ben covaitise aplight,
 To win lond and lede;
 520 Opon this whele thou schalt be dight,
 Bot yif thou take the way ful right
 Intil thin owhen thede."
- covetous indeed
 land; nation
 placed
 Unless; immediately
Unto your own country

88

- Her conseyl he hath forsaken.
 The fendes han the knight forth taken,
 525 And bounde him swithe hard
 Opon the whele that arn about,
 And so lothly gan to rout,
 And cast him amidward.
- Their counsel
 very
 turned
 hideously; bellow
 in the midst

Sir Owain

89

- 530 Tho the hokes him torrent,
 And the wild fer him tobrent.
 On Jhesu Crist he thought,
 Fram that whele an angel him bare,
 And al the fendes that were thare
 No might him do right nought.
- Then; hooks; tore
fire; burned fiercely*
- bore*

90

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

91

- 545 The fendes seyd to the knight than,
 "Thou hast wonder of thilche man
 That make so dreri mode:
 For thai 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 knight up went
 Almest into the firmament,
 And sethen adon him cast
- sooner; said
told (recorded)*
- Almost
afterwards down*

93

- 555 Into a stinkand river,
 That under the mounteyn 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.
- stinking
mountain; offire
missile of a siege engine
any ice
describe
in haste*

Sir Owain

94

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

95

- 565 That ich pain, ich understand,
Is for bothe nithe and ond,
That was so wick liif;
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 ladde him swithe withalle,
Til thai com to an halle,
He no seighe never er non swiche.
Out of the halle com an hete,
575 That the knight bigan to swete,
He seighe so foule a smiche.
- led; quickly
saw; before; such
heat
sweat
saw; smoke*

97

- Tho stint he forther for to gon.
The fendes it aperceived anon,
And were therof ful fawe.
580 “Turn ogain,” thai gun to crie,
“Or thou schalt wel sone dye,
Bot thou be withdrawe.”
- Then stopped; to go
realized
livid
taken out*

98

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

Sir Owain

99

- For al was the halle grounde
 590 Ful of pittes that were rounde,
 And were ful yfilt
 To the brerdes, gret and smal,
 Of bras and coper and other metal,
 And quic bronston ymelt;
- pits*
filled
rims
brass; copper
caustic brimstone molten

100

- 595 And men and wimen theron stode,
 And schrist and crid, as thai wer wode,
 For her dedeli sinne;
 Sum to the navel wode,
 And sum to the brestes yode,
 600 And sum to the chin.
- shrieked; cried; crazy*
deadly
waded
breasts went

101

- Ich man after his misgilt
 In that pein was ypilt,
 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:
- Each; sin*
pain; thrust
heat
bore bags (i.e., pouches); necks
coins glowing all on fire
such meat; ate

102

- That were gavelers in her liif.
 Bewar therbi, bothe man and wiif,
 Swiche sinne that ye lete.
 610 And mani soules ther yede uprightes,
 With fals misours and fals wightes,
 That fendes opon sete.
- usurers*
permit
stood upright
sinners; creatures
set upon

103

- The fendes to the knight sede,
 "Thou most bathi in this lede
 615 Ar than thou hennes 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

104

- Owain drad that turment,
And cleped to God omnipotent,
And His moder Marie.
Yborn he was out of the halle,
Fram the paines and the fendes alle,
Tho he so loude gan crie.
- dreaded
called
mother
Borne
Then*

105

- Anon the knight was war ther,
Whare sprang out a flaumme 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
strong; fierce
Then; sorely terrified
coal; pitch it spewed*

106

- 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*

107

- The fende hath the knight ynome,
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 spel
solace
fellows hurry*

108

- “This ben our foules in our caghe,
And this is our courtelage
And our castel tour;
Tho that ben herin ybrought,
Sir knight, hou trowestow ought,
That hem is anithing sour?
- birds; cage
garden
Those
do you believe at all
That they are at all agonized*

Sir Owain

109

"Now turn ogain or to late,
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

contrivance

110

655 Her conseil the knight forsoke.
The fendes him nom, so seith the boke,
And bounde him swithe fast.
Into that ich wicke prisoun,
Stinckand and derk, fer adoun,
660 Amidward thai him cast.

counsel

took

fully

wicked

Stinking; dark, far

Amidst

111

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

deeper

hotter

Then; be pained

called

good

112

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

carried

otherwise; lost

pain; tell of

pride

forever

113

675 Baside the pit he seighe and herd
Hou God almighty him had ywerd;
His clothes wer al tornet.
Forther couthe he no way,
Ther him thought a divers cuntry;
His bodi was al forbrent.

saw; heard

protected

torn

could

strange country

burned badly

Sir Owain

114

- Tho chaunged Owain rode and hewe;
 680 Fendes he seighe, ac non he no knewe,
 In that divers lond;
 Sum sexti eighen bere,
 That lotheliche and griseliche were,
 And sum hadde sexti hond.
- Then; face and complexion
 saw, but
 strange
 sixty eyes bore
 loathsome; gruesome
 sixty hands*

115

- 685 Thai seyd, "Thou schalt nought ben alon,
 Thou schalt haven ous to mon,
 To teche thee newe lawes,
 As thou hast ylernd ere,
 In the stede ther thou were
 690 Amonges our felawes."
- attend to
 learned before
 place*

116

- The fendes han the knight ynome;
 To a stinkand water thai ben ycome.
 He no seighe never er non swiche.
 It stank foulier than ani hounde,
 695 And mani mile it was to the grounde,
 And was as swart as piche.
- taken
 stinking
 saw; before; such
 hound
 black as pitch*

117

- And Owain seighe therover ligge
 A swithe strong, naru brigge.
 The fendes seyd tho,
 700 "Lo, sir knight, sestow this?
 This is the brigge of Paradis,
 Here over thou most go;
- lay
 very; narrow bridge
 then
 do you see
 must*

118

- "And we thee schul with stones throwe,
 And the winde thee schal over blowe,
 705 And wirche thee ful wo.
 Thou no schalt, for al this midnerd,
 Bot yif thou falle amidwerd
 To our felawes mo.
- inflict misery on you
 for all the world
 Avoid falling in the middle
 other fellows*

Sir Owain

119

- 710 “And when thou art adoun yfalle,
 Than schal com our felawes alle,
 And with her hokes thee hede.
 We schul thee teche a newe play
 Thou hast served ous mani a day
 And into Helle thee lede.”

fallen

behead

120

- 715 Owain biheld the brigge smert,
 The water therunder, blac and swert,
 And sore him gan to dredre.
 For of o thing he tok yeme:
 Never mot in sonne beme
 Thicker than the fendes yede.

bridge painful

black; dark

sorely; dread

one; notice

motes; sun beams

came

121

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

high; tower

sharp; razor

narrow

Burned of lightning; thunder

Which he thought [a] great difficulty (misfortune)

122

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

is no; ink

imagine

master figure out

One half of; pain

123

- 735 So the dominical ous telle,
 There is the pure entré of Helle:
 Sein Poule berth witnesse.
 Whoso falleth of the brigge adoun,
 Of him nis no redempcioun,
 Noither more no lesse.

(see note)

entry

Saint Paul bears

off (from)

Neither

Sir Owain

124

- 740 The fendes seyd to the knight tho,
 “Over this brigge might thou nought go,
 For noneskines nede.
 Fle periil, sorwe, and wo,
 And to that stede, ther thou com fro
 Wel fair we schul thee lede.”
- then*
For any need at all
Flee peril
place
lead

125

- 745 Owain anon him gan bithenche
 Fram hou mani of the fendes wrenche
 God him saved hadde.
 He sett his fot opon the brigge,
 No feld he no scharpe egge,
 750 No nothing him no drad.
- consider*
wiles
felt; edge
dreaded

126

- 755 When the fendes yseigh tho,
 That he was more than half ygo,
 Loude thai gun to crie,
 “Allas, allas, that he was born!
 This ich knight we have forlorn
 Out of our baylie.”
- saw then*
gone
lost
prison

127

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

128

- A cloth of gold him was 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

Sir Owain

129

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

130

- Forthermore he gan yse
 775 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:
- see*
Wood nor steel was not

131

- Jaspers, topes, and cristal,
 Margarites and coral,
 And riche saferstones,
 Ribes and salidoines,
 785 Onicles and causteloines,
 And diamaunce for the nones.
- 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 Saveour
 Is queinter than goldsmithe other paintour,
 795 That woneth in ani lond,
 So fare the gates of Paradis
 Er richer ywrought, forsothe ywis,
 As ye may understand.
- more skillful; or*
lives
far
Are

Sir Owain

134

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 800 | The gates bi hemselfe undede.
Swiche a smal com out of that stede
As it al baume were;
And of that ich swetenisse
The knight tok so gret strengthe ywis,
As ye may fortheward here. | <i>opened</i>
<i>smell; place</i>
<i>balm</i>
<i>sweetness</i>
<i>truly</i> |
|-----|--|---|

135

- 805 That him thought he might wel,
More bi a thousand del,
Suffri pain and wo,
And turn ogain siker aplight,
And ogain alle fenes fight,
Ther he er com fro.

times
firmly assured
against
Where; earlier; from

136

- | | |
|---|---|
| The knight yode the gate ner,
And seighe ther com with milde chere
Wel mani processiou,
With tapers and chaundelers of gold;
Non fairer no might ben on mold,
And croices and goinfainoun. | went; near
<i>in gracious manner</i>
<i>many [in] procession</i>
<i>candles; candle-holders</i>
<i>earth</i>
<i>crosses; banners</i> |
|---|---|

137

- Popes with gret dignité,
And cardinals gret plenté,
Kinges and quenes ther were,
Knightes, abbotes, and priours,
Monkes, chanouns, and Frere Prechours, *canons; Friar Preachers (i.e., Dominicans)*
And bischopes that croices bere;

138

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 825 | Frere Menours and Jacobins,
Frere Carmes and Frere Austines,
And nonnes white and blake;
Al maner religiou
Ther yede in that processioun,
That order hadde vtake. | <i>Friars Minor (i.e., Franciscans); Dominicans</i>
<i>Carmelites; Augustinian Friars</i>
<i>nuns</i>
<i>religious</i>
<i>went</i>
<i>religious orders had taken</i> |
|-----|--|---|

Sir Owain

139

- The order of wedlake com also,
wedlock
830 Men and wimen mani mo,
more
And thonked Godes grace
That hath the knight swiche grace ysent,
He was deliverd from the fendes turment,
Quic man into that plas.
Living

140

- 835 And when thai hadde made this melody,
Tuay com out of her compeynie, Two; company
Palmes of gold thai bere. bore

To the knight thai ben ycome
Bituix hem tuay thai han him nome, Between; two; taken

840 And erchebischesopes it were. archbishops

141

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Up and doun thai ladde the knight, | <i>led</i> |
| | And schewed him joies of more might, | <i>power</i> |
| | And miche melodye. | <i>much</i> |
| | Mirie were her carols there, | <i>Merry</i> |
| 845 | Non foles among hem nere, | <i>There were no sins among them</i> |
| | Bot joie and menstracie. | <i>minstrelsy</i> |

142

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 850 | Thai yede on carol al bi line,
Her joie may no man devine,
Of God thai speke and song;
And angels yeden hem to gy,
With harpe and fithel and sautry,
And belles miri rong | <i>went; in a line</i>
<i>understand</i>
<i>spoke; sang</i>
<i>went; guide</i>
<i>fiddle; psaltery (i.e., stringed instrument)</i>
<i>merrily rang</i> |
|-----|--|---|

143

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 855 | No may ther no man caroly inne,
Bot that he be clene of sinne,
And leten alle foly.

Now God, for Thine woundes alle,
Graunt ous caroly in that halle,
And His moder Marie! | <i>carol (i.e., sing)</i>
<i>Unless</i>
<i>leave</i>

<i>Let us sing</i> |
|-----|---|--|

Sir Owain

144

- 860 This ich joie, as ye may se,
Is for love and charité
Ogain God and mankinne.
Who that lat erthely love be,
And loveth God in Trinité,
He may caroly therinne.
- very*
Towards
leaves behind earthly love
sing

145

- 865 Other joies he seigne anough:
Heighes tres with mani a bough,
Theron sat foules of heven,
And breke her notes with miri gle,
Burdoun and mene gret plenté,
870 And hautain with heighes steven.
- birds*
trilled; merry glee
Bass; melody
treble; loud sound

146

- Him thought wele with that foules song
He might wele live theramong
Til the worldes ende.
Ther he seigne that tre of liif
875 Wharthurth that Adam and his wiif
To Helle gun wende.
- birds'*
life
Whereby
went

147

- Fair were her erbers with floures,
Rose and lili, divers colours,
Primrol and paruink,
880 Mint, fetherfoy, and eglentere,
Colombin and mo ther were
Than ani man mai bithenke.
- gardens*
Primrose; periwinkle
chrysanthemum; briar rose
Columbine
imagine

148

- It beth erbes of other maner
Than ani in erthe groweth here,
885 Tho that is lest of priis.
Evermore thai grene springeth,
For winter no somer it no clingeth,
And swetter than licorice.
- There are plants of other kinds*
Those that are least of value
summer; shrivels
sweeter

Sir Owain

149

- 890 Ther beth the welles in that stede,
The water is swetter than ani mede,
Ac on ther is of priis,
Swiche that Seynt Owain seighe tho,
That foure stremes urn fro
Out of Paradis.
- wells
sweeter; beverage
But one; value
Such; then
streams flow from

150

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

151

- 905 The thridde strem is Eufrates,
Forsothe to telle, withouten les,
That rinneth swithe right.
The ferth strem is Tigris;
In the world is make nis
Of stones swithe bright.
- third
Truth to tell, without lies
quickly forth
fourth stream
none other

152

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

153

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

Sir Owain

154

- Sum he seighe gon in rede scarlet,
And sum in pourper wele ysett,
And sum in sikelatoun;
As the prest ate Masse wereth,
Tonicles and aubes on hem thai bereth,
And sum gold bete al doun.
- purple; attired
silk woven with gold*
- Vestments; albs
hammered gold*

155

- 925 The knight 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

- Ichil you tel a fair semblaunce,
That is a gode acordaunce
Bi the sterres clere:
Sum ster is brighter on to se
Than is bisides other thre,
And of more pouwere.
- I will; comparison
That accords well
stars bright*
- three others*

157

- In this maner ydelt it is,
Bi the joies of Paradis:
Thai no have nought al yliche;
940 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

- The bischopes ogain to him come,
Bituen hem tuay thai him nome,
945 And ladde him up and doun,
And seyd, “Brother, God, herd He be!
Fulfilid is thi volenté,
Now herken our resoun.
- back to
Between; two; took
led*
- God, be He praised
desire
listen; explanation*

Sir Owain

159

“Thou hast yse with eighen thine
Bothe the joies and the pine:
Yherd be Godes grace!
We wil thee tel bi our comun dome,
What way it was that thou become,
Er thou hennes pas.

seen; eyes
pain
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)
960 Men clepeth it Purgatori.

evening and morning

161

“And this lond that is so wide,
And so michel and so side,
And is ful of blis,
That thou hast now in ybe,
965 And mani joies here yse,
Paradis is cleped ywis.

broad
great; spacious
called

162

“Ther mai no man comen here
Til that he be spourged there,
And ymade al clene.
970 Than cometh thai hider.” The bischop sede,
“Into the joie we schul hem lede,
Sumwhile bi tuelve and tene.

cleansed
At some time; twelve; ten

163

“And sum ben so hard ybounde,
Thai nite never hou long stounde
975 Thai schul suffri that hete;
Bot yif her frendes do godenissee,
Yif mete, or do sing Messe,
That thai han in erthe ylete,

bound
do not know; time
heat
friends
If appropriate; have Mass sung
arranged for

Sir Owain

164

- “Other ani other almosdede,
980 Alle the better hem may spedē
Out of her missays,
And com into this Paradis,
Ther joie and blis ever is,
And libbe here al in pays.
- Or; almsdeed
hasten
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
like*

166

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

167

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

168

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

Sir Owain

169

- Ther was al maner foulen song,
all kinds of birds'
1010 Michel joie was hem among,
And evermore schal be;
Ther is more joie in a foules mouthe,
bird's
Than here in harp, fithel, or crouthe,
fiddle; croud (i.e., stringed instrument)
Bi lond other bi se.
By land or by sea

170

- 1015 That lond, that is so honestly,
Is ycleped Paradis terestri,
called; terrestrial
That is in erthe here;
That other is Paradis, Godes riche:
kingdom
Thilke joie hath non yliche,
That; like
1020 And is above the aire.

171

- In that, that is in erthe here,
Was Owain, that Y spac of here,
I spoke
Swiche that les Adam;
Which; lost
For, hadde Adam yhold him stille,
firmly
1025 And wrought after Godes wille
As he ogain him nam,
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
1030 With pike and spade in diche to delve,
ditch
To help his wiif and himselfe,
God made him miche to done.
much

173

- God was with him so wroth,
That he no left him no cloth,
clothing
1035 Bot a lef of a tre,
leaf
And al naked yede and stode.
Loke man, yif hye ner wode,
went; stood
At swiche a conseil to be.
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 thai lived evermo,
 He drof hem to midnerd.
- 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 Sauter,
 Of a thing that toucheth here,
 Of God in Trinité,
 Opon men, that ben in gret honour,
 1055 And honoureth nougnt her Creatour
 Of so heighe 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
-

Sir Owain

179

- 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 hete
To tellen hem, that he no lete,
Whether Heven were white or biis,
Blewe or rede, yalu or grene.
The knight seyd, "Withouten wene,
Y schal say min aviis. | commanded
leave out
gray
Blue; yellow
doubt
opinion |
| 1080 | | |

181

- “Me thenketh 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.

182

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | “And ich day ate gate o sithe
Ous cometh a mele to make ous blithe,
That is to our bihevē:
A swete smal of al gode,
It is our soule fode.
Abide, thou schalt ous leve.” | <i>one time</i>
<i>To us; meal; glad</i>
<i>benefit</i>
<i>piece</i>
<i>food</i>
<i>believe</i> |
| 1090 | | |

183

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

Sir Owain

184

- The Holy Gost in fourme o fer
1100 Opon the knight light ther,
In that ich place;
Thurth vertu of that ich light
He les ther al his erthelich might,
And thonked Godes grace.
- form of fire*
alighted

185

- 1105 Thus the bischop to him sede,
“God fet ous ich day with His brede,
Ac we no have noure neighe
So grete likeing of His grace,
No swiche a sight opon His face,
- feeds; bread*
But; nowhere near
Such a great enjoyment
- 1110 As tho that ben on heigh.
- those; high*

186

- The soules that beth at Godes fest,
Thilche joie schal ever lest
Withouten ani ende.
Now thou most bi our comoun dome,
- feast*
last
- 1115 That ich way that thou bicome,
Ogain thou most wende.
- judgment*
Back; must go

187

- Now kepe thee wele fram dedli sinne,
That thou never com therinne,
For nonskines nede.
1120 When thou art ded, thou schalt wende
Into the joie that hath non ende;
- well; deadly sin*
For no reason at all
- Angels schul thee lede.”
- lead*

188

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

Sir Owain

189

Of that praier gat he no gain
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 com fro.

*took his leave; back
Though
fled; like a missile from a catapult*

1130

190

No nere than a quarel might flé,
No fende no might him here no se,
For al this warlde to winne;
And when that he com to the halle,
The thritten men he fond alle,
Ogaines him therinne.

*stone; flee
hear; see
Facing towards*

1135

191

Alle thai held up her hond,
And thonked Jhesu Cristes sond
A thousaned 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; wander
might be
quickly*

1140

192

And as ich finde in this stori,
The priour of the Purgatori
Com tokening that night,
That Owain hadde overcomen his sorwe,
And schuld com up on the morwe,
Thurth grace of God almighty.

*[To] the prior
Came with a premonition*

1150

193

Than the priour with processiou恩,
Wih croice and with goinfainoun,
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
gleam*

1155

Sir Owain

194

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

195

- 1165 Thai ladde him into holi chirche,
Godes werkes forto wirche. *works to do*
His praiers he gan make,
And at the ende on the fiften day,
The knight anon, forsothe to say,
1170 Scrippe and burdoun gan take. *Pilgrim's bag and staff*

196

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

197

- And Bedlem, ther that God was born *Bethlehem*
Of Mari His moder, as flour of thorn,
And ther He stighe to Heven;
1180 And sethen into Yrlond he come, *flower*
And monkes abite undername, *arose*
And lived there yeres seven. *habit assumed*

198

- And when he deyd, he went ywis
Into the heighe joie of Paradis,
1185 Thurth help of Godes grace.
Now God, for Seynt Owain's love,

Sir Owain

Graunt ous 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. 155–56) the first 36 lines of the Anglo-Norman version of the poem.
- 11–12 *Thai no held it . . . 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 thai seyd commounliche . . . No her folies 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 *-ith*. 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 *Godes priveté* (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 *Godes Staf* (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 priveté*” (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 priveté*. Since men are ordinarily not to know *Godes priveté*, the book is a powerful gift to St. Patrick.
- 58 *Godes Staf*. The *Staf*, “a bishop’s staff, crosier” (*MED*), is clearly a sign of episcopal authority granted by God. *Godes Staf* 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 sinne*. The idea that a day and a night, preceded and followed by prayer and fasting, would forgive sins and satisfy purgatorial 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 purgatorial rather than the infernal at this point.

Explanatory Notes

- 119 *Peter.* A: *patrike* 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 *reicles* (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 chanounes.* 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 infernal 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 *His.* The word is mysterious, but seems intended since it rhymes with “Paradys” (line 155). A word seems to be missing or implied, such as *His [own]*.

Sir Owain

- 156 *Jhesu ous 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 “withouten les” (line 175) and “forsothe to say” (line 191).
- 166 *Now herknes.* This address directly to the reader is another feature rather characteristic of romance.
- 169 *Steenes.* 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, *História 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 bischop of Yrlond.* 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 interlocuter.
- 192 *Penaunce 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 *priour with processiouen.* 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 *Tractatus* has fifteen men.

Explanatory Notes

- 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 schorn.* Their heads were freshly shaved with the tonsure of religious orders.
- 276 *resoun right.* “Right reason” is reason informed by the will’s selection of higher rather than lower goals. (St. Thomas Aquinas, *ST* 1.qu.94)
- 293 *thou gos to Helle.* Owain’s experience is purgatorial, but he is warned that he is in danger of falling into Hell.
- 329 *tine.* This seems to be derived from the verb *tinen*, “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 *slewithe.* 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 . . . greved him swithe sore.* The verb *dede* (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.

Sir Owain

- 420 *In herd.* “In public.” The point is that there is no way to hide from the torments.
- 479 *theves and theves fere.* Although the connection is not explicitly made, thieves and their companions are guilty of the deadly sin of greed or covetousness. “Covaitise” is mentioned specifically at line 512.
- 484 *bacbiters.* 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* (stanzas 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 *misers* not found in the *MED* and first found in the *OED* c. 1560. The generality of *wightes* later in the line suggests that perhaps *misours* here is also general, a combination of *mis* (“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 maner 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 *sinne of prede.* 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*

Explanatory Notes

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

- 682–84 *Sum sexti eighen bere . . . sum hadde sexti hond.* 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 “Sein 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

Sir Owain

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 *salidoines*. “A fabulous stone of two kinds, said to be found in the stomach of a swallow” (*MED*). The term, usually “celadon,” is listed under *celidoine* with many spelling variations.
- 785 *causteloines*. “Some kind of precious stone; ? chalcedony” (*MED*). The term is listed under *calcedoine*. According to the *OED*, it is “transparent or translucent.”
- 786 *for the nones*. 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 *charbukelston*. The *OED* records that carbuncles were said to give off light or glow in the dark.
- 793–94 *our Saveour . . . paintour*. God, as the Creator of the world, was frequently described as the greatest of all artists or makers.
- 813 *mani processioun*. Although I have not followed E in inserting *in*, clearly one single procession is intended.

Explanatory Notes

- 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 *chanouns.* 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 Prechours.* 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 Austines* (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 wedlake.* 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 *fithel.* “Fiddle,” the most popular stringed instrument of the Middle Ages. It had three

Sir Owain

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

sautry. “Psaltery,” 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 *breke 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. *Burdoun* (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), *mene* (line 869) signifies “the middle part, whether instrumental or vocal” (p. 278), while *hautain* (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 liif* (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 *Pison*. Although the first letter of this line in A may be *d*, the intention must be *p*, thus *Pison*. The first of the four rivers of Eden was Phison (Genesis 2:11).
- 898 *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).

Explanatory Notes

- 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 *crouthe*. 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” (*limbus 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 *Passioun*. 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.

Sir Owain

- 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 priour.* *To* must be assumed at the beginning of this line since *the priour* 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 *Scrippē and burdoun.* “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 (*scrippē*) to hold food, money, reliques, and whatever. They carried a staff (*burdoun*) made of two sticks tightly wrapped together. The traditional dress is well-described in the romance *The Squyr of Low Degre*.

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 Staunton* 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 *Owayne Miles* 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 Kölbing's edition and subsequent addenda (K) and Zupitza's (*Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 10.247–57) corrections (Z) to Kölbing. 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 *untrewthe*. So K, E. A: *untrewe*. A's reading is not attested in the *MED* and K, E preserve the rhyme with line 4.
16 *sum man*. A: *no man* (though a bit unclear). E's emendation makes sense of the sentence.
22 *thai*. Inserted above the line in A.

Sir Owain

- 28 *afliccioun*. A: *afliccoun*; E: *afflicoun*. A's reading is not attested in the *MED*, which offers no examples of *afliccoun* as a variant. *Afliccioun* provides a closer rhyme to *orisoun* (line 29), though the *affliccoun/orysoun* rhyme recurs in A, line 223. But both "affliccoun" and "orysoun" in this later stanza rhyme with "processioun"; thus my emendation to *afliccioun* here and in line 223. N.b., Robert Mannyng's *Handlynge Synne*, where "afflyccyoun" (line 310) is rymed with "orysouns" (line 309); the rhyme there sounds right through metathesis.
- 36 *Yrlond*. So K, E. A: *Yrluod*. A is clearly in error.
- 83 *schuld be forgive*. Z, E insert *be*, which makes the line appropriately passive.
- 87 *stedfast of bilee*. Z, E insert *of*, an important clarification.
- 112 *Wharthurth*. So A. K reads *thurch* throughout, but A's *thurth*, 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: *seize*. I have followed the rhyme with "hey" (line 151), though elsewhere I have transcribed "seighe" (line 773).
- 172 *Northumberland*. A: *Norphumberland*. There is no need to double the *h*.
- 174 *As*. So K, E. A: *At*. The change to *As* makes the line intelligible.
- 175 *Oweyn*. A: *Uweyn*; 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 *afliccioun*. A: *afliccoun*. See textual note to line 28.
- 267 *thare*. 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 *do as Y*. A: *do y*. K, E insertion of *as* repairs the grammar.
- 296 *do thee*. A: *dope dope*, with the second excised.
- 416 *gloweand*. Corrected from *groeand* in A.
- 419 *dragouns*. A: *dragrouns*. 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 *thare*. 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 *thou schalt*. A: *he schal*. K, E: *thou shalt*. The change to the second person is necessary for the sense of the passage.
- 524 *forth*. The *p* is added above the line in A.

Textual Notes

- 552 *sethen*. A: *sebben*. There is no need to double the *th* in transcription. So, too, in line 1180.
- 641 *schake*. 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 *wis* in A.
- 708 *felawes*. A: *fewes*. I have accepted K, E's correction.
- 733 *dominical*. So K, E. A: *dmcl*. 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 *cou* and changes to *thou (bou)*, but I agree with K that the scribe of A has already made this correction.
- 746 *fendes*. Although the first *e* of *fendes* is obliterated, there is no doubt about the whole word.
- 762 *better*. A: *beiter*. The A form is not cited in *MED* as a variant of *better*.
- 794 *goldsmithē*. A: *goldsmithē*. The scribe of this part of A frequently combines *t* and *b* where either *th* or *b* would do, as he does in the A version of *Amis and Amiloun*. (See Bliss, p. 658.)
- 803 *ywis*. The *y* is inserted above the line in A.
- 813 *processioun*. So A. E inserts *in* before *processioun*, but I agree with K that it is not necessary.
- 817 *dignité*. A: *dingnite*. 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 *is*. Inserted above the line in A.
- 895 *Pison*. A: *dison*. E is clearly correct about the name of the river, though A clearly reads *dison*.
- 898 *Gihon*. A: *fison*. 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 *While*. A: *Whise*. K, E's emendation makes sense, and some alteration is clearly necessary.
- 938 *Paradis*. A: *parabis*; K, E *paradis* is obviously necessary; K does not indicate that this is a change from A.

Sir Owain

- 956 K, E read A: *Bothe auen and a morwe*. K leaves *auen* as a variant of *of even*. E changes to: *Bothe an euen and a morwe*.
- 970 *sede*. Second *e* inserted above the line in A.
- 988 *celestien*. Corrected from *celestial* in A.
- 993 *may*. Corrected from *mar* in A.
- 1016 *Is*. Corrected from *bis* in A.
- 1018 *other*. Corrected from *oner* in A.
- 1044 *midnerd*. So A. K incorrectly reads *miduerd*. The word in A is a derivative of Old English *middangeard* (*MED*). It seems to refer to the extra-paradisal world.
- 1058–70 These lines are lost in A. E: “The excision of the miniature at the head of ‘The deputisoun bituen the bodi and the soule’ has caused the loss of most of thirteen lines.” The miniature was on fol. 31v. The initial *th* (*P*) of line 1058 is legible, as are the upper parts of *have don 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 *s*, 1060 *o*, and 1070 *b*. Laing and Turnbull were apparently able also to see initial letters at lines 1061: *h*; 1062: *a*; and 1069: *P*.
- 1180 *sethen*. A: *seppen*. 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 seized 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 Cisterian 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

The Vision of Tundale

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 further 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 *mali non valde* (sinful souls who undergo a severe purgative experience), the *mali* (the damned), the *non valde 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, divagating 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

Introduction

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 Anime*, 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 stinking 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 proud 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 farm 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 genitals, 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.

The Vision of Tundale

- VIII: Lustful clergy and religious who have broken their vows are swallowed by a great bird and infested with vermin 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 II 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 horrible 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

Introduction

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 *mali 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 grevyd they God in sum parté. (lines 1519–20) *lived*

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

Thawye they ben clansyn of all ylle,
Here mot thei abydon Goddus 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'

The Vision of Tundale

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 *boni 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 destinations.

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

Introduction

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 gud that in tho erthe is,
Nor all the matens ne all the masse
Myght not help thee from the peyn of hell." (lines 211–13)

*good; the earth
matins; 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 transmitted 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 Tundal*," p. 88. I find it hard to agree with Seymour that they are intentional or forgetful lapses into autobiography by Marcus.

The Vision of Tundale

profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?”² Tundale’s earthly power has abandoned him to what, in reality, he merits. Likewise, when the infernal fiends at the gates of Hell in Passus IX threaten Tundale, they emphasize what Tundale deserves:

For thi wykkydnes 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 Passus VII. There Tundale, viewing the horrors of punishment, questions God’s mercy by alluding to Scripture:

“Wher his the word that wryton was
That Goddus mercy schuld passe all thyng?
Here see Y therof no tokenyng.” (lines 812–14) *sign*

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:

“Allthauff God be full of myght and mercy,
Ryghtwessnes behowyth Hym to do therby.
But He for gevith more wykkydnes,
Thenne He findeth ryghtwesnes.
Tho peynus that thu haddus wer but lyght.
Grettur 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 behooves us to do penance on earth and live according to God’s

² Matthew 16:26; see also Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25.

Introduction

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. Penitence 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.³

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:

Yett nold not God is sowle tyne
For He hit boghthe from Hell pyne,
For His mersy passud all thyngē. (lines 37–39)

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

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 Goddus mercy schall thee save. (line 257)

God's

³ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Charles S. Singleton, Bollingen Series 80, 3 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970–75), 1.3.4.

The Vision of Tundale

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 Anime* 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 Gowther*, *Sir Isumbras*, *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 trwe, or be it fals,
Hyt is as the coopy was. (lines 2382–83)

*true
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.

Introduction

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.

Select Bibliography

Manuscripts

National Library of Scotland MS Advocates' 19.3.1, fols. 98r–157v. [c. 1425–1450]

British Library MS Cotton Caligula A. ii, fols. 95v–107v. [c. 1400–1450]

British Library MS Royal 17.B.xliii, fols. 150r–184v. [c. 1400–1450]

Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1491 (SC 7656), five leaves at the end of the book; fragmentary. [c. 1400–1450]

MS Takamiya 32 (*olim* Penrose 10, *olim* Penrose 6, *olim* Delamere), fols. 166v–75v. Presumably in a private collection. Photographic copies are available at the Library of the University of Chicago and at the British Library: Facs. 405 (16). [Fifteenth century]

Editions

Gardiner, Eileen, ed. “The Vision of Tundale: A Critical Edition of the Middle English Text.” Ph.D. Dissertation: Fordham University, 1980. *DAI* 40.12A (1980), p. 6266A.

Mearns, Rodney, ed. *Visio Tnugdali: The Vision of Tundale*. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1985.

Turnbull, William B. D. D., ed. *The Visions of Tundale, together with Metrical Moralizations and Other Fragments of Early Poetry*. Edinburgh: Thomas G. Stevenson, 1843.

Wagner, Albrecht, ed. *Tundale: Das mittelenglische gedicht über die Vision des Tundalus*. Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1893.

The Vision of Tundale

Commentary

Gardiner, Eileen. "The Translation into Middle English of the *Vision of Tundale*." *Manuscripta* 24 (1980), 14–19.

_____. "A Solution to the Problem of Dating in the *Vision of Tundale*." *Medium Ævum* 51 (1982), 86–91.

Hines, Leo James. "The *Vision of Tundale*: A Study of the Middle English Poem." Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1968. *DAI* 29.6A (1968), p. 1869A.

Marshall, J. C. Douglas. "Three Problems in *The Vision of Tundale*." *Medium Ævum* 44 (1975), 14–22.

Seymour, St. John Drelincourt. *Irish Visions of the Otherworld: A Contribution to the Study of Mediæval Visions*. New York: Macmillan, 1930.

_____. "Studies in the *Vision of Tundal*." *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 37.4, Sec. C (January 1926), 87–106.

The Vision of Tundale

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

The Vision of Tundale

	He mayntyniod ay mysdoers.	abetted always miscreants
35	He lovyd ay contakt and stryve.	always dissension; strife
	Ther was non holdyn wors on lyf.	considered
	Yett nold not God is sowle tyne,	would not; his soul harm
	For He hit boghthe from Hell pyne,	it bought (redeemed); Hell's pain
	For His mersy passud all thynge.	mercy surpassed
40	But Tundale had an hard warnyng,	severe
	For as he in his transyng lay,	trance (unconsciousness)
	His sowle was in a dredeful way.	
	Ther hit saw mony an howge payn,	many a huge pain
	Ar hit come to the body agayn.	Before it came
45	In Purgatory and in Helle	
	As he saw, he cowthe well telle.	could
	But how he had a hard fytt,	severe fit
	Yf ye woll here, ye may whytt.	will hear; understand
	Tundale had frendys full mony,	friends very many
50	But he was full of trichery.	treachery
	Of his maners mony had dred,	behavior many had dread
	For he was lythur in word and dede.	evil
	Throw ocur 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 Goddus sake.	give [to the poor]
	When he sold his marchandyse,	merchandise
	He sold ay derur than ryghtfull prise.	always dearer; proper price
	He wold gyve dayes for his best,	allow days for his own benefit
60	But he sold the derur for the fryst.	dearer; delay
	Tundale, he went upon a day	
	To a mon to ascon his pay	man; demand
	For thre horsus that he had sold,	three horses
	For the whych the penys wer untold.	pence (money); unpaid
65	That mon hym prayd of respite	requested a delay
	Unto a day the deyt to quytte	For a certain time; debt; repay
	And proferud hym sykurnes by othe.	offered him security; oath
	Anon he grucchud and waxyt wrothe	At once he grumbled and became angry
	For he had not evon tho pay,	exactly the payment
70	But thratte hym fast and made gret deray.	threatened him vigorously; great uproar
	But Tundale was bothe quynte and whys;	clever; wise
	He sette the horsus to full hye prise	set the horses at a very high price

The Vision of Tundale

	For he had no pay in honde.	<i>Because; payment in hand</i>
	To hym the mon in scripture hym bonde.	<i>The man gave him his bond in writing</i>
75	The mon spake to hym curtesly And broghtte hym owt of is malycoly. He sobort his hart that was so greyt And made Tundale dwell at tho meytt. And when he was seytt and servyd well,	<i>man spoke; courteously And brought him out of his anger calmed; heart; great invited; stay to dinner seated and served</i>
80	A greytt evyl he began to fele. At the fyrst mossel soo syttand He myght not well lefte up his hond. He cryed lowde and changyt chere, As he had felud dethe nere.	<i>A great illness he began to feel first morsel while sitting could; lift; hand cried loud; changed expression As if; felt death near</i>
85	To the weyf of the howse than callud he, “Leve dame,” he seyd, “for charyté Loke me my sparthe wher that he stande, That Y brogħt with me in my hande, And helpe me now hethon awey,	<i>wife; house; called Dear lady; for charity Find; battle ax wherever it is I brought hence away</i>
90	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.	<i>I expect to die severely; illness; taken strength; feel I none heart; feeble; I feel I am surely dead, I know full well</i>
95	A Jesu Cryst, Y aske Thee mercy, For can I now non odur remedy.” Ryght as he schuld ryse of that stede, Anon in the flore he fell don dedde. Tho that wer his frendys by sybbe	<i>know I; other Just as he was about to rise from that place Instantly on; floor; down dead</i>
100	Herd 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 bellus yronge And “Placebo” and “Dyrge” sone ysonge.	<i>Those who were; friends; kinship Heard; experience; befell him They came; heart sad lying dead bells rung sung</i>
105	All his cloths wer of hym tane. He lay cold dedde as any stan, But of the lyft syde of Tundale Was sumwat warme the veyne corale, Wherfor sum hyld hym not all dedde;	<i>clothes; taken stone left somewhat; median vein believed him not fully dead</i>
110	Forwhy thei flytte hym not fro that sted. But styll as a dedde mon ther he lay	<i>Therefore; moved; place</i>

The Vision of Tundale

	From mydday of that Wenusday Tyl the Setturdaiy aftur the none; By than wyst Tundale what he had done,	midday; Wednesday Until; Saturday; noon then knew
115	Then he lay dedde, as ye han hard, But herus now how is sowle fard. Wen Tundale fell don sodenly,	have heard hear; his soul fared
	The gost departyd sone from the body. As sone as the body was dedde,	When; down suddenly spirit parted immediately
120	Tho sowle was sone in a darke sted. Full wrechudly hit stod allone; Hit weput sore and made gret mone.	The soul; dark place wretchedly; it stood alone It wept sorely; lamented greatly
	He wend to a byn dampnyd ay to Payne <i>thought [himself] to have been damned forever</i> And never a com to tho body agayne	thought [himself] to have been damned forever to come; the
125	For the synnus that the body dyd, That myght nether be layned nor hydde. He had lever then al mydylerde	sins neither; concealed; hidden rather; than all the world
	Ha ben agayne, so was he ferd But he sawe mony a hydwys Payne	To have been [alive] again; frightened saw many a hideous pain
130	Or he come to the body agayne, But sum had more and sum had lasse, As tho story beyrthe wytnesse.	Before; again some [souls]; less the; bears witness

I Passus

	As the gost stod in gret dowte, He saw comyng a full loddly rowte	spirit stood; great confusion terrifying rabble
135	Of fowle fendys ay grennyng, And as wyld wolfus thei cam rampyng.	foul fiends ever baring their teeth wolves; leaping
	He wold a flown from that syght, But he wyst never whydur he myght.	would have fled knew; whither
	Thes fowle fendys cam to hym ther.	These foul fiends came
140	The sowle for ferd made drury chyr, And that was full lytull wondor;	soul; fear; woeful countenance little wonder
	He went to a byn ryvon asondur.	<i>thought [himself] to have been ripped open</i>
	Thei wer so loghly on to loke,	They were; horrible to look at
	Hym thoghtte the eyrthe undur hym schoke,	He thought; earth; shook
145	Her bodys wer bothe black and fowle;	Their
	Full gryssly con thei on hym gowle.	terribly began they; howl

The Vision of Tundale

	Her ynee wer brode and brannynng as fyr; All thei wer full off angur and yre.	eyes; wide; burning; fire they; anger; ire (wrath)
150	Her mowthus wer wyde; thei gapud fast. The fyre owt of her mowthus thei cast. Thei wer full of fyr within.	mouths; wide; gaped open fire out; mouths
	Her lyppus honget byneythe her chyne. Her tethe wer long, tho throtus wyde, Her tongus honged owt full syde.	lips hung beneath their chins Their teeth; the throats
155	On fete and hondus thei had gret nayles, And grette hornes and atteryng taylys. Her naylys wer kene as grondon stylle;	Their tongues hung out at great length feet; hands; great nails great horns; poisonous tails
	Scharpur thyng myght no mon fyll. Of hem cam the fowlest stynk	Their nails; sharp; ground steel Sharper; man feel
160	That any erythly mon myght thynk. With her naylys in that plas Ychon cracched other in the face.	From them came earthly man their nails; place each one scratched
	Thei faghtton ycheon with odur and stryon, And ychon odur all toryvon.	They fought each; other; brawled each other; tore to pieces
165	Hit was a wondur gryselly syght To see how thei weryn all ydylgh. In the word was no mon alive	It; wondrously gruesome they were; shaped
	That cowthe so gryselly a sygth dyscryve. Full grymly thei on hym staryd,	the world; man could so gruesome a sight describe
170	And all atonus thei cryd and rored And seyd, "Gow abowte we yond wykyd gost	most fiercely; stared
	That hathe ey don owre counsele most And syng we hym a song of deyd,	at once; cried; roared
	For he hathe wroght aftur owre red."	Let us go to yonder wicked spirit
175	Thei umlapud the soule abowte And creidon and mad an hugy schowt	Who has always done our counsel most
	And seyd, "Thu synfull wrecchyd wyght, In Hell a styd is for thee dyght,	death
	For thu art now owre owne fere.	done according to our advice
180	Thu art deythus doghettur dere. And soo to fyr withowttyn ende	surrounded; about
	And to darknes art thu frend, And to all lyght art thu foo;	cried; made; great shout
	Therfor, with us schalt thu goo.	You; wretched creature
185	This his thi felyschyp, thu caytyff,	place; prepared
		companion
		death's daughter dear
		without
		friend
		foe
		<i>is your fellowship; caitiff (wretch)</i>

The Vision of Tundale

	That thu chase to thee in thi lyffe;	chose; life
	Therfor, with us schald thu wende	shall; go
	To dwell in Hell withowton ende.	
	Thu hast ybyn bothe fals and fykyll,	been; false; fickle
190	And thu hast seyd fals sclandur mykyll;	said; slander great
	Thu lovedyst stryft nyght and day,	loved strife
	And thu and we lovyd ay.	loved always
	Thu hast ylovyd myche lechery,	much
	And myche thu hast usud voutry,	much; committed adultery
195	Pryde, envy, and covetys,	covetousness (greed)
	Gloteny with all odur vys.	Gluttony; other vice
	Why wolddust not thu leyve thi trichery	would; leave; treachery
	Whyle thu levedust and was myghty?	lived; mighty
	Wher his now all thi vanyté,	Where is; vanity
200	Thi ryches, and thi grette mayné?	great power
	Wher is thi pompe and thi prude?	
	Thi wyckydnes may thu not hyde.	
	Wer is thi streynthe and thi myght	Where; strength
	And thi harneys soo gayly dyght?	armor; fancily fashioned
205	Wher is thi gold and thi tresour?	treasure
	Wher is thi catell and thi stor,	property; possessions
	That thu wendyst schuld never thee fayll,	thought; fail
	And now may all hit not thee avayle?	avail
	Thu lovyst neyver God, nor Holy Chyrch,	loved
210	Noo warkys of mercy woldyst worch.	No works; would work (perform)
	All the gud that in tho erthe is,	good; the earth
	Nor all the matens ne all the masse	matins; masses
	Myght not help thee from the peyn of Hell	pain
	For eyvermore therin to dwell.	
215	That wykkyd thought that was in thi brest,	wicked; breast
	Woldyst thu never schowe it to no preste.	Would; make known; priest
	Wreche, thu thar not calle nor crye.	Wretch; there did not call
	Thu wendust with us withowton mercy."	traveled
	Ther the gost stod. Hit was darke as nyght	
220	But sone he saw a sterre full bryght.	soon; star; full bright
	Tundale fast that sterre beheld.	intently; star
	Full wyll comfortud he hym feld.	Very well comforted; felt
	Throw tho vertu of his creatur	Through the power; creator
	He hopeyd to geyte sum socur.	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 myldde chere:	remedy his misery guardian [angel] soon; met graciously; greeted gentle manner
230	"Tundale," he seyd, "wat dost thou here?" When Tundale herd hym his name call And saw hym bryght schynyng withall, He was fayn and began to crie And seyd, "Swete fader, mercy!"	what do heard shining glad Sweet father misdeeds
235	These fowle fendys for my mysdede To tho fyr of Hell thei wold me lede." Then onsweryd tho angell bryght And seyd to the drefull wyght, "Fader and lord thou callust me now.	the fire; would; lead answered the frightened creature call earlier
240	Why woldyst thou not er to me bow? Y was thi yemer evon and moron, Seython thu was of thi modur boron. Thu woldyst neyver to me take tent, Nor to non of myn thu woldest not sent."	I; guardian evening and morning Since; mother born would; pay attention none of mine; assent (be guided)
245	Tundale seyd, and sykyd sore: "Lord, Y saw thee never before, Nor never myght Y here thee lowde nor styll, Therfor, wyst Y not of thi wyll." The angell that was of gret might	sighed sorely hear you loud or quiet knew I; will power
250	Chasyd won that was a fowle wyght. Of all that fowle company Ther semed non soo ugly. "Tundale," he seyd, "this is he That thu dyddest know and not me.	Chased one; foul creature seemed; ugly did know
255	Aftur hym thu hast alwey wrought But in me trystys thu ryght noght. But Goddus mercy schall thee save, Allthaff thu servydyst non to have. Bot Y woll welle that thu wytte,	Following him; always worked trusted you not at all God's Although; deserve
260	Thee behovyt fyrst an hard fygth." Than was Tundale full glad. But he was aftur full hard bystad, For he saw peynus greyt and strong.	want greatly; understand must do later severely afflicted pains great

The Vision of Tundale

	And sum of hem was he among.	them
265	Well he cowthe tell yche a peyn	could report; each pain
	When he come to the body ageyn.	again
	Tundale therowt the angell hym drowgh,	out of there; drew
	For hym thoght he had drede ynow.	it seemed to him; dread enough
	When that thei saw, tho fendys felle,	When they; the fiends cruel
270	That he schuld not goo with hem to Hell,	them
	Thei began to rore and crye	roar
	And sclanderyd then God allmyghty	slandered
	And seyd, "Thu art not tru justyce.	true
	Thu art fals and unryghtwysse.	unjust
275	Thu seydust Thu schuldust reward sone	said; should; straightaway
¶	Ylke mon aftur that he hathe done.	Each man according to (see note)
	Tundale is owrus with skyll and ryght,	ours; reason
	For he hathe sarvyd hus day and nyght,	served us
	Full wykydly has he levyd longe.	lived
280	Yf we leyf hym, Thu dost hus wronge."	lose; us
	Thei rorud and crydon, so wer thei woo	roared and cried; grieved
	That Tundale schuld wend hem froo.	go; from
	Ychon faght and with odur dyd stryve	Each fought; other did struggle
	And with her naylys her chekus dyd ryve.	their nails; cheeks; tear
285	So fowle a stynke, as thei cast than,	foul a smell; gave off
	Feld never before yrthely man.	Felt; earthly
	Then seyd the angell to hym at the last,	closely
	"Tundale, com forthe and folow me fast."	sighed very sadly
	Then seyd he and sykud full sore,	will see
290	"Lord, than seyst thou never me more.	doomed
	Yf Y goo behind thee, then am Y schent,	These; will; snatch
	Thes fendys from thee wold me hent	lead; them; pain
	And leyd me with hom to Hell peyn,	get
	Then getust thou me never ageyn."	dread
295	Then seyd the angell, "Have no drede.	may no way; lead
	Thei mey no wyse from me thee lede.	many; it seems to you, appear
	As mony, as thee thynkuth, semyth here,	are; more; near
	Yet ar ther mo with naylys full nere.	While; both
	Whylus that God is with us bathe,	us harm
300	Thei may never do hus skathe,	consult to defend yourself
	But thu may rede to fende thee with,	prophecy; David (see note)
¶	In the profecy of Davyd,	

The Vision of Tundale

	That ther schall fall of thi lyft syde A thowsand fendys in short tyde And of thi ryght syde semand Schall fall also ten thowsand. And non of hem schall com to thee, Bot with thi eyn thu schalt hom see. Thu schalt ysee, or we too twyne, What peynus fallyth for dyverse synne."	on; left time appearing them eyes; them see, before we two part pains befall; various
305		
310		

II Passus

	When the angell had told his tale, Throw an entré he lad Tundale, That was darke; they had no lyght, But only of the angell bryght.	Through; entry; led
315	Thei saw a depe dale full marke, Of that Tundale was full yrke. When he hit saw, he uggod sore. A delfull dwellyng saw he thore. That depe dale fast he beheld.	deep dale very dark troubled shuddered violently dolesful; there deep; intently
320	A fowle stenke therof he feld. Alle the grond, that ther was semand, Was full of glowyng colis brennand. Over the colys yron lay, Red glowand hit semud ay.	foul stench; sensed ground; visible coals burning coals; iron glowing it seemed always
325	Fowr cubytus thyk hit was, Tho heyte of the fuyr dyd throw pas. That yron was bothe large and brad. For full strong payn was hit mad. The heyte of the yron was more	Four cubits thick it The heat; fire; go beyond broad made heat; iron
330	Then all the fuyr that was thore. That fyr was ever ylyche brannynng And ever mor stronglyke stynkyng. Of that fyr com more stynk Then any erthely mon myght thynk.	fire; there 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

	Fendus with the sowlus wer layd.	<i>Fiends; souls</i>
	And in that stynke dyd thei brenne than	<i>burn</i>
340	And wer molton as wax in a pan.	<i>melted; cauldron</i>
	Thei ronnen throw fyr and yron bothe,	<i>ran through fire</i>
	As hit wer wax throw a clothe	<i>As if it; through</i>
	Thei weron gederud and molton agayn;	<i>re-formed (gathered); melted</i>
	And fro thes therin to new payn.	<i>from</i>
345	Then seyd the angell to Tundale.	
	“Her may thu see mykyll bale.	<i>great woe</i>
	For every mon is dight this payn	<i>assigned</i>
	That fadur or modur has yslayn,	<i>father; mother; slain</i>
	Or any odur throw cursyd red,	<i>other; advice</i>
350	Or ben asentyd to any monus ded.	<i>acquiesced; man's death</i>
	Of this geyte thei never reles,	<i>get; release</i>
	For this peyn schall never ses.	<i>cease</i>
	In odur peyn yet schall thei be	<i>other pain</i>
	Then this that thow may herre see.	<i>Than; here</i>
355	But of this peyn schall thu not fele,	<i>feel</i>
	And yett thu hast deservyd hit full welle.”	<i>Unless</i>

III Passus

	Thei passyd forth from that peyn	<i>great mountain</i>
	And comyn to a greyt montteyn	<i>large; high</i>
	That was bothe gret and hye.	<i>heard; doleful</i>
360	Theron he hard a delfoll crye.	<i>that one side; seeming [to be]</i>
	Alle that ton syde was semand	<i>burning</i>
	Full of smoke and fyr brennand;	<i>dim</i>
	That was bothe darke and wan	<i>pitch; brimstone</i>
	And stank of pyche and brymston.	<i>that other side</i>
365	On that todur syde, myght he know,	<i>frost</i>
	Gret was the forst and snow,	<i>winds</i>
	And therwith gret wyndus blast,	
	And odur stormus that folowyn fast.	<i>other storms; follow immediately</i>
	He saw ther mony fendys felle	<i>many evil fiends</i>
370	And herd hom loightly rorre and yelle.	<i>heard them angrily roar</i>
	Thei hadon forkys and tongus in hand	<i>had forks; tongs</i>
	And gret brochys of yron glowand	<i>skewers; glowing</i>

The Vision of Tundale

	With hom thei drowyn and putton ful sore The wrecchyd sowlys that ther wore.	<i>With which; pulled; pushed were</i>
375	Owt of that fyr thei conne hom drawe And putton hom into the cold snowe, And seyton into the fyr agayne Thei putton hom into odur peyne. Her peyn was turnod mony folde,	<i>began them drag pushed them afterwards</i>
	Now in hotte, now in cold.	<i>put them; other pain</i>
380	Then seyd the angell, that was soo bryght, “This peyn is for thefus dyght And for hom that robry makus Or agayn mennus wyll her guddus takus	<i>thieves designed robbery commits</i>
385	Or throw falsehed any mon bygylyls Or wynnyght mennus gude with wykyd wyls.” When thei hadon seyn that wykyd turment, Furdurmore yette thei went.	<i>against men's will their goods take falsehood; beguiles win men's goods; wiles seen Further on still</i>

IV Passus

	The angell ay before con pas, And Tundale aftur that sore aferd was, Thei hyldon ey forthe the way Tyll thei come to anothur valay, That was bothe dyppe and marke. Of that syght was the sowle yrke.	<i>always; ahead proceeded because of; afraid held always forward valley deep; dark troubled deeper bottom</i>
390	In erthe myght non deppur be. To the grond thei myght not see. A swowyng of hem thei hard therin And of cryyng a delfull dyn.	<i>groaning; them they heard doleful din</i>
395	Owt of that pytte he feld comand A fowle smoke that was stynkand Bothe of pycche and of brynston, And therin sowlys brent, mony won. That peyn hym thoght well more semand Then all the peynus that he byforyn fand.	<i>pit; sensed coming stinking pitch; brimstone souls burned, many a one seeming pains; before found</i>
400	That peyn passyd all odur peynus. That pyt stod betwene two monteynus. Over that pyt he saw a bryge	<i>pit stood between; mountains bridge</i>
405		

The Vision of Tundale

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

V Passus

435	Yette went thei foryt bothe togeydur,	<i>Still; forth</i>
	But tho sowle wyst never wydur,	<i>knew; whither</i>
	Be a longe wey of greyt merknes,	<i>By; way; darkness</i>
	As the story beryth wyttenes.	<i>bears witness</i>
	Thei passyd that and com to lyght,	
440	But he saw then an hogy syght.	<i>huge (fearsome)</i>
	He saw a best that was more to knaw	<i>beast; larger (lit., more to know)</i>
	Then all tho monteynus that thei saw,	

The Vision of Tundale

	And his ynee semyd yette more And bradder then the valeyys wore.	<i>eyes seemed; larger broader than; valleys were</i>
445	In all his mowthe, that was so wyde, Nyne thowsand armyd in myght ryde, Betwene his toskys, that were so longe, Too greyt gyandys he saw honge. The hed of the ton hyng donward And tho todur is hed stod upward.	<i>armed [men] tusks</i> <i>Two great giants; hung head of the one hung downward the other his head</i> <i>the middle; stood; each</i> <i>Two pillars apart</i> <i>three parts</i>
450	In myddys his mowthe stodon on yche syde Too pylers to hold hyt up wyde. Tho pylers weron sette on serewyse. In his mowthe wer thre partyse,	<i>gates; open stood</i> <i>flames; went</i>
455	As thre gret yatys that opon stode. Gret flamus of fyr owt of hym yode, And therwith come also fowle a stynke, As tong myght tell or hert thynke. Thei hard ther a dylfull dyn	<i>tongue; heart heard; doleful din</i>
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.	<i>Howling; lamentation; heard their</i> <i>Loud they heard</i> <i>Their</i>
465	Befor that bestys mowthe was sene Mony thowsandus of fendys kene, That hyed hem with myght and mayne Tho wrecchyd sowlys to dryve to Payne. With brennyng baelys thei hem dong	<i>cruel</i> <i>hastened; might and main</i> <i>Those</i> <i>rods; beat</i>
470	And with hem droffe to peynus strong. When Tundale had that best yseen And tho wykyd gostys, that wer so kene, Tundale spake full delffully, When he hard that hydos crie,	<i>drove</i> <i>beast</i> <i>spirits; cruel</i> <i>sorrowfully</i> <i>heard; hideous</i>
475	And seyd than to that angell bryght, “What bytokenyth this hydos syght?” The angell onswerud hym anon. “This best is callud Akyron,	<i>means; hideous</i> <i>answered</i>
480	And ther throw byhovyth thee to wend, Yff we schull goo owre way to the end. Non from this peyn may passe quyte,	<i>beast; Acheron</i> <i>must (it is fitting for); go</i> <i>entirely</i>

The Vision of Tundale

	But cleyne men of lyffe parfyte.	pure; life perfect
	This hogy best, as Y thee kenne	huge beast; teach
	His sette to swolo covetows men	<i>Is; swallow covetous</i>
485	That in erthe makyght hit prowde and towghe And never wenon to have ynowghe, But evur coveton more and more And that hor sowlys forthynkon sore. In tho profecy hit is wryton thus,	<i>came to be; hard believed; enough always coveted their souls repent prophecy; written</i>
	That a best schall swolewo the covetows.	<i>swallow (see note) great thirst</i>
491	So muche thurst hathe that best That all the watur most and lest That evur ran est or west Myght not stanche the bestys thurst.	<i>waters east stanch prepared</i>
495	Therfor, this Payne is redy ydyght, Namely for yche a covetows wyght That wenon never ynow to have, Ne holden hom payd, nor vochensaffe That God hom sent of His grace.	<i>thought; enough felt satisfied with What must say</i>
500	Therfor thei schen say, ‘Alas! Alas!’ For ay the more that thei han free, Tho more covetows a mon may hem see. The gyandys, that thu syst with ee, Hongyng betwene his toskus so hye,	<i>always; have to themselves giants; see with [your] eyes tusks so high</i>
505	God dys law wold thei not knowe, But thei wer trew in hor owne lawe. Of whom tho namus wer callud thus: That ton hyght Forcusno and that toder Conallus.’	<i>acknowledge to their own the names</i>
	“Alas,” quod that sowle, “suche peyn have thay, Whedur thei schull never thennus away.”	<i>That one is named; that other Whither; thence</i>
510	Quod the angell, “Thee falon no glee; And in erthe seche hast thu ybe.” When he had seyd thus, ther thei yode, And byfor the best bothe thei stode,	<i>You feel For; such; been went before against vanished though</i>
515	But that was agayn Tundaleis wylle. The angell vaneschyd and he stod stylle. No wondur was thaw he had drede. The fowle fendys comyn gud spedē,	<i>good speed (quickly) bound; tightly</i>
	Thei token hym and bowndyn hym fast, Withynne that best thei connen hym cast.	<i>beast; began to cast him</i>

The Vision of Tundale

	Awhyle within he most dwell.	must
	Ther was he beyton with fendys fell,	beaten by; cruel
	With kene lyonus that on hym gnowe	savage lions; gnawed
	And dragonus that hym al todrowe.	dragons; pulled apart
525	With eddrys and snakus full of venom	adders; snakes; venom
	He was all todrawyn yche lym.	torn to pieces each limb
	Now he was in fyr brennand,	burning
	Now in yse fast fresand.	ice; intensely freezing
	The terys of hys ynee two,	tears; eyes
530	Thei brendon as fyr. Hym was full wo.	burned
	Strong stynke he feld of brymston.	sensed of brimstone
	He was in peynus mony won.	pains many a one
	With his nalys in angur and stryfe	nails
	Hys owne chekus he con al toryfe.	cheeks; began to tear to bits
535	Of yche synne that evur he dudde	each; did
	He was upbraydud. Ther was non hudde.	reproached; none hidden
	In grett wanhope was he ay.	despair; always
	He went nevir to have passyd away.	thought
	But sone he come owt of that peyne.	
540	He wyst not how. He was full fayne.	knew; glad
	Ryght now was he in full grett dowt,	perplexity
	And anon aftur was he without.	outside
	He lay awhly as he wer deed,	a while as [if] he were dead
	And sone aftur he stod up in that sted.	place
545	As he hym dressyd so syttande,	raised up; sitting
	He saw the angell byforyn hym stand.	in front of
	He had comfort than of that lyght,	
	When he saw thys angell bryght.	
	The angell twoched sone Tundale	touched
550	And gaff hym strynthe. Than was he hale.	gave; strength; well
	Then lovyd he God of His grace	
	With terys sore gretand in that place.	tears; moaning
	He thus passyd that turment,	torment
	But fordurmore bothe thei went.	further on

The Vision of Tundale

VI Passus

555	Anodur wey thei to con take, Tyll thei com to an hydous lake. That lake mad an hydous dynne Throw wawys of watur that weron withyne. Tho wawys of that watur roos as hye	<i>those two took hideous noise waves rose as high his eyes see huge; cruel did cry eyes; burned burning lamps do waited swallow lie narrow bridge</i>
560	As any mon myght with is ee ysee. Therin wer howgy bestys and fell That hydously con crye and yell. Her ynee wer brode and brandon bryght, As brannynge lampus don on nyght.	<i>Two miles; length; seeming breadth spikes; steel grievous</i>
565	On yche a syde thei waytud ay To swolow sowlys that was ther pray. Over that lake then saw thei lygge A wondur long, narow brygge, Too myle of leynthe that was semand	<i>Without their; hurt sorely</i>
570	And scarsly of the bred of a hand, Of scharpe pykys of yron and stell. Hit was grevows for to fele. Ther myght non passe by that brygge thare, But yeff her feet wer hyrt sare.	<i>nearer; their prey off; down always ready growling together</i>
575	The hydous bestys in that lake Drew nerre the brygge her pray to take Of sowles that fell of that brygge don. To swolow hem thei wer ay bon. Cryng and yelling and gowling yfere,	
580	Tho noyse was wonder dredfull to here. These hydous bestus wer wondur grette; The sowlys that fell wer her mette. Tundale saw the bestys all And fyr owt of her mowthe walle.	<i>their food</i>
585	The fyr that he saw from hem faulland Made the watur all hotte walland. He saw won stand on the brygge With a burden of corne on is rygge Gretand with a dylfull crye	<i>welled falling boiling one grain; his back Moaning; doleful</i>
590	And pleynud his synne full ptyuysly. The pykys his fett pykud full sore.	<i>bewailed; piteously spikes; feet pricked</i>

The Vision of Tundale

	He dredyd the bestys mykyll mor	dreaded; much more
	That hym to slee wer ay bowne,	ready
	Yef that he had falle of the brygge don.	If; off
595	Tundale askyd the angell bryght, “What meneghth that hydous syght?”	means
	The angell onswerud thus agayn,	ordained
	“For hym is ordeynyd this payn	robbed; their
	That robbight men of hor ryches	goods; theirs
600	Or any gudys that herys is, Lewd or leryd, or Holy Kyrke,	Unlearned; learned; Church
	Or any wrong to hem woll wyrk.	work (do)
	But sum haght more peyn and sum lase	have; less
	All astur that her synnus his.	All according to their sins
605	Sum reckys not wat thei deyre And woll not a kyrke forbeyre.	care not what; injure
	Sum ar fekul and sum unleylle.	refrain from destroying a church
	Sum woll robbe and sum wol stell	fickle; unfaithful
	Thyng that to Holy Chyrche fallys;	rob; steal
610	Sacrileggi that men callys Thei that done wronge or vylony	belongs
	Within that sted of seyntwary,	Sacrilege; call
	Or within the sted of relegyon	villainy
	Maketh any dystruccioun,	place of sanctuary
615	All schull thei here turmentyd be In this peyn that thu may see.	place of religion
	And he that thu syst on the brygge stand,	destruction
	With tho schevus so sore gretand,	tormanted
	Fro Holy Chyrch he hom stale,	
620	For thei wer teythe told by tale.	
	Therfor, byes he hem full dere	see
	That dede throw peyn that he haght here.	sheaves; moaning
	Over the brygge schalt thu wend nowe	them stole
	And with thee lede a wyld cowe.	tithes counted up
625	Loke thu lede her warly And bewar she fall not by,	pays; dearly
	For wen thu art passyd thi peyn,	deed; has here
	Thu delyvur hur me agayn.	travel
	Thee behovys to lede huyr over alle,	lead; cow
630	For that thu thi gossypus cow stale.”	Be careful to lead; warily
		when
		You must (it behooves you); her
		friend's; stole

The Vision of Tundale

- | | |
|--|--|
| Than spake Tundale with drury chere,
“A mercy, Y aske my lord dere. | <i>dreary mood</i> |
| If all Y toke hur agaynus his wyll,
He had hur agayn, as hit was skyll.” | <i>Even though; against
as it turned out</i> |
| 635 “That was soght,” quod that angell,
“For thu myghtust not from hym hur stell.
And for he had is cow agayn,
Thu schalt have the lesse payn. | <i>so
keep away</i> |
| Yche wyckyd dede, more or lesse,
640 Schall be ponnyshed aftur the trespass,
But God allmyghty lykusse noght
Nowdur ell dede, nor evyll thoght.”
As Tundale stod that was ylle lykand,
The wylde cow was broght to is hande. | <i>punished; according to
likes not
Neither ill deed
ill liking</i> |
| 645 Maygrey is chekys hym byhovyth nede
To take the cow and forthe here lede.
Hym thoght hit was to hym gret Payne,
But he myght not be ther agayn.
He dud the angell commandment. | <i>Despite everything; must
did</i> |
| 650 By the hornes the cow he hent.
He cheryschyd the cow all that he myght,
And to the brygge he leduth hor ryght.
When he on the brygge was,
The cow wold not forthur pas. | <i>grabbed
took good care of
her
further go</i> |
| 655 He saw the bestys in the lake
Draw nerre the brygge her pray to take.
That cow had ner fall over that tyde
And Tundale on that todur syde.
He was wonderly sor aferd than | <i>their prey
nearly; [at] that time
that other
afraid</i> |
| 660 Of gret myscheffe. Up than thei wan.
Thei passydon forthe, that thoght hym hard,
Tyll thei come to the mydwarde,
Odur wylie he abovyn, odur wyle the cow;
Bothe the hadon sorow ynow. | <i>went
passed
middle</i> |
| 665 Then mette thei hym that bare the corne
Ther went thei bothe. Thei hadon ben lorne,
So narow then the brygge was
That nowdur myght for othur pas.
To hom bothe hit was grette peyn, | <i>Some times; other times
They both; enough
bore; grain
Where; lost
neither</i> |

The Vision of Tundale

670	For nowdur myght ther turne ageyn. Nor nowdur dorst for all myddylerd Loke byhynd hym, so wer thei ferd. The scharpe pykys that thei on yede Made hor feet sore to blede,	dared; the world afraid spikes; went their; bleed
675	So that hor blod ran don that tyde Into that watur on eydur syde. He prayd Tundale of mercy That he wold lette hym passe by. He seyd, "Certus Y ne may,	[at] that time either <i>Certainly</i>
680	For Y may not passe for thee away." Thei wepton sore. Gret dele ther was, For nowdur myght lette odur pas. As Tundale stod with the cow in honde, He saw the angell byfor hym stond.	wept; distress neither; other pass
685	The angell broght hym from that wo And bad hym, "Lette the cow goo." And seyd, "Be of gud comford now, For thu schalt no more lede the cow."	comfort
690	Tundale schewyd his fett, that thei wer sore, And seyd, "Lord, Y may goo no more." Then seyd the angell, that hym ladde, "Thynke how sore thi feett bledde, Therfor dredfull is thi way	showed <i>led</i>
695	And full grevous, soghth to say." Then towchyd he the feet of Tundale, And as tyd was he all hale. Then seyd Tundale, "A blessyd be thu, That I am delivered from peyn now."	truth to say touched quickly; healed
700	The angell seyd, "Thow schalt sone ywyttie, A grett peyn abydus hus yette. Fro that sted woll Y thee not save, That is full and more woll have. And thydur now behovyth thee. Ageynes that may thu not bee."	know waits for us place <i>to there now [it] behooves you [to go] Against</i>

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.	forth wilderness <i>house in front of him</i>
710	As an ovon that hows was mad, But the mowthe therof was wyd and brad. Owt at the mowthe the fure brast, And fowle stynkyng lye com owt fast.	<i>Like; oven</i> <i>wide; broad</i> <i>fire burst</i> <i>fire</i>
	The lye was bothe grett and thro And start a thowsand fote therfro.	<i>dangerous</i> <i>reached</i>
715	The sowlys withowten that brene to noght, That wykyd gostys thydur had broght. When Tundale had sen that syght, He spake to that angell bryght:	<i>outside; burn to nothing</i> <i>thither</i>
	“Now goo we to a delfull stedde.	<i>sorrowful place</i>
720	Yondur Y holde the yatys of dedde. Who schall delyver me from that sore? Y wene to be ther forevermore.”	<i>behold; gates of death</i> <i>know (expect)</i>
	Then seyd the angell gud, “Thu schalt be delyvyred from that styd.”	<i>place</i>
725	“Gret myght he hathe of Goddus grace That may delyver me from that plas.”	
	The angelle sone hym answerd, “Tundale,” he seyd, “be noght aferd.	
	Withynme yonde hows byhovyth thee to wend,	<i>yonder house [it] behooves you to go</i>
730	But yonde lye schall thee not schend.”	<i>fire; destroy</i>
	When Tundale com that hows nere He saw mony a fowle bocchere,	<i>butcher</i>
	Evyn in the mydward the fyre thei stand And scharp tolys in her hond.	<i>tools; their hands</i>
735	Summe hade syculus, knyvus, and saws, Summe had twybyll, brodax, and nawgeres,	<i>sickles; knives</i> <i>pickaxes; broad axes; augers</i>
	Cultorus, sythus, kene wytall,	<i>Coulters (plowshares), scythes, sharp withall</i>
	Spytill forkus the sowlys to fall.	<i>Pitchforks</i>
	Thei wer full lodly on to loke.	<i>loathsome</i>
740	Summe had swerdyrs and summe hoke, Summe gret axes in here hond	<i>swords; hooks</i> <i>their hands</i>

The Vision of Tundale

	That semyd full scharpe bytond.	<i>honed</i>
	Of that syght had he gret wondur,	
	How thei smyton the sowlus insondur.	<i>smote; apart</i>
745	Summe stroke of the hed, somme the thyes,	<i>off; thighs</i>
	Summe armus, summe leggus by the kneys,	<i>arms; legs; knees</i>
	Summe the bodyes in gobedys small,	<i>chunks (gobbets)</i>
	Yette kevered the sowlys togedur all.	<i>recovered</i>
	And ever thei smoton hem to gobetus ageyn.	
750	This thoght Tundale a full grette peyn.	
	Then seyd Tundale to the angell tho,	
	“Lord, delyver me from this woo.	
	Y beseche yow that Y Mey passe this care,	
	For sweche a peyn saw Y never are,	<i>before</i>
755	And all odur tormentus that ben schyll,	<i>will be</i>
	I woll suffur at yowre wyll.”	
	Then seyd the angell to Tundale thus,	
	“This peyn thee thenke full hydous,	
	But in this peyn byhovus thee to bee	<i>[it] behooves you</i>
760	And eke in more that schalt thu see.”	<i>also</i>
	Of that peyn he thoght more aw	<i>awe</i>
	Then of all tho peynus that ever he saw.	
	But sone theraftur he saw thare	
	A peyn that he thoght mare:	<i>more</i>
765	He saw an hydous hwond dwell	<i>hound</i>
	Withinne that hows that was full fell.	
	Of that hound grette drede he had.	
	Tundale was never so adrad.	<i>afraid</i>
	Wen he had seyn that syght,	
770	He bysought of that angell bryght	<i>besought</i>
	That he wold lett hym away steyl,	<i>sneak</i>
	That he com not in that fowle Hell.	
	But the angell wold not for nothyng	
	Grant hym hys askyng.	
775	The wykyd gostys that wer within	
	Abowt hym com with gret dynne,	<i>noise</i>
	With hor tolys and with her geyre,	<i>tools; equipment</i>
	That he saw hom byfore beyre.	<i>bear</i>
	Among hom thei tokyn Tundale	<i>took</i>
780	And hewyd hym in gobettus smale.	<i>hewed</i>

The Vision of Tundale

	He myght not dye for that peyn, For he was sone hole ageyn.	whole <i>great master; was named</i>
	The most maystur of that hows hyght Preston; that was his name ryght.	
785	He saw and hard wyle he was thare Gowlyng and gretynge and mykyl care. The lye that he saw withowtton passe Wastyd all that theryn was. Ther was full delfull noyse and crie	heard while <i>Howling; lamentation; great grief</i> fire <i>Destroyed</i>
790	And hongur for glotenye, That all the sowlys that therin wer Myght not stanche the appetyt there. Tundale saw theryn allsoo Men and wemen that wer full woo,	hunger <i>satisfy</i>
795	That peynud wer in her prevytys And all tognawyn bytwene hor kneys. He saw within that dongeon Mony men of relygeon That full wer of fowle vermyne	private parts <i>gnawed; their thighs</i>
800	Bothe withowtyn and withyn. Strong vermyne on hem he saw, And on every lym beton and gnaw. Tundale knew summe ther full wyll That worthy wer that peyn to fele.	Many <i>vermin</i>
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 cawdoron of drede. As he satte, his syght was dym:	bite <i>knew; glad</i> <i>place</i> <i>cauldron of dread</i>
810	He saw his angell byfor hym. He seyd to the angyll, "Alas! Wher his the word that wryton was That Goddus mercy schuld passe all thyng?"	
815	Here see Y therof no tokenyng." Then awsweryd the angyll and seyd anon, "That word desseyves mony a mon. Allthauff God be full of myght and mercy, Ryghtwessnes behowyth Hym to do therby. But He forgevyth more wykkydnes,	sign (<i>see note</i>) <i>misleads</i> <i>Although</i> <i>Justice requires</i> <i>forgives</i>

The Vision of Tundale

820	Thenne He findeth ryghtwesnes. Tho peynus that thu haddus wer but lyght. Grettur thu schuldyst have tholud with ryght." Tundale than began to knele And thonked God He schappud so wele.	<i>righteousness</i> <i>suffered</i> <i>kneel</i> <i>created</i>
825	Then sayd the angell to Tundale, "Wherto schuld any mon geff tale, Yf God schuld ay forgeffe hym sone All tho synnus that he had done Withowtyn any peyn to fele?	<i>Why; give heed</i> <i>forgive</i>
830	Thenne nedyd a mon nevir to do wele. But thei that ar wykyd and synfull kyd And no penans in body dyd, God takyth on hem no venjans, Yf thei hadon any repentans.	<i>needed</i> <i>known</i> <i>penance</i> <i>vengeance</i> <i>repentance</i>
835	Throw His mercy ar thei save. But yette the sowle som peyn schalt have. Oftontymes from mony a wyght Guddus, that han to hom be dyght, Fro hym God hom hathe ytake	<i>Goods; assigned</i>
840	And dothe here his peynus slake, For insted of peyn is worldus catell, Yf that a mon thonke God of all yll. So schall ther sowlys have lasse peyn Wen dethe to grond hathe hom slain,	<i>pains lessen</i> <i>possessions (are taken)</i>
845	And the seyner from all peyn wende To the blysse withoutten ende. But in the world is non, Y wene, Be he of synne nevir so clene, Noght a chyld, for sothe to say,	<i>When</i> <i>sooner</i>
850	That was boron and deed today Have peyn and drede he schall ryght well, Thaw he schull not hom sore fele. To love more God he woll be fayn That soo may schape suche payn,	<i>I believe</i> <i>Not even</i> <i>born; died</i>
855	As the mon that dampnyd is To Hell for his wykkydnes. He schall suche joy in Hevyn ysee That more icy myght nevir bee.	<i>Though</i> <i>eager</i> <i>escape</i> <i>comfort</i>

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------------------|
| 860 | 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. | <i>grieve</i>
<i>established</i> |
| 865 | But the prest that tho palmer was,
That thu saw ovur the brygge pas,
He saw all the peynus stronge,
But non of hem was he among, | <i>miss</i>
<i>pilgrim</i> |
| 870 | For he lovede God almyghty ay
And servyd Hym well to his pay.
Goddes joy may he not mysse,
For he hathe a trone of blysse.” | <i>reward</i>
<i>throne</i> |
| | When the angyll had thys told
To make Tundale the more bold,
The angell lad hym yett furdurmare,
Tundale folowyd with myckyll care | |

Passus VIII

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 875 | A wondur hydous best thei saw,
Of whom Tundale had grett aw.
That best was bothe felle and kene
And more than he had evur ysene. | <i>awe</i>
<i>cruel</i> |
| 880 | Two grett wyngys that wer blacke
Stod on eydur syde on his backe.
Two fett with naylys of yron and stell
He had, that weron full scharpe to fell. | <i>wings</i>
<i>either</i>
<i>feet</i>
<i>feel</i> |
| 885 | He had a long nekke and a smalle,
But the hed was grett withall.
The eyn wer brode in his hed
And all wer brannand as fyr red. | <i>slender</i>

<i>eyes</i> |
| 890 | His mowthe was wyd and syde-lyppud;
Hys snowt was with yron typud
Fyr, that myght never slakyd bee,
Owt of is mowthe com gret plentee. | <i>wide-lipped</i>
<i>nose; tipped</i>
<i>extinguished</i> |
| | That best sat evyn in mydward
A lake, that was froson full hard.
That lake was full of gret yse. | <i>frozen</i>
<i>ice</i> |

The Vision of Tundale

	Ther had sowlys full gret angwysse.	anguish
895	That best was bothe fell and gredy And swolloed tho sowlys that wer redy, And when the sowlys wer theryn, Ther wer thei peynod for her syn.	cruel; greedy swallowed
	In strong fyr ther brand thei ay,	pained
900	Too thei wer ner wastud away, And than ycast fro that peyn Tyll thei wer covert agayn. Then wax thei blacke and bloo	Till; wasted cast recovered grew; blue
	For sorow and care and muche woo.	
905	As wemen doght bothe meke and mylde, When thei ben in beryng of chylde, Thei playnod hem and seydon, "Alas!" Harde wer hor peynus for hor trespass.	bearing complained (bewailed)
	For strong bytyng thei had withyn	
910	With wood edderys and odur vermyne That was withynne hem gnawyng ay, As thei among snakys lay.	wild adders snakes
	When thei her tymys myght know and see, Thei made hem sorow then gaynyd no glee.	times
915	Thei made suche dylle sothe to telle, That noyse of hem nygh fylled Hell. So dylfull a noyse was never hard Of men and wemen, so thei fard.	dole nearly heard fared
	But her tyme behovys hem to kepe,	their; [they are] obliged
920	When the edders schulld owt of hem crepe, Noght only throw prevy place, But throw ylke a lym maketh her trace. Throw hed and feyt, backe and syde,	adders; creep
	Throw armus and leggys thei con glyde.	private each limb feet
925	Throw wombe and brest thei wer crepand And throw ylk a joynt that thei fand. Thei crepud owt all attonus.	began to glide creeping found
	Thei sparud neydur flesse nor bwonus.	crept; at once
	Tho eddres wer full gret and longe	neither flesh; bones
930	With hedys of yron that wer full stronge. Thei had mowthys of fyr glowand And glowand tongus owt schetand.	heads glowing sticking

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | Her taylys wer full of smale broddys
As wether hokys wer the oddes. | picks
<i>shepherds' crooks; points</i> |
| 935 | Whan the vermyн wold have owt crepon
At the holys that thei made opon,
Thei myght not wyn owt hor taylys,
Soo fast hyldon the crokyd naylys.
Thei turnyd her hedys in agayne thar | holes; open
<i>held; crooked</i> |
| 940 | Throw ylke a joynт thei madon full bare.
Thei fretud hom within and hem gnew,
And all her bowell they owt drew.
Thei smyton her hedds owt and yn;
Her taylys thei myght not owt wyn. | chewed; gnawed
bowel
stuck; heads
get out
back pulled |
| 945 | When tho hokys thay hom ageyns tyt,
Thei turnedyn ageyn and toke ther bytt.
Fro hed to fotte ay was gnawyng,
Scrattynг, fretyng, fleyng, and styngyng.
To Hevon the noyse myght have ben harde, | Scratching, eating, flaying
Heaven; heard |
| 950 | So hydously thei crydon and sowle fared.
The sowlys thei crydon for grett angwis
And pleyndon gretly ther folys.
Thei wer not lyveryt of hor payn,
For hit was newed ay agayn. | fared
anguish
lamented; sins (follies)
delivered
renewed |
| 955 | Tundale seyd to the angyll bryght,
“Lord, this is a dredfull syght.
Me thynkyght this peyn well more
Then all tho peyn that Y saw before.”
Then onsweryd the angell ageyn | |
| 960 | And seyd, “Tundale, this peyn
Ys ordeynynd for men of relygyon
That kepuд not well hor professyon;
For monkus, channons, prestus, and clerkus,
And for odur men and wemen of Holy Kyrke | kept; their vows
monks, canons, priests; clerks |
| 965 | That delytus hor bodys yn lechery
Or in any odur maner of foly,
And dothe not as ther ordyr wyll,
But ledus hor lyffe aftur ther wyll.
Thei schull have the same evermore | delight |
| 970 | If thei amend hom not or thei goo before.
And for the same thow hast bene, | order requires
lead their lives |

The Vision of Tundale

	This schalt thu thole, that thu hast sene."	suffer
	When the angyll had seyd thus,	
	The fendys, that wer full hydeous,	
975	Within the best Tundale thei ladde,	
	And ther was he within full hard bestad.	beset
	Therin was he peynyd full long,	
	Brennyng in fyr that was full stronge.	
	Seththyn the best hym owt kest,	
980	Then was he swolloed as he wold brest.	Afterwards; cast
	All full of edders than he was,	swollen; burst
	And non of hem myght from odur passe.	
	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 hond	
	And delyvured hym of that bale.	harm
	Then seyd the angyll to Tundale,	
	"Com furdurmore and folow me,	
990	For more peyn byhovyth thee to se."	
	Fordurmore thei went than,	game (pleasure)
	But Tundale thought hit no gam.	
	Thei come into a wey full derke.	
	Of that way was Tundale yrke,	troubled
995	For ther was no more lyght,	
	But that at come of the angyll bryght.	
	That way was strayt and longlastand	straight; longlasting
	And worst of all that Tundale fand.	found
	Afrontte unnethe thei myght passe	Forward scarcely they might not pass
1000	So narow of steppus don that was,	steps down
	As thei had come from a hye hyll	
	Don into a deppe dongyll.	deep valley
	The more that Tundale folowyd ay,	
	The lengur hym thought was that way.	
1005	Tundale feld a stynkyng ayre;	sensed; air
	Then of his lyffe he was in speyr.	despair
	Then he sykud and wept full sore,	sighed
	And seyd to the angyll thore,	at that time
	"Lord, wydur schalt this way wend?	
1010	Me thenkyth this way hasse non ende."	has

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|------|--|------------------------------------|
| | Then onward the angyll fre
And seyd, "Y wyll telle thee
How this way lythe and into what sted.
This is the way that lyght to the dedde." | courteous |
| 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 brede. | lies
leads |
| | Thys is now a narow way | <i>great of breadth (see note)</i> |
| 1020 | That thu us ledust, and longe to asay."
Then seyd the angyll, "Wyll Y wate
That the boke spekys not of this gate,
But of the way of unclannes, | assay
Well I know |
| | Of fleschely lust that dedly is. | impurity |
| 1025 | Be that way men lyghtly wende
To the dethe withowtyn ende." | By |

IX Passus

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | Then went thei forghthe and furdurmore
By that darke way that they in wore.
They come to a depe dongyll. | forth |
| 1030 | Of that syght lykyd hym full yll.
That dongyll full of smytheus stood,
And smythus abowtte hom yode
With grett homerus in hor hond
And gret tongus hoote glowand. | valley |
| | | forges |
| | | blacksmiths; went |
| | | hammers |
| | | tongs |
| 1035 | The smythus wer grymly on to loke.
Owt of hor mowthus com grett smoke.
These smythus wer full of sowlys within
That wepton and madyn grett dyn.
In grett fyres thei con hom cast | forges; terrifying |
| | | forges |
| 1040 | And sethen with homerus leydon on fast.
The master of that smythy was bold.
Vlkane was is name hold.
"Lo yond," quod the angyll, "with is gyn
Hathe made mony a mon do syn. | proceeded to throw them
then; hammers laid on |
| | | forge |
| | | Vulcan |
| | | his devising |
| 1045 | Wherfor with hym aftur thare dede, | death |

The Vision of Tundale

	Thei schull be peynod with hym in this stede."	<i>tortured; place</i>
	Then asked Tundale, "Lord fre,	
	Schall Y among yond fendys be,	
	As odur that han servyd well,	
1050	So grett peynus for to fell?"	<i>feel</i>
	Then seyd the angyll sone,	
	"Tundale," he seyd, "thu hast so done	
	That thee behovyth to thole this turment."	<i>suffer</i>
	And then to the smythy he went.	<i>forge</i>
1055	The tormentowrus com rennand	<i>tormenters; running</i>
	With furgons and with tongus glowand.	<i>pokers; tongs</i>
	Betwene hom hent thei Tundale thar	<i>seized</i>
	And laddyn hym to muche care.	
	Tundale had thei with hom than	
1060	And leyt the angyll stond alan.	<i>alone</i>
	Into that smythy thei hym caste,	<i>forge</i>
	In myddys the fyr as hem liked best.	
	With gret balyws at hym thei blew,	<i>bellows</i>
	As hit wer as yron ymulton new.	<i>melted</i>
1065	Tundale bygan to brenne yche lym,	
	But thowsandus thei brend with hym.	
	Sum of hom thei madyn nesche,	<i>flaccid</i>
	As is the watur that is fresche.	
	Sum wer molton as molton ledde,	
1070	Sum as yron glowyng redde.	
	Thei cast attonus full smartly	<i>at once</i>
	A thowsand sowlys full peteously.	<i>piteously</i>
	With yron homorus thei stode	
	And leyde on hem as thei wer wode.	<i>laid on; crazy</i>
1075	A thowsand sowlys togedur thei dong	<i>beat</i>
	In a pott full wonderly long,	
	As men schull tempore yron and stell,	<i>temper</i>
	And that was a grysly peyn to fele.	
	That turment most thei long dre,	<i>undergo</i>
1080	But yett myght thei not fully dye.	
	These tormentowrys wer fowle and blake.	<i>tormenters</i>
	Ylke onto odur in cownsell spake	<i>counsel</i>
	What peynus thei myght the sowlys wyrke;	<i>work</i>
	Of wykkyd labourus thei wer not yrke.	<i>tired</i>

The Vision of Tundale

- 1085 Yet thei dud hom more peyn.
 Thei smyton hom all insondor ageyn.
 Odur smythus wer ther that tyde
 Of another smyth ther besyde.
 Thei seyd, “Habbuth yowr wel her yowr pay.
- 1090 Kest ye hom hydour, 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 hokys and tongus hootte glowand,
 That thei hyldon in hor hand.
 Hom thoght thei wer not smythyd ynoghe,
 Up and don the develes hom droghe,
 And in strong fyr thei brendon hom ay,
- 1100 Tyll thei wer nye brand away.
 But sone then aftur was Tundale
 Delyvered owt of that greyt bale
 Ageyns that grysly smyths wylle.
 But all tho todur sowlys lafton stylle.
- 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 fard.
 “Tundale,” he seyd, “now may thu see
- 1110 Werof thi synnus servyd thee.
 Thee behowynt to have a gret angwys
 For thi delytes and thi folys.
 These that thu art delyvered froo,
 Wer ordeynyd the peyn for to doo,
- 1115 For with that same company
 Foluyddyn thee yn thi foly.”
 Tundale stod and cowthe noght say,
 For his wytte was ner away.
 Then seyd the angyll as he stood,
- 1120 “Looke thu be of comford gud.
 Yf all that thu have had tene
 In sum peyn that thu hast sene,
 Grettur peynus yett schalt thu see
- blacksmiths
forge
You have had; enjoyment
Cast; assay
leapt
- blacksmiths proceeded to seize them*
glowing hot tongs
held in their hands
beaten enough
pulled
- nearly*
- gruesome blacksmith's*
the other; left
- recovered*
- In what way*
deserve
- from*
- Followed*
could
- suffering*

The Vision of Tundale

	Heraftur that abydus thee.	waits for
1125	Fro hem schalt thu schap full well, But thee byhovyth sum to fell. Thu schalt see or we wende Sowlys in peyn withowttyn ende. Hor mysdedys hom dampnyd has;	escape <i>you are obliged to feel some</i>
	Therfor her song is ay ‘Alas.’ But odur that soghton Goddys mercy Passon that peyn well sycurly.” When the angyll had this sayd, His hond upon Tundale he layd.	<i>Their; them damned</i>
1130	Then was he hoole and feld no soor; Yett went they furthe furdurmore.	<i>Pass; safely</i>
1135		<i>whole; felt</i>

X Passus

	As the angyll and he went in company, Ther com a cold all sodenly. Suche a cold Tundale feld	
1140	That his lymes myght hym not weld. He was ner froson to dedde. Strong darkenes was in that stedde. Then was Tundale full ferd, For more peyn never he hade.	<i>control</i>
1145	For drede of peyn full sore he qwoke. Hym thoght his hedde all toschoke. All his peyn byforyn, hym thoght, So muche as that grevyd hym noght. Then he spake to tho angyll sone	<i>quaked</i> <i>shook</i>
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 ferd.	<i>grieved</i> <i>numbed</i>
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 pyté.	<i>stir joint; limb</i> <i>Dole</i>

The Vision of Tundale

- He went forthe ay furdurmare.
 1160 To Helle the way lay evyn thare.
 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 wondur.
 Noo hart myght thenke, nor no tong telle
 How hydous was the noyse of Helle.
 Then was that sowle in grett dawt. *anxiety*
- 1170 He lokyd in every syde abowt. *deep pit great pit; coming*
 Ever whan come that hydous dyn,
 He lokyd to have be takyn in.
 Butt he saw hym besyde
 A deppe putt muckyll and wyde.
- 1175 Owt of that pyt he saw comand *endure*
 A grett flam of fyr all stynkand.
 Suche a stynke com of that hole
 That he myght not long hit thole; *ditch*
 Owt of that dyke ther ros evon
- 1180 A pylar that ner raght to Hevon. *pillar; nearly reached*
 All brannand that pylar was
 With lye abowt as a compas.
 He saw fendys and sowlys flye
 On that pylar bothe low and hye.
- 1185 Thei flow ay up and don fast, *fire; circumference*
 As sparkelys of fyr thoro wyndus blast.
 And when the sowlys wer brent to askus all,
 In myddys the dyke they con falle. *sparks; through wind's ashes*
- They keverdyn that and wer broyght agayn; *recovered*
 1190 On this wyse was ever newyd hor payn. *rather*
 Tundale had lever than all myddelerd *back*
 Have turned ageyn, soo was he ferd.
 But ageyn myght he not goo,
 Ne styr hys lymus to nor froo.
- 1195 As he was clomsyd, styll he stod. *enfeebled*
 He was so ferd he was ney wod. *nearly mad*
 With hymselffe he began to stryve

The Vision of Tundale

- And his owne chekys all toryve.
 He grevdde, 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 peler in that low, pillar; fire
 Thei hardon that gowlyng and that crye; heard; yowling
 Thei come to hym full hastily.
- 1205 Brennand hokys with hom thei broght;
 To turment sowlys wer thei wroght.
 Thei gretton hym, that sowle that meyné,
 “Kaytyfe, wealand myght thu bee. greeted; group
 1210 Thu metust well with us at home; Wretch; surrounded
 Tell us now fro wennus thu come. meet
 For thi wykkydnes and thi foly whence
 In fyr to brenne art thou worthy,
- 1215 For thou come in noo peyn yet to fele.
 Here in Hell fyr we woll the kele, cool
 For now with us schalt thou wende
 And dwell in Hell withowtyn ende.
 Of owre maneres we schull thee kenne. customs; teach
- 1220 Withowt kelyng schalt thou brenne, cooling
 Evermore to brenne in fyr reed,
 For thou schalt never passe this steed.
 Thee tharre not thynke, on no wysse,
 Too be delyvered of this angwysse place
- 1225 In darknes schalt thou ever bee,
 For lyghtnes schalt thou never see,
 Trust thou not helpe to have,
 For noo mercy schall thee save.
 Wrechyd gost, we schull thee lede must; way
- 1230 To Hell gatys for thi mysdede,
 For in thi lyffe thou bare thee ylle
 And wroghst all ageyn Goddus wyll.
 Wherfor we wyll thee with us bere
 Too Satanas owre mastere,
- 1235 That lythe depe in tho pytt of Helle, lies
 And with hym schalt thou ther dwelle.

The Vision of Tundale

	He gaffe thee full evyll reyd, That broght thee heddur to this steyd. Ovur late to com woll hym falle	advice hither <i>Too late</i>
1240	To delyver thee from us alle. But now sykyr may thu bee That thu schalt nevir more hym see."	<i>certain</i>
	The wykkyd gostus togedyr spake And seyd, "This sowle wolle we take.	
1245	To Satanas cast we hym, that grymly groonus. He schalle hym swolow all attoonus."	<i>groans</i>
	They brawneschedyn hym and manast fast To Sathanas that sowle to cast.	<i>threatened; menaced hard</i>
	Ther he lay depe in Helle pytte.	
1250	Thydour they saydon thei wold hym flytte. A hydous noyse the fendys made. Hor eyn wer brannand and brade;	<i>thrust</i>
	As brennand lampus glowand they ware. Full grymly con they on hym stare.	<i>Their eyes; burning; broad lamps</i>
1255	Hor teyt wer blacke, scharpe, and long. With tuskus both grett and strong, Her bodyus wer lyke dragonys;	<i>Their teeth</i>
	Hor tayles wer lyke schorpyonyss.	<i>scorpions</i>
	They had naylys on her krocus,	<i>crooks</i>
1260	That wer lyke ankyr hokys As they wer made all of stele; The poyntus wer full scharpe to fele.	<i>anchor hooks</i>
	They had wyngus long and brade;	<i>steel</i>
	As backe wyngus wer thei made.	<i>bat's wings</i>
1265	Whedur they wold, low or hye, With hor wyngus myght they flye.	
	They grennyd on hym and bleryd here yye.	<i>snarled; stuck out their eyes</i>
	That wondur hit was that he dyd not dye.	
	Then com the angyll that hym ladde;	
1270	Tho fendys than fast away fledde. "Tundale," he seyd, "thu wer full radde.	<i>frightened</i>
	Now may thu make joy and be glad.	
	Thow was the sone of peyn full ryght,	<i>son</i>
	And now thu art the sone of lyght.	<i>son</i>
1275	For now forward sycur thu bee;	<i>safe</i>

The Vision of Tundale

- Goddus marcy schall helpe thee.
God hath thee grantyd, thou mayst be feyn,
That thu schalt fele noo more payn,
But Y woll well that thu wette
1280 Moo peynus schalt thu see yette.
Com foryt with me smertly;
Y schall thee scheuw thi most enmy
To monkynd that ever was,
That tysus al men to trespass.”
1285 A lytull furdurmore they yode,
And sone at Hell gatus thei stode.
Ther Tundale saw a greyt pytte,
That all this world myght not hit dytte.
“Com hydour,” quod the angyll bryght.
1290 “Thu schalt here see an hydous syght.
Stond ner this pytte, and loke adon.
Thu schalt see her an hydous demon.
That pytte is ay darke as nyght
And ever schall be withowttyn lyght.
1295 Bothe fendys and sowlys, that therin is,
Thu schalt see bothe more and lesse.
And Satanas, that lythe bound in Helle grond,
Thu schalt hym see in a lytull stond.
But they schall soo ywrekyd bee
1300 That non of hem schall see thee.”
Tundale than to the pytte wentt
Throw the angyll commandementte.
He lokyd don with grett aw.
Sathanas at the grond he saw.
1305 So ugly was that loightly wyght
Nevur ar was seyn so hydous a syght.
And so orybly he fard,
And such dull he saw ther and hard,
That yeffe a mon had varely
1310 An hundryd hedys on won body
And as mony mowthus withall,
As to yche hed schuld falle,
And yche a mowthe above the chyn
Had an hundryd tongys within,

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 1315 | And ylke a tong cowthe all the wytte
That all men have that lyvythe yette,
All wer not ynow to tell
The peyn that he saw in the pytte of Hell.
But Tundale toke full gud kepe | <i>each; knew; learning</i>
<i>enough</i>
<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 dyscryvyn hym. | <i>considered</i>
<i>describe</i>
<i>tell</i> |
| 1325 | Hym thought he was as grett to know
As any best that ever he saw.
His body was bothe brood and thykke,
And as blakke as ever was pykke.
So blakk was non, as hym semyd than. | <i>horrible</i>
<i>pitch</i> |
| 1330 | Hym thought he had the schappe of a mon.
He was bothe grett and strong
And of an hundryt cubytes long.
Twenty cubytes was he brad,
And ten of thyknes was he mad. | <i>shape</i>
<i>cubits</i> |
| 1335 | And when he gaput, or when he gonus,
A thowsand sowlys he swoluwys attonus.
Byfor and behynd hym was kende
On his body a thowsand hande.
And on ylke a honde was ther seyn | <i>gapes; opens his mouth wide</i>
<i>at once</i>
<i>seen</i> |
| 1340 | Twenty fyngrys with nayles keyn,
And ylke a fyngur semud than
The leynthe of an hundryt sponne
And ten sponne abowt of thyknes;
Ylke a fyngur was no les. | <i>sharp</i>
<i>finger seemed</i>
<i>span</i> |
| 1345 | Hys nayles semyd of yron strong.
Full scharpe they wer and full long,
Lengur than evur was spere of werre,
That armyd men wer wont to berre.
Mony teght he had that was so wondur. | <i>war</i>
<i>teeth</i> |
| 1350 | With hom he gnew sowlys insondur.
He had a muche long snowt,
That was ful large and brod abowt.
And hys mowthe was full wyde | <i>gnawed</i>
<i>nose</i> |

The Vision of Tundale

	With hongyng lyppus on eyther syde.	<i>hanging lips</i>
1355	Hys tayle was greyt and of gret lenthe, And in hit had he full gret strynthe. With scharpe hokys that in is tayle stykythe The sowlys therwith sore he prekydthe.	<i>pricked</i>
	Apon a gredyon full hot glowand	<i>gridiron</i>
1360	That fowle fende was ay lyggand. Brennand colys lay ay undur, But they wer dym, and that was wondur, Many fendys as gloand folus,	<i>lying</i>
	With balys blowyng ay at tho colys.	<i>coals</i>
1365	So many a sowle abowt hym flow, In myddys the fyr and in the low, That Tundale had full gret farly How the world myght bryng forthe so many.	<i>fiery imps</i>
	Satanas, that is soo grym,	<i>bellows</i>
1370	Lay ther bondon yche a lym. With yron cheynus gret and strong On that gredyon that was so long. As Tundale thoght, the cheynus was	<i>flame</i>
	Lappud abowt with walland bras	<i>wonder</i>
1375	And the sowlys that he hent With hys hondes wer all torent. He thrast hom insondur, as men dos Grapbys, thrastyng owt the wos.	<i>bound</i>
	When he had grond hom alle	<i>chains</i>
1380	Into the fyr he lette hom falle. And yeyt they kevered all ageyn, And ever putte to new peyn. Tundale hard and saw allsoo	<i>Surrounded; boiling brass</i>
	How Satanas gronod for woo,	<i>seized</i>
1385	Forwhy that he was bond so fast. At ylke a sykyng he con owt cast A thowsand sowlys; from hym they flow	<i>torn to pieces</i>
	Owt at his mowthe into the low.	<i>Grapes, pressing; juice</i>
	They wer sone scateryd wyde	
1390	Abowt hym ther on ylke a syde. But that peyn was not ynow. When he ageyn his ande drow,	<i>groaned</i>
		<i>Because</i>
		<i>flame</i>
		<i>scattered</i>
		<i>breath</i>

The Vision of Tundale

- Alle the sowlys he cast owt,
 That wer yscateryd rond abowt,
- 1395 He swalowyd hom ageyn ychon
 With smoke of pycche and of brymston.
 The sowlys that passyd owt of hys hond
 Fellon into the fyr and brand.
- When thei ageyn keveryd wor,
 1400 With his tayle he smot hom sore.
 Thus peynyd he tho sowlys and dud hom woo
 And hymselfe was peynyd allsoo.
 The more peyn that he thare wroght
 To tho sowlys that thydur 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 furst creature
 That God made aftur His fygure.
 Fro Hevon throw pryd he fell adon
 Hydour into this depe donjon.
- 1415 Here ys he bounde, as thu may see,
 And schall tyll Domusday bee.
 For yeffe they faylyd, that hym schuld hold,
 Heyvon and erthe trobull he wold.
 Of tho that thu mayst see with hym,
- 1420 Sum they ar of Adames kyn
 And odur angelis, as Y thee telle,
 That owt of Hevon with hym felle.
 Ther ys neydur sowle ne fend,
 But they ar dampnyd withowttyn ende.
- 1425 And mony mo hydur schulle come
 Or that hyt bee the Day of Dome,
 That forsakyth Goddu law
 And Hys warkys wyll 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
- dungeon*
- Doomsday (Judgment Day)*
- trouble*
- Judgment Day*
- works*
clerks

The Vision of Tundale

- In all the peynus they have beyn.
Now ar they cast on this manere
To Satanas to thole peyne here.
- 1435** And whosoo is broght to thys kare
Schall dwelle therin forevermare.
- Men that ar of muche myght,
That don to pore men wrong and unryght,
And woll algate fulfyllle hor wyll,
- 1440** Whedur hyt be gud or ylle,
And streyn the pore, that ar lesse,
Thei aron prynces of wykydnes.
- In strong turment schull thei bee
With fendys, that have of hom posté.”
- 1445** Tundale seyd to the angyll sone,
“Syr, Goddus wylle behovys to be don,
But o thyng wold Y fayne lere.
- Why gevith not God suche power
Too all they that aron hold gud men,
- 1450** That throw ryght wollyn odur ken,
As He dothe wykkyd men tylle
That evermore wykkydnes wyll fullefyll?”
- The angyll seyd that, “Sumtyme lettus
The wykkydnes of suggettus
- 1455** That wolde not be reulyd welle,
Therfor gret peynus behovus hom to fele,
And for sumtyme God wolde nocht
- That the gud men of this world wer broght
To over muche worldys guddus havyng,
- 1460** Lest here tyme of gudnes thei wold lesyng.
Thes fowle kaytyf, for all his myght,
His not callyd prynse of ryght,
But hys men mey hym calle
- Cheffe of markenes and pryncypalle
- 1465** All theys peynus that thu hast sene,
To reckyn hom all bedene,
That ordeynynd ben for monnus mysse,
Ar but lytyll to the regard of thys.”
- “Sartus,” quod Tundale, “ye say well.
- 1470** Y have more dred now as Y fele,
- endure
grief
(see note)
- always
- distress
are
- over them power
- must
like to learn
- through good others will learn
- allows
subjects
ruled
- lose
This foul 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 evur Y sawe.
 Therfore, Y pray yow that ye me lede
 Fro this syght and fro thys drede.
- 1475 Sum felows have Y here ysee
 That sumtyme with me prevey have bee. *close*
 Now is hor wonnyng here full depe; *dwelling*
 Y cleyn forsake hor felyschepe.
- And to that had Y ben worthy
 1480 Ner that Jesu on me had mercy; *Unless*
 To that same peyn schuld Y have goo
 And dwellyd therin forevur and oo." *always*
- This worde the angyll hard, that ther stood,
 And spake to hym with myld mod,
 1485 "A blessyd sowle Y may thee calle,
 For thu art passyd thy peynus all.
 And all the sygheftus that thee have deyred, *suffered*
 Theroft now thar thee never be aferd.
- Thu hast now seyn in sorow and stryffe
 1490 Men that wer of wykyd lyffe.
 And now schalt thou see that blysse
 That God hathe holy choson for Hys,
 And therfor glad may thu be.
 Cum now forthe and folow me."

Primum Gaudium

- 1495 Tundale dyd hys commandment
 And with the angyll forthe he went.
 Sone wax hit bryght as the day, *grew*
 And the darkenes was sone away,
 And the drede that Tundale hadde
- 1500 Was awey; than was he glad.
 Sone he thonkyd God of Hys grace
 And folowyd forthe the angylls trace.
 By that they hadon gon a lytull stonde.
 They saw a walle was feyr and rounde. *fair*
- 1505 Full hye hit was, as Tundale thought;

The Vision of Tundale

- But sone within the angyll hym broght.
 Men and wemen saw he thare
 That semud full of sorow and care,
 For they had bothe hongur and thurst
 1510 And grett travell withowtyn rest. *travail*
 Gret cold they hadon alsoo,
 That dudde hom sorow and made hom woo.
 Hem wantedyn clothys and foode;
 As dowmpe bestys, nakyd they yode. *They lacked
dumb; went*
- 1515 Her penanse was hard to see,
 But lyght they had grett plenté.
 "Thys folke," quod the angyll, "aryn all save,
 But penance yett behovys hom to have.
 All leved they well in honesté, *lived*
 1520 Yette grevyd they God in sum parté.
 Honestly and well wold they leve,
 But ovur lytull gud wold they geve,
 Nowdur to clothe nor to fede
 The powre men that had gret nede.
- 1525 Therfor wolle God sumtyme that they had peyn,
 Thoro wykyd stormus of wynd and reyn, *rain*
 And throw greyt hongur and thurst
 But aftur 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 aftur fast.
 They come to a gate at the last.
 That gate was openyd hom ageyn,
 And in they went. Tundale was fayn. *glad*
- 1535 A feld was ther of feyr flowrys
 And hewyd aftur all kyn colowrys. *field; fair
hued; kind of colors*
 Of how com a swete smytle,
 Swettur than any tong may telle.
 That plase was soo clere and soo bryght
- 1540 Tundale was joyfull of that syght;
 Full clerly ther schon the sonne
 That well was hym that ther myght wonne. *live*
 Mony feyr treus in that place stood
 With all kynnus fruyt that was gud. *trees
types of*

The Vision of Tundale

- 1545 That Tundale hard ther ay amonge
 Full swet noyse of fowlis song. birds'
 Full mekyl folke ther was seen many folk
 That of all kynne syn wer mad clene kind of sin
 And delyvered owt of all kyn peyn.
- 1550 They wer joyfull and full feyn.
 In myddys that plase was a welle,
 The feyryst that any mon might of telle. streams various
 From that ran mony stremus sere
 Of watur, that was both feyre and clere.
- 1555 Tundale thoght ther joy ynooghe. enough
 He spake to the angyll and looghe. laughed
 "Lord," he seyd, "here is greyt solace."
 Leyt us never wynde from this place." depart
 The angyll seyd, "Hit beys not soo. It may not be so
- 1560 Furdurmore behovus hus to goo. us
 The sowlys that thu syst here within see
 Han ben in peyn for hor syn,
 But they ar clansyd throw Goddus grace
 And dwellon here now in this place.
- 1565 But yett hennus may they noghyt hence
 To the blysse of Hevon to be broght.
 Thawye they ben clansyn of all ylle, Though
 Here mot thei abydon Goddus wylle. await
 The well that thu hast seyn here,
- 1570 With the watur that spryngus soo clere, by reason
 Ys callyd be scylle the well of lyfe. well-known
 The name of that welle is full ryfe.
 Whosoo drynkyth of hit ryght weyll,
 Hongur schall he never yfeyll.
- 1575 Ne thrust schall he neyvermare, thirst
 But lykyng have withowttyn care. pleasure
 Yeffe he wer old, withowttyn peyn
 Hyt wold make hym yong ageyn."

The Vision of Tundale

II Gaudium

1580	Yett fordurmore the angyll yede, And Tundale folowyd with gud spedē. Sone then aftur, as they went, He beheld and toke gud tent Tyll a plas wer they schuld passe, Wer mony a lewde mon wasse.	<i>went</i>
1585	Tundale hade seyn sum of hom are And knew full weyll what thei ware. Among hom too kynggus saw hee, That wer sumtyme of greyt postē. Tho whyle they lewyd on bon and blod, Bothe they wer men of truthe full gudd.	<i>paid attention</i>
1590	The ton of hom Cantaber hyght; That todur was callyd Donatus ryght. Then Tundale spake to the angyll free, “Lord,” he seyd, “what may thys bee?”	<i>ordinary man</i>
1595	These too kynggus, that Y see here, They wer men of greyt powere. They wer bothe stowt and kene. In hom was lytull mercy aseen. Aydur of hem hatyd odur,	<i>two kings</i>
1600	As cursyd Caym and his brodur. Sertus, syr, me thenkyth ferly, How they myght be so worthyly To come to thys joyfull stedde. Me thynkyght they wer worthy to be dedde.”	<i>power</i>
1605	The angyll thought hyt gret nede To bryng hym owt of that drede And seyd, “Thu schald wytte why That God of hom hathe marcy.	<i>lived in bone and blood</i>
1610	Byfor hor deythe ther fylle suche schanse That they had verey repentanse. For Cantaber, when he felle seke, To God con he hys hart meke.	<i>staunch; brave</i>
1615	He made a vow with delfull cry To yeld hymselfe to God allmyghty And all hys lyffe in penans to bee	<i>them</i>
		<i>Each; hated the other</i>
		<i>Certainly; a wonder</i>
		<i>chance</i>
		<i>true repentance</i>
		<i>he was able to make his heart receptive</i>

The Vision of Tundale

	When he wore hole and had posté. Donatus was in a preson strong; Beefor hys dethe ther was he long. All hys guddus gaffe he away	healthy; power prison goods gave
1620	To pore men for hym to pray. In grett peverté was he withstadde, And in preson hys lyffe he ladde. Yeffe all they wer kynggys of myghtt,	poverty; placed
	Yette they dyodon in poverté dyghett.	<i>Even though</i> <i>died; set</i>
1625	Therfor God wold not hom forsake, But to Hys blysse He wold hom take. Of all hor synnus they con hom scryve, Therfor marcy behovus hom have."	confess mercy
	Full mekyll joy saw Tundale thare,	
1630	But yett went they bothe furdurmare. They saw an halle was rychely dyght; Tundale saw never so feyr a syght. The wallys semyd gold of that hows	decorated
	Full well ysett with stonus full precyous.	
1635	The rofe semyd of carbunkyll ston. Dorrus nor wyndows was ther non, But mony entrys and thei wer wyde, That stodon ay opon on every syde,	stones; precious roof; carbuncle
	For all tho that wold in passe	<i>Doors</i> <i>entries</i>
1640	Was non lattyd that ther was.	<i>prevented</i>
	Hyt semyd as bryght, bothe far and ner, As evur was sonne that schon here, Large and round were the wonys.	
	The flore was paved with precyous stonus.	<i>rooms</i>
1645	The halle was withowtton post.	<i>column</i>
	Hyt semyd an hows of gret cost.	
	Hyt schon within and withowtte.	
	Tundale lokyd over all abowtte.	
	He saw a seyt ryche aparalyt,	<i>seat richly adorned</i>
1650	Of red gold fynly ennamelyd	<i>finely decorated</i>
	Clothus of gold and sylke gret plenté	
	Saw he ysprad apon that seytté.	<i>spread; seat</i>
	He saw sytte on that seytt	
	Kyng Cormake, that was full greytt.	

The Vision of Tundale

- 1655 Hys clothyng was of ryche hew.
 Tundale full well that kyng knew.
 Meche pepull to hym soght,
 And ryche gefftus they hym brogħt. gifts
 Befor hym stodde they full gladde,
- 1660 And muche joy of hym thei made.
 Tundale stood ner and toke gud kepe,
 And byheld that grett worchepe paid attention
 Tho men to Kyng Cormake thus dydde,
 That sumtyme was hys lord kydde.
- 1665 For he was sumtyme with hym of meyné,
 Therfore farly of that syght had hee.
 Prestus and deykenus come ther mony;
 Befor hym a greyt company known
company
wonder
 All revescyd, as they schuld syng Mas
 With ryche clothus of holynes.
- 1670 That halle was seytte, within and withowtte,
 With greytt rychesse all abowtte,
 With cowpus and chalys rychely dyghett,
 With sensowrys of silver and gold brygħt, cups; chalices
censers; silver
 1675 With basseynus of gold fayr and seemly,
 And with tabylls peyntyd rychely.
 Tundale thoght, yeffe he had no mare
 But that joy, thatt he saw thare,
 He had of joy greytt plentté, basins
tables
- 1680 So greyt murthe and joy ther saw hee.
 They knelyd befor that kyng alle,
 Tho folke that comyn into the halle,
 And seyd, “Weyll is thee on yche a syde,
 And weyll thee mott evur betyde.
- 1685 For tho warkys of thi hondys free
 We have now presented here to thee.”
 Then spake Tundale to the angyll brygħt,
 For he was amerveld of that syght, amazed
 And seyd, “Of all tho that Y here see,
- 1690 Non hym servyd in lege posté,
 Therfor grett farly have Y here as a vassal
wonder
 That they hym worscheppe on this manere.”
 Then answerd the angyll curtesly

The Vision of Tundale

- And seyd to hym, “Well wott Y
 1695 That of all tho that thu may see
 Was nevur non of hys meyné,
 But sum wer pore pylgrimus kyd
 Too whom oft hys charyté he dyd,
 And sum wer men of Holy Chyrche,
 1700 To hold hom was he nevur yrke.
 Therfor wold God, full of myght,
 That hyt be yold throw hor hondus ryght.”¹
 “Syr,” quod Tundale, “haght he no turment
 Sothen that he owt of the world went?”
 1705 Then answerd the angyll ageyn
 And seyd, “He sufforyd mony a peyn,
 And in more turment 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 turnyd then from hys seyt.
 He grevde, he gowlyd, hys dull was gret.
 1715 Tundale folowyd aftur sone
 To wytte wat schuld be with hym ydone.
 He saw mony men sytte kneland,
 With hor hondys up to God prayand,
 And seyd, “Gud lord, and Thi wyll hit bee,
 1720 Have mercy on hym and pyté.”
 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 scharpe and hard.
 1725 “This peyn,” quod the angyll, “behovyth hym to have
 Yche a day onus, as God vochesave,
 Forwhy he kept hym not clene
 Fro that tyme that he weddyd had bene,
 And also he breke hys othe

*company
known*

support; unwilling

*had
Since*

grew

wailed; dole (sorrow)

*know
kneeling
praying*

*distress
navel*

hairshirt

*once; grants
Because; pure*

broke; oath

¹ *That it (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 brent schall bee,
Sette unto the navyll, as thu myght see,
And forwhy that he commandyd to sloo
An erle that he hatyd as his foo, | <i>because; to be killed</i>
<i>earl</i> |
| 1735 | That was slain for hatered
Besyde Seynt Patrycke in that sted.
Therfor he tholuth, as thu wottus wele,
This hayre that is full hard to fele,
That grevys hym wher the knottus lyes | <i>place</i>
<i>suffers; understand</i>
<i>hairshirt</i> |
| 1740 | And dothe hym full grett angwys.
Of all odur peyn is he qwytt
Save of these too, as thu mayst wytte.”
Then seyd Tundale anon ryght thus,
“How longe schall he suffor thys?” | <i>two</i> |
| 1745 | The angyll seyd, “Ilke a day owrys three
This grett peyn sufferyn schall hee,
And the space of won and twenty owrys
He schall have joy and gret honowrys.”
And with that the angyll went furdurmore | <i>hours</i> |
| 1750 | Too odur blyssys that was thore. | <i>there</i> |

III Gaudium

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 1755 | 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. | <i>eye</i> |
| 1760 | Within that wall they wer sone togedur,
But he west not how they com thydur.
Ther they fwond a full delytabull place
That was fulle of murthe and solace.
Tundale lokyd abowtte hym thanne
And saw mony a mon and woman
Synggand ay so murly
And makand joy and melody.
Ther they honowryd God allweldand
And pleydon and song to not cessand, | <i>found; delightful</i>

<i>Singing</i>
<i>making</i>
<i>all-ruling</i>
<i>played; ceasing</i> |

The Vision of Tundale

- 1765 “Blysse be to God of myghtus most,
Fadur and Son and Holy Gost.”
Hor clothus wer precyows and new,
As whytte as snow that ever dyd snew. snowed
They wer joyfull and blythe ynogh happy
1770 And song and made myrthe and logh. laughed
They lovyd God in Trynité,
Nott cessand of that solemnyté, ceasing; celebration
And ay as they wer syngand always
Her vocys was ever accordant, voices; harmonious
1775 As melodyes of musyk clere,
That full delectabull was to here.
Ther was gret swetnes and lykyng
And joy and murthe withowttyn sesynge, ceasing
Honesté, beawtté, and clennes, beauty; purity
1780 And helthe withowttyn sekenes. sickness
They weron all off wylle free
In parfyte love and charyté.
The swette savour that ther was savor
All the swetnes of eyrthe dud it passe.
1785 “This joy,” quod the angyll bryght,
“Hathe God ordeynyd for weddyd men ryght
That levon in cleyne maryage pure
And keputhe hor bodys from owttrage, keep; outrage
And for hom that hor guddys gevyn
1790 Too the pore that in myscheff levyn, distress
And for hom that techon dylygenly teach
Hor sogettus to lovyn God allmyghty subjects
And chastyn hom aftur hor myght chastise
When they don wrong and lyffe not right,
1795 And for hom that Holy Chyrche honowrys
And mayntenyth hom and sockors. succors
For thoo that don wylle schall at gret Dom here well; Judgment
The voys of God that woll say, ‘Com neer
My Fadur, blessyd chyldyr free, children
1800 And receyve My kyndam with Mee kingdom
Ordeynyd and dyght for man
Seythyn the tyme that the word began.””
Tundale prayd with gud wylle

The Vision of Tundale

- 1805 The angell that he myght dwell stye.
The angell gaff hym noo onswer,
For he wold not doo hys prayer.

IV Gaudium

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| | Furdurmore yett then went thay,
Withowtyn travayll or peyn, her way,
And ylkon, as they went abowte, | <i>travail</i> |
| 1810 | Come to Tundale and to hym dyd lowtte
And haylsyd hym and callyd hym ryght
By hys name, as he hyght.

They made gret joy at is metyng,
For they wer fayn of his commyng | <i>bow</i>
<i>greeted</i> |
| 1815 | And thonkyd God allmyghtty,
That hym delyvered thoro Hys mercy,
And seydon. "Honour and loyng myght bee
To the Lord of blys and pyté,
That wold not the deythe of synfull men, | <i>bliss and pity (compassion)</i> |
| 1820 | But that they turne and leve ageyn;
And throw Is mercy wold ordeyn
Too delyver this sowle from Helle peyn
And wold bryng hym thus graciously
Among this holy company." | <i>does not want</i>
<i>Unless; live</i>
<i>His</i> |

V Gaudium

- 1825 The angell and Tundale yett furdur went,
And Tundale lokyd and toke gud tent.
They saw a walle, as they schuld passe,
Well herre than that todur wasse;
That wall semyd to Tundale sygght higher
1830 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 metalle,

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1835 | Then hym thoght of the solemnyté
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> |
| | | <i>before</i> |
| 1840 | So fayr a plas saw he never are,
Ne he, ne noo eyrthely mon,
As that was, that he saw anon.
Therin saw he, as hym thoght
Mony a trone all of gold wroght | <i>before</i> |
| | | <i>Neither he, nor any earthly man</i> |
| 1845 | And of precyous stonus seer,
That wer sette ther on dyverse manere.
With ryche clothus wer they kevered ychon,
So ryche was ther, eyr never see he non.
Holy men and wemen bothe | <i>throne</i> |
| | | <i>various</i> |
| 1850 | Saten in hom, clad in ryche clothe.
He saw abowt hom in that tyde
Fayr honourmentys on yche a syde.
All that he saw wer full brygght.
Tundale saw never suche a syght. | <i>covered</i> |
| | | <i>ornaments</i> |
| 1855 | Ne noo hert myght thynke of eyrthely man
Soo fayr a syghtte, as saw he than.
Tho greytt brygtnes of Goddus face
Schon among hom in that place.
That brygtnes schon more cleer | |
| 1860 | Then ever schon any sonne here.
Allwey hit was fayr and schyre
And semyd as hyt had ben gold wyr.
Crownus on hor heddus they had ychon
Of gold with mony a prescyous ston, | <i>shining</i> |
| | | <i>wire</i> |
| 1865 | Of grett vertu and dyvers colowrys.
They semyd all kyngys and emperowrys.
Soo feyr crownus, as ther was seen,
In this world weron kyng ne qwene.
Lectornes he saw befor hem stande | <i>value; various colors</i> |
| | | <i>Lecterns</i> |
| 1870 | Of gold, and bokys on hem lyggande,
And all the lettornes that he saw thare
Wer made of gold, bothe lasse and mare.
They song all ther with myld chere, | <i>books; lying lecterns</i> |

The Vision of Tundale

	“Aleluya” with vocys soo clere.	
1875	Hym thought they song so swete and clene Hyt passyd all the joyes that he had seen, And soo mykyl joy had he of that That all odur joyes he forgatte.	
	“These men,” quod the angell bryght.	
1880	“Ar holy men that God loyvyd ryght, That for Goddus love wer buxum In eyrthe to thole martyrdum, And that waschyd hor stolys in the blod Of the lombe wyt myld mod,	<i>ready</i> <i>suffer martyrdom</i> <i>washed their robes</i> <i>lamb</i>
1885	And had laft the world all holely For to sarve God allmyghty And to kepe hor boddys ay fre Fro lechery to chastyté. And they loyvd soburnes ay	<i>sobriety</i>
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	<i>truth</i>
1895	Full of Pavelons schynand; Soo fayr wer never non seyn in land. They wer keveryd with purpull and grys, That wer full ryche and grett of prye, The whylk was oversette and dyght	<i>pavilions</i> <i>seen</i>
1900	With besantes of gold and selver bryght, And all odur thyngus of beawté That hart myght thynke or eyne myght see. The cordys therof wer bryght and new. They wer of sylke and of rych hew.	<i>which; covered; decorated</i> <i>coins</i>
1905	They wer all with sylver twynud And freyt with gold, that bryght scheynod. On the cordys wer instrumentus seer Of musykys that hadon swette sond and clere, Orgons, symbols, and tympanys,	<i>entwined</i> <i>fretted; shone</i> <i>instruments various</i> <i>music; sound</i>
1910	And harpus that ronge all at onys; They geve a full delectabull sond, Bothe trebull and meyne and burdown,	<i>Organs, cymbals; drums</i> <i>harps; once</i> <i>treble; mean; bass</i>

The Vision of Tundale

- And odur instrumentus full mony
That madon a full swette melody.
- 1915 All maner of musyk was ther hard thanne.
Soo muche in eyrthe hard never no manne,
Not by an hundrythe thowsand part,
As this was to any monnus regarde.
Within the ryche pavelons, whyte schynande,
- 1920 Ay mekyll folke wer syngande
Full swetly with a mery stevon,
With all maner of musyk accordant eyvon.
So muche myrthe as thei made within,
No wordlyche wytte may ymagyn.
- 1925 Tundale thoght that all the blys
That evur he had seyn was not to thys.
Then spake the angyll with myld chere
Unto that sowle on thys manere.
“These folke,” he seyd, “that murthe makyth thus,
- 1930 They wer gud relygyous,
As frerus, monkys, nonnus, and channonus,
That welle heldon hor proffessyonns.
- 1935 Bothe blythelyche and with gud wyll
Hys commandementys to fullfylle,
And lovyd ay God in hor lyfe here
And to Hym ever obeydyand were,
And putte hom with clene conscyons
- 1940 Undur the rewle of obeedyons,
And to chast lyfe hom toke
And all hor fleschely wyll forsoke.
Thei hyldon sylens withowtton jangelyng
And best lovyd God over all thyng.”
- 1945 “Syr,” seyd Tundale, “Y pray thee
Lett hus goo nerre, that Y may see
The swete semland and feyr chere
Of the mury songus so schyll and clere.”
Then seyd the angell so feyr and bright,
- 1950 “Hereof thu schalt have a syght
Of hem, as thu hast mee besoughtte,
- pavilions
many folk
sound
harmonious

worldly

vows
busy

happily

obedient
conscience
obedience

kept silence; chattering

nearer

resonant

The Vision of Tundale

	Butt entré to hom getust thou noght. The sygght," he seyd, "of the Trinyté Schall not be schewyd unto thee.	<i>them</i>
1955	But this Y wolle thee schewe, that Y have hight. Thu schalt be unknowyn of that sygght. For all they in worlde here, That have bee borne and children were, That throw Godus grace have ben gud in levynge,	<i>promised</i> <i>ignorant</i>
1960	Ar now ordeynynd suche lykyng That here they schulle dwell ever for sothe With all halows and with angells bothe; That in hor lyffe ay chast have bene And levyd wylle, as vergynes clene,	<i>pleasure</i> <i>saints</i>
1965	Thei schall ever thus joyfull bee, For they seen ever God in Hys see."	<i>virgins</i> <i>seat</i>

VI Gaudium

	They went then forthe and fordurmore By a fayr way that they in wore. Full greyt plenté then saw thay	
1970	Of men and wemmen by that way That semyd all as angells bryght; Soo feyr they semyd to hor sygght. Ther was soo swete savour and smyll,	
1975	That noo hart myght thenke, ne tong telle, And swete voyse and melody Was among that company That made Tundale forgette clene	<i>smell</i>
1980	All odur joyes that he had seyn. For all maner instrumentys seer Of musyk that wer swete and clere Gaffe ther sown and wer ryngand	<i>diverse</i>
1985	Withhowtyn towchyg of monnus hand. And the vocys of spyrytus thare Passyd all joyes that ther ware And made joy and wer gladde	<i>sound</i> <i>spirits</i>
	And non of hom travell hadde	<i>travail</i>

The Vision of Tundale

	Hor lyppus wer not mevand, Ne made no contynanse with hand. The instrumentys rong ther full schryll, And noo travaylle was don thertyll.	<i>lips; moving gesture clearly</i>
1990	All maner of sounyd was therin, That hart myght thynke or ymagyn. Fro tho fyrnament above hor hedde Com mony bryght beymus into that sted,	<i>beams</i>
1995	Fro the wyche hyng chynus of dyvers fold Schynand full bryght of fyn gold. They hongyd full thycke on ylke a party And annamelyd wondur rychely.	<i>chains</i>
	All wer they joynyd and fastenyd ryght Among them hong greyt plente	<i>each part decorated</i>
2000	In yardys of seler full gayly dyght, That hongud up full hye in the eyre. Ther was noo eyrthely lyght never soo feyre.	<i>rods air</i>
	Of ryche jowellys and of greyt beawtte, Fyollys and cowpus of greytt prysse,	<i>jewels</i>
2005	Symbals of sylver and flowre delyce With bellys of gold that mery rong, And angellys flewyn ay among With whyngus of gold schynand bryght.	<i>Bowls; cups; price Chimes (Cymbals); fleur-de-lis</i>
2010	Noo eyrthely mon saw ever seche syght As the angels that flewyn in the eyre Among the beymus that wer soo feyre. Ther was suche joy melody and ryngyng,	<i>wings</i>
	And suche murthe and such syngyng	<i>joyous</i>
2015	And suche a sygghtt of rychesse, That all this world might hit not gesse, Nor all the wyttus that ever wer sey Cowthe hyt never halfe dyscry.	<i>wits describe</i>
	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."	

The Vision of Tundale

	Anon he come and saw a tree, That wonderly mykyll was and hye. Suche on saw he never with yye. Grett and hye that tre was,	<i>a one</i>
2030	And brod and round all of compas, Chargytt on yche a syde full evon With all kyn frysse that mon myght nemon, That full delycious was to fele,	<i>Laden</i> <i>kinds of fruit; name</i>
	With all kyn flowres that savoryd wele, Of dyverse kynd and seer hew: Sum wyte, sum reede, sum yollow, sum blew.	<i>various</i>
	And all maner erbys of vartu And of every spyce of valew, That feyr was and swette smylland,	<i>herbs (plants); power</i> <i>value</i> <i>smelling</i>
2040	Growyd ther and wer floryschand. Mony fowlys of dyverse colowrys Seyt among tho fruyt and the flowrys On the branchus syngant so meryly	<i>birds</i>
	And madon dyverse melody, Ylkeon of hom on hys best manere.	<i>Each one</i>
	That song was joyfull for to here. Tundale lystenyd fast and logh And thoght that was joy ynoghe.	<i>attentively; laughed</i>
	He saw undur that ylke tree,	
2050	Wonand in cellys, gret plente Of men and wemen schynand bryght As gold, with all ryches dyght. They loved God with gret talent	<i>Living; cells</i> <i>arrayed</i> <i>desire</i>
	Of the gyftus that He had hem sent.	<i>For the gifts</i>
2055	Ychon had on hys hed a crowne Off gold that was of semyly faschyon, All sett abowtte on seyrwyse With precyous stonus of full gret prise,	<i>in various ways</i>
	And septurus in ther hand they had.	
2060	With gold they wer full rychely clad, With bryght clothus of ryche hew, As they wer kyngys crownyd new. So rychely as they wer dyght	<i>scepters</i> <i>arrayed</i>
	Was never eyrthely mon of myght.	

The Vision of Tundale

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

VII Gaudium

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 2085 | Noo lengur ther they stoode,
But furdurmore yett thei yood.
They saw anodur feyr wall stand
Of greyt heylght, full bryght schynand.
Passe that todur wer feyr ther they had ben, | <i>went</i> |
| 2090 | But non so feyr as that was seen.
Tundale beehyld hyt and abadde
And avysud hym wharof hyt was made.
Hee saw this wall, as hym thought,
All of precyous stonus wroght. | <i>Passing that other
hesitated
considered; how</i> |
| 2095 | Hit semyd that the stonus brand,
So wer they of red-gold schynand.
The stonus wer full whyte and clere;
What stonus they wor ye schall here:
Crystall that was white and clere, | <i>crystal</i> |

The Vision of Tundale

2100	Berell, cresolyte, and saphere, Emeraudus, dyamondus that men desyres, Iacyntus, smaragdynes, and rubyes, Emastyce and charbokull allsoo, Omacles and tapaces and odur moo.	<i>Beryl, chrysolite; sapphire Emeralds, diamonds Zircons, emeralds; rubies Bloodstones; carbuncle Onyx; topaz</i>
2105	Strong stonus of dyverse hew, Suche saw he never, ne knew. Thcn spake the angell so feyr and free, “Tundale,” he seyd, “cum up and see.” They clombon bothe up on that wall	
2110	And lokyd don and seyyn over all. The greyt joy that they saw thare Semyd a thowsand fold mare Then all the joy that they had seyn Ther, as they befour had beyn.	
2115	For noo wytte myght tell of monnus mowthe, Passe he all the wytte of the world cowthe, Ne hart myght thynke, ne eyr yhere, Ne ee see wer hee never soo clere, The joy that ther was and the blysse,	<i>Surpass ear eye</i>
2120	That God had ordeynynd for all Hysse. They saw ther, as the story doghthe tell, The nyne ordyrs of angell. They schon as bryght as the sonne, And holy spyrtus among hom wonne.	<i>lived</i>
2125	Prevey wordys 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 foryete,	<i>Secret</i>
2130	For in thi mynd loke thu hyt sett: God, that ys withowttyn ende, Wolle turne to thee and be thi frend. Now see that here ys joy and blys, That they that here aron schull never mysse.”	<i>open; ears; hear what you hear; forget</i>
2135	Over that yett sew they moore Among the angelles that ther wore. They seen the Holy Trynyté, God sytting in Hys majesté.	

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 bryghtnes and the bewté,
 That they in Hys face myght see,
 2145 Was seyvon sythus brygħtūr to syght
 Then ever schon sonne, that was soo lyght;
 The whyche syght is foode to angelles
 And lyffe to spyrytus that ther dwelles.
 In the styd wher they stode,
 2150 They saw all, bothe evyll and gud,
 All the joy and the peyn beneythen
 That they had beforon yseyyene.
 They saw allsoo all the world brad
 And all the creaturys that God had mad.
 2155 Ther saw they the ordur, here as wee wonne,
 In a bryght bem of the sonne.
 Ther may nothyng in this world bee
 Soo sotyll, nor so prevé,
 But that he may see a party
 2160 That hathe seyn God allmyghty.
 Tho eene that have seen Hym
 Mow never be made blynd nor dym.
 Bot they had suche power and myght,
 Ther they stodon on the walle bryght,
 2165 That they myght see at a syght clere
 All thyng that was bothe far and nere.
 Alle that was behynd hom at that tyde,
 Byfor hom and on ylke 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
 Won that hyght Renodan
 That made joy and glad chere
- Ran
beauty*
- seven times*
- beneath
seen*
- in which we live
beam*
- subtle; secret
part*
- May*
- needful*
- One*

The Vision of Tundale

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| | And grett hym on fayr manere
And toke hym in hys armus lovely | <i>greeted</i> |
| 2180 | And schewyd hym love and curtesy.
And seyd as they stod togedur,
“Son, blesyd be thi comyng hydur.
Fro this tyme forward thu may have lykyng
In the world to have gud endyng. | <i>comfort</i> |
| 2185 | Y was sumtyme thy patron free
Too whom thu schulldust boxum bee.
Thu art holdyn, as thu wost welle,
Too me namly on kneus to knele.”
And when he had seyd thes wordys thare, | <i>courteous</i>
<i>bound</i>
<i>knees to kneel</i> |
| 2190 | Hee lafft hys speche and spake noo mare.
Tundale loked with blythe chere
On ylke a syde, bothe farre and nere.
He saw Seynt Patryk of Yrland
Commyng in a bryght tyre schynand | <i>happy</i> |
| 2195 | And mony a byschop nobely dygght,
Then had he grett joy of that syght.
They wer full of joy and lykyng
Withowtyn dele or any sykyng.
Among that blesydfull company | <i>attire</i>
<i>dressed</i> |
| 2200 | He saw ther fowre byschopus namly
That he knew be syght of semland,
Whan he was in tho world dwelland.
They wer gud men and lyved with ryght,
And won of hom Celestyen hyght, | <i>bishops</i>
<i>appearance</i> |
| 2205 | That was archebyschop of Armake
And muche gud dedde for Goddus sake.
And anodur hyght Malachye,
That come aftur hym full gracyouslye,
That Pwope Celestyen of hys grace | <i>Armagh</i> |
| 2210 | Mad archebyschop of that place.
In hys lyfe he gaffe with hart glad
Too pore men all that he had.
He mad colagys and chyrchys mony,
That nomburd wer to fowre and fowrti, | <i>Pope</i>
<i>gave</i> |
| 2215 | Namely for men of relygyon
Too sarve God with devocyon. | <i>colleges</i>
<i>numbered</i> |

The Vision of Tundale

- | | |
|---|---|
| He feffyd hem and ynoogh hem gaffe
All that was nedfull hom to hafe,
Save that aght to hymselfe only,
2220 Hee laft hym noght to lyve by.
The thrydde of hom that he knew than
Hyght Crystyne, that was an holy man,
That was sumtyme byschop of Lyons
And lord of mony possessyons, | <i>donated; enough; gave
have
Except what was necessary to himself only</i> |
| 2225 But hee was ay meke in hert,
Symplyst of wyll and povert.
He was Malachynus owne brodur;
Aydur of hom loved well oodur.
The fowrte of hom, that he ther knew, | <i>poor</i> |
| 2230 Hyght Neomon, that was full trew
And ryghtwyse whyle he levyd bodyly,
That sumtyme was byschop of Clemy
And passud all the todur thre
Of wytte and wysdam in his degré. | <i>just</i> |
| 2235 Tundale saw besyde hom 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 | <i>seat
void (empty)</i> |
| 2240 And askyd for whom hyt was ydyght.
Then spak Malachye and seyd
“Thys sege is ordeynud and purveyd
For won of owre bredur dere,
Wen he commthe schall sytton here, | <i>seat
prepared
seat; ordained; prepared
brothers</i> |
| 2245 The whyche is yette in the world levand.
Ay tyll he com hyt schall voyde stand.”
Tundale had delyte greytt
Of the sygght of that fayr seyt,
And as he stod joyfull and blythe | <i>living</i> |
| 2250 Then com the angell to hym full swythe
And spake to hym with blythe chere,
“Tundale,” he seyd, “how lykuth thee here?
Thu hast mony a feyre syght seyn.
In dyverse places ther thu hast beyn.” | <i>quickly</i> |
| 2255 “That have Y lord,” he seyd, “and loogh, | <i>happy</i> |

The Vision of Tundale

- Y have seyn joy ynoogh.
Dere lord, Y pray thee of thy grace
Leyt me not owt of thys place.
For Y wold never owt of this place wende,
2260 But dwell here withowttyn ende.” go
“Thu spekyst,” quod the angell, “all in veyn.
Thu schalt turne to the body ageyn.
That thu hast seyyn, hold in thy thoght;
And thatt thou hast hard, foryete hyt noght.” in vain
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 vyrgyns that have bene
Chast and kept hor bodys clene,
2275 And for the love of God allmyghty
Have forsake the world all holely,
And to God ar gevyn fro all ylle
With all her thoghtus and all her wyll.
But suche a thoghtte and wyll was no in thee
2280 When thu wast in thi nowne posté. delivered
To God wold thu not the bowe,
Ne my conseyle wold thu not know.
To dwelle here art thou not worthy.
But turne agayn to thy body,
2285 And of fylthe make thee clene,
And fro syn henforward thu thee absteyne.
My helpe thu schalt have and my consell,
So that thu schalt not of Hevyn fayll.”
When the angell had seyd thys,
2290 Tundale turnyd from all that blysse.

The Vision of Tundale

Reversio Anime

	As hys sowle wox all hevy And feld hyt chargyd with hys body, He oponyd hys eene then and saw And hys lymes to hym con draw.	<i>grew; heavy burdened eyes</i>
2295	And or he spake anythyng, He lyfte up a greyt sykng. They that hym saw and stodon by Wer astoneyd and had farly.	<i>raised; sighing astonished; wonder</i>
2300	And tho that lovd hym wer full fayn That he was turnyd to the lyfe ageyn. He dressyd hym up all sykande And weptt and made hevy semlande	<i>lifted heavy appearance</i>
	And seyde thus with a grette crye, “Lord Jesu Cryst, Thy marcé!	<i>mercy</i>
2305	Worse than Y am,” quod he than, “Was never noo boron of woman. But now wylys that Y have space,	<i>while</i>
	Y wolle amend with help and grace Off God, that for us tholyd pyne;	<i>suffered pain</i>
2310	Y hoope He wolle not my sowle tyne.” He spake to hymselfe and seyd, “Kaytyff, Why hast thu levyd so wykd lyff? Hy have ben,” he seyd, “a wyckyd man.”	<i>harm Wretch <i>I</i> accused</i>
	Full sore hym tenyd at hymselfe than.	
2315	He bethoght hym of all the tyme, Of the greyt syghtus that he had syen. Therfor hyt semyd be hys contynance That for hys synne he had repentance.	<i>countenance</i>
	All had they ferly that by hym stode	<i>wonder</i>
2320	That he soo well had turnyd hys mood, For that he was sumtyme soo fell, As ye before have hard me tell, Won of hom, that stod hym next,	<i>cruel</i>
	Askyd hym yf he wold have a preste,	<i>One</i>
2325	For to schryve hym of all the foly And to hosull hym with Goddus body. Then answerd he ageyn.	<i>shrive; sin (folly) give the Eucharist</i>

The Vision of Tundale

- “Yee,” he seyd, “Y wold full feyn
 That the prest come to me
- 2330 To here my schryft in prevyté
 And to howsull me; then wer Y saffe.
 Y pray yow do me a prest to haffe,
 And Goddus body that Y may take,
 For all my synnus Y woll forsake.”
- 2335 The prest come sone, for he was soght,
 And Goddus body with hym he broght.
 When Tundale was schrevon and made redy,
 He receyvyd the ost full mekely.
 Then spake Tundale with hert free,
- 2340 “Lord,” he seyd, “lovyd mot Thu bee,
 For Thy marcy and Thi gudnes
 Passus all mennys wykkydnes.
 Passe hyt be muche and grevus soore,
 Thy grace and Thi mercy is meche more.”
- 2345 Mony a mon and also wemen
 Wer geydoryd abowt hym then.
 He told hom wer he had yben,
 And wat he hard had and seyn;
 And wat he had feld was in his thoght,
- 2350 He held in mynde and forgeet hit noght;
 And he warnyd ylke a man that peyn wold drede
 Too amend hom here, or that they yeede.
 He cownseld hom to bee holy
 And bad hom leyve hor greyt foly
- 2355 And turne hom to God allmyghtty,
 Servyng Hym evermore devoutly.
 He prechyd the wordys of God thare,
 That never was prechyd among hem are,
 And hom that synfull wer he told
- 2360 He repreved hem as Goddus lawe wold;
 And comfordud gud men, that wer clene,
 Throw the joy that he had seyn.
 And whyles he levyd synnus he fledde
 And all hys lyffe in holynes ledde.
- 2365 He made to the world noo countynance,
 But he levyd ever in peynanse.

*confession; privacy
 safe*

*shriven
 [Communion] host*

gathered

heard

before; died (went)

reproved

The Vision of Tundale

- He gaffe all hys gud away
Too pore men for hym to pray.
Noo worldys gud more wold he have,
2370 But levyd as long as God vochedsave. *permitted*
And at the last wen he schuld hennus pas,
When that Goddus swete wylle was,
The sowle departyt from the body
And yoode to God allmyghty,
2375 In Hevon evermore to dwell. *went*
Ther more joy is than tong may tell.
Too that joy He hus bring
That made Hevyn, eyrthe and all thyng.
Ylkon of yow that have hard mee
2380 Seythe “Amen” for charytee.

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

*Here ends; says Heeg
true
copy*

Explanatory Notes to The Vision of Tundale

Abbreviations: see Textual Notes.

- 11 *In Yrlond byfyll.* 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 tho story.* The reference to a source, which recurs 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 *tho* 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 slouthe.* 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 *warkus of mercy wold he worch.* 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

The Vision of Tundale

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 Vitae*, the *Speculum Christiani*, 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 *boghthe*. A common medieval usage for “redeem” based on the etymological meaning of “redemption”: “to buy back” (*redemptare*).
- 40–44 Tundale’s soul separates from his body. This is the most common mode in vision literature. It differs from narratives like *Sir Owain* 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 Owain*, 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 *lenden* as “to allow (a longer time) for repayment of a loan.”

Explanatory Notes

- 76 *malycoly*. 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 *bellus yronge*. 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 “*Placebo*” and “*Dyrge*.” *Placebo* is the first word of the first antiphon for Vespers in the Office of the Dead (*Officium defunctorum*). *Dirige* 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 Gast 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 *none*. *MED* lists this word as “the canonical hour of nones; 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 *hav* 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 *mydylerde*. 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.”

The Vision of Tundale

- 133 The poem is divided by A into an introductory section, ten *passus*, seven *gaudia*, and the *reversio anime* (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 loddly rowte . . . as wyld wolfus thei cam 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 his now . . . withowton 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 Gast of Gy*, *Sir Owain*, 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 Thurkill*, early thirteenth century), but from *The Vision of Drythelm* (Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 731) and *The Vision of Wetti*, 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

Explanatory Notes

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 Gast 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 tuo mille 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 *cubytus*. “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 *set(ten)*, 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.” “Set” makes the best sense, however.
- 355–56 *But of this peyn . . . yett thou hast deservyd hit*. The angel assures Tundale that he will not experience this particular torment, though later he does suffer physically, an experience shared by Furseus 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 viscid semi-liquid when heated.”
- brymston*. “The mineral sulphur,” perhaps more pertinently “burning sulphur” (*MED*).
- 407–10 *he saw a bryge . . . won fotte in brede*. The narrow bridge between two mountains recalls bridges over Hell in *The Apocalypse of St. Paul* (late fourth century), *The Vision of Sinnulf* 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*

The Vision of Tundale

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 *serewyse*. The word can mean “in a diverse way, variously” (*MED*), but in context the adverbial use of *sere* seems more probable: “physically apart; asunder,” or “individually, separately” (*MED*).
- 469 *baelys*. 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 (*OCD*). 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  **Latin Note:** After line 490, A has, boxed in red: *Absorbebit flumen et non mirabitur et habebit fiduciam, quod influat 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 *Forcusno . . . Conallus*. Forcusno 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 Helinand 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 Tain, 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, narow 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 burden

Explanatory Notes

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 haght more peyn and sum lase / All aftur that her synnus his.* 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 *Sacrileggi.* 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 *teythe.* 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.

The Vision of Tundale

- 706 *wyldernys*. “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 *Preston*. 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 **☞ 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 peyn schalt have . . . To the blysse withoutten 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.
- 888 *snowt*. “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 bene, / This schalt thu thole*. 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 *dongyll*. 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

Explanatory Notes

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 Destrucccion 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: *lata est via que dicit 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 *Vlkane*. Vulcan, the “ancient Roman god of destructive, devouring fire,” who was “highly admired, secretly feared” (*OCD*). From Greek antiquity, his counterpart, Hephaestos, was a blacksmith. This conflation of the Greek and Roman gods fits the hellish context perfectly.
- 1223 *Thee tharre not thynke*. “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 lesse*. 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., Isaias 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 (*ST1.qu.63a6*) 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*).

The Vision of Tundale

- 1363 *gloand folus.* I.e., “fiery imps.” See *MED* *fol n 2*: “an impious person, a sinner, a rascal.”
- 1411–12 *the furst 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 *Cursor Mundi*’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 tormenta paciuntur* (“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 Gast of Gy*, 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 Judgment 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

Explanatory Notes

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 mon*. A “lewed man” was “a member of the laity, layman, non-cleric” (*MED*).
- 1591 *Cantaber*. 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 *Caym*. 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 Donatus, A mentions that Donatus 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 *carbunkyll ston*. Carbuncle, which, according to the *OED*, was said to shine in the dark. See line 2103.

The Vision of Tundale

- 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 *deykenus*. 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 *sensowrys*. 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 *hayre*. 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” (*MED*). 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 *Besyde Seynt Patrycke*. This refers to a church, not the saint. G (p. 317) identifies it as probably the metropolitan church of Cashel.

Explanatory Notes

- 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 Tundale* 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 *erward*. “At or during some earlier time in the past, on a former occasion, formerly, previously” (*MED*).
- 1897 *grys*. “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 *besantes*. “A golden coin of Byzantium; any of several similar coins minted in Western Europe” or “a bezant used as an ornament” (*MED*).
- 1909 *Orgons*. 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.
- symbols*. “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.
- tympanys*. “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 *harpus*. 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 *trebull and meyne and burdoun*. The *trebull* (usually called a *hautein*) is the highest part in a three-part vocal or instrumental composition, with *meyne* and *burdoun* as the middle and lower parts (Carter, pp. 200, 278, 510).

The Vision of Tundale

- 1931 *frerus, monkys, nonnus, and channonus.* 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 delyce.* 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 *seyrwyse.* 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 *feffud.* 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 *Iacyntus*. “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.
- smaragdynes*. 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 *Emastyce*. 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 Isaiahs 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* 1.qu.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 wordys*. 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 *opon thyn eyrus and here*. Compare Jesus’ oft-repeated phrase in the Gospels, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matthew 11:15, 13:9, 13:43; Mark 4:9, 4:23,

The Vision of Tundale

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

- 2176 *Renodan*. St. Ruadan (d. 584), abbot of Lothra. 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 prelates. He is believed to have been a Roman Britain 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 archbishopric 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 *colagys*. 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 *Crystyne*. Bishop of Clogher (1126–39) and older brother of St. Malachy. The Latin designation of his diocese, *Lugdoniensis*, accounts for *Lyon* in A and causes M to identify his see as Louth rather than Clogher.
- 2227 *Malachynus*. Latinate form of Malachy.
- 2230 *Neomon*. Nehemiah O'Morietach, bishop of Cloyne and Ross (1140–49). Sometimes he is erroneously identified as St. Neeman of Cluny, perhaps because of the Latin version of Cloyne — *Cluanensis*.
- 2232 *Clemy*. This is the bishopric assigned to *Neomon* by A; C has *Ylye*; P has *Ely*; R has *Clunny*. These seem to be various attempts to render the Latin “*Cluanensis*.” See explanatory note to line 2230.
- 2235–38 Many scholars believe the empty seat to be reserved for St. Bernard of Clairvaux.
- 2381 *Hyheg*. 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. xlili (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), "bub" for "but" (837), and emended the scribal practice of occasionally hearing g and k interchangeably as in "styng" for "stynk" (333) and "lonke" 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 awhyle*. A: *ben wyll awhyle*. I have omitted *wyll* as unusually clumsy and grammatically unnecessary.
10 *clanse*. A: *clanso*; C: *clense*; I have accepted G: *clanse* as doing least harm to A. Several times A has a mistaken *o* at the end of a word; subsequently I have corrected these without comment.
14 *yere*. A: *here*; G, following C, P: *yere*.
19 *is*. A frequently has *is* for *his* and vice-versa. I have retained this usage since it does not cause confusion.
24 *pride*. A: *pde* with *i* superscript.
37 *tyne*. A: *tyme*; G, following C, P: *tyne*.
59 *for his best*. G, following C: *as hym lest*, is plausible, but I have retained A.
70 *deray*. A: *aray*; G, following C: *deray*.
78 *at tho*. G, following C, P: *to*.
108 *corale*. A: *quale*; G, following C, P, R: *corale*. See explanatory note.
110 *flytte*. A: *had*; G, following C, P, R: *flytte*.

The Vision of Tundale

- 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 hydwys 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 (*i 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: *worlde*. *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 *stryft*. A: *strft* is canceled before *stryft*.
- 204 *harneys*. A: *hornys*; G, following B, P: *harneys*.
- 215 *thought*. A: *thought*; G, following B, C, P, R: *thoughtes*. I prefer *thought*, preserving the singular and assuming a scribal error in one grapheme.
- 215–16 *That wykkyd thought that was in thi brest, / Woldyst thu never schowe 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: *ungdly*; G, following C, P, R: *uggly*. Perhaps A intended *ungodly*.
- 269 *thei*. A: *he*; C: *they*.
- 323 *the*. A: *that*; G, following B, C, R: *the*.
- 327 *brad*. A: *brdd*; C: *brode*; P, B: *brade*.
- 333 *stynk*. A: *styng*; C: *stynke*.
- 339 *dyd*. A: *dud*.
- than*. Omitted in A. C: *thn*.
- 340 *pan*. A: *pon*; C: *panne*.
- 341 *ronnen*. A: *ronnon*; C: *ranne*.
- fyr and yron bothe*. A: *that yron into the fyr bothe*; G, following B, P: *fyr 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: *ordeyned*, 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*.
yslayn. A: *bothe yslayn*; G, following B, C, P, R: *slayne*. To include A: *and* and *bothe yslayn* 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 pyche and brymston*. These lines are reversed in A but marked by the scribe *b*, *a* for correction.
- 376 *snowe*. C: *sawne*, which better suits the rhyme.
- 382 *This*. A: *Then This*, with *Then* marked for expunction.
- 389–90 *The angell ay before con pas, / And Tundale aftur that sore aferd 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 *hys*. Omitted in A. G, following C, P, R: *hys*.
- 563 *Her ynee wer brode and brandon bryght*. A: *Therin wer brondus and brandon bright*; G, following C, P, R: *Her ynee wer brode and brandon bright* makes a substantial improvement in this line and makes line 564 more effective.
- 565 *waytud*. A: *waxoud*; 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: *sowlows*; G, following C, P, R: *sowles*.
- 614 *dystruccioun*. A: *dystruccoun*; G, following P, R: *dystruccioun*.
- 615 *turmentyd*. A: *turment*; G, following C, P, R: *turmentyd*.
- 626 *she*. A: *yee*. C: *she*; R: *ho*.
- 645 *Maygrey is chekys*. A: *Maygrey in is chekys*. I have omitted *in* 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 omits *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 noght aferd*. 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 *hoke*. A: *hokeus*; G, following B, P: *hoke*. A destroys the rhyme and does not need *-us* to form a plural here.

The Vision of Tundale

- 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 full*. A: *that fowle*; G, following B, C, P, R: *that full*. A was probably distracted by the appearance of *fowle* later in the line.
- 799, 801 *vermyn*. A: *venym*; G, following B, C, P, R: *vermyn*. *Venym* is a possible word, but *vermyn* better fits this narrative and the tradition of vision literature.
- 808 *cawdoron of drede*. A: *cawdoron of drede*; G, following B, C, P, R: *schadowe of dede*. The latter makes for an interesting allusion to Vulgate Psalm 22:4, but A makes sense as it is.
- 814 *tokenyng*. A: *thyng*, an eyeslip's repetition from the previous line. C: *tokenyne*.
- 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 *lad hym*. A: *had hym*; C: *ledde hym*; P: *him ladde*.
- 903–04 *Then wax . . . and muche woo*. 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: *venym*; G, following B, C, P, R: *vermyn*. See note to lines 799, 801.
- 916 *nygh fyllid*. A: *fell neght to*; C: *nygh filled*.
- 933–34 *Her taylys . . . the oddes*. A: *Her naylus wer bothe gret and longe / All kene hokys wer ther hond*. G's reconstruction from B, C, P, R fits the descriptive and narrative situation better — and preserves the rhyme.
- 963–64 *For monkus . . . 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 *Thei*. A: *Iuwes*; G, following B, C, R: *thei*. The sentence needs a subject.
- 971 *the*. As a reminder of my procedure, A: *thei* 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 *dongyll*. A: *dongyll* 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: *narow*; G, following C, P, R: *longe*. Some change is necessary to avoid the awkward repetition from line 1019.
- 1035 *The*. A: *thys*; G, following B, C, R: *the*. The noun is plural.
- 1062 *as hem liked best*. A: *at that best kast*; 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 *Yet thei.* A: *This peyn*; G, following B, C, R: *Yet thei* avoids the repetition of *peyn* in A.
- 1094 *odur smythus.* A: *non boldly*; G, following C, R: *oder smythus*. 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 / Foloyddyn the in foly*. These lines virtually duplicate lines 1115–16.
- 1148 *grevyd.* 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 *clomsyd.* A: *closyd*; G, following C, P: *clomsyd*. This appears to be a simple omission of *m*, but I mention it because R also has *closyd*.
- 1198 *toryve.* A: *toryvy*; G, following C, P, R: *toryve*. A appears to have been distracted by “stryve” in line 1197 and spoiled the rhyme.
- 1234 *Too Satanas.* A: *too sanat satanas*, with *sanat* canceled.
- 1259 *on her krocus.* A: *on her he krocus*, with *he* canceled.
- 1262 *The.* A: *thei*; C: *the*.
- 1270 *than fast.* A: *than a fast*, with *a* canceled.
- 1288 *world.* A: *wold*, with *r* superscript.
- 1297 *Satanas.* A: *satans*, with *a* superscript.
- 1356 *hit had he.* A: *his tayle was*; G, following R: *hit had he*. The *tayle* 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 *gloand.* I have retained A: *gloand*; G, following R: *tatred*; P: *taterede*; C: *hyt were tatered*.
- 1376 *hondes.* The *d* is obscured.
- 1392 *ande.* A: *armus*; G: *ande* (meaning “breath”), based on R: *ende*, P: *?nde*, and C: *breth*, seems to make the best of a difficult situation. Certainly it is hard to see *armus* as suitable in A’s own context.
- 1393 *the sowlys.* A: *the sowk sowlys*, with *sowk* canceled.
- 1407 *angyll.* A: *anglyll*; C: *angell*.
- 1420 *Adames.* A: *admes*, 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: *sum tyme*. The A scribe may have had his eye on “hom” in line 1456.
- 1464 *Cheffe.* A: *Thyffe*; G, following P, R: *Cheffe*. Some word indicating leadership or authority is necessary.
- 1487 *have.* A: *hve*; C: *have*.

The Vision of Tundale

- 1534 After line 1534, A omits two beautiful lines that appear in C, R and are accepted by G:
Sone they feld a swete ayre / And [C: They] fond a feld was wonder fayre.
- 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 *Caym*.
- 1613 *a vow.* A: *aw vow*, with *w* canceled.
- 1628 *Therfor marcy behovus hom have.* A: *Therfor behovus hom 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 *wonyss.* A: *wowys*; C: *wones*.
- 1654 *Cormake.* 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 *oft.* A: *of*; R: *ofte*; C: *ofn*.
- 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 *sufforyd.* A: *had sufforyd.* 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: *yron*; G, following C, R: *hayre*.
- 1731 *brent.* A is missing a verb. I have supplied *brent* from R.
- 1738 *hayre.* A: *peyn*; G, following C, R: *hayre.* Perhaps A did not know what a “hairshirt” was?
- 1744 *longe.* A: *lonke*.
- 1750 *thore.* A: *throre*; C: *thore*.
- 1861 *schyre.* A: *cleer*; G, following C, R: *schyre.* I have accepted the change to avoid the repetition with line 1859.
- 1868 *world.* A: *wold*, with *r* superscript.
- 1899 *whylk.* A: *walle* does not make sense in this description. G, following R: *whylk*, or C: *whych* does.
- 1901–02 *And all . . . eyne myght see.* A: *And with all odur 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*.
- 1923 *instrumentus.* A: *instrumenstus*; C: *instrumentes*.
- 1923 *So much myrthe as thei made within.* This line is repeated in A.
- 1955–56 *But this . . . of that syght.* These lines are reversed in A.
- 1980 *swete.* A omits, but G, following C, R, accepts.

Textual Notes

- 1995 *hyng*. A: *thing*; I have accepted G's emendation to *hyng*, which improves intelligibility greatly.
- 2034 *flowres*. A: *fruyt*; 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 *wer 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 gems.
- 2132 *turne*. A: *tne*, with *ur* superscript.
- 2136 *angelles*. A: *angell*; C: *angelles*.
- 2142 *Renne*. A: *And renne* destroys the syntax.
- 2147 *angelles*. A: *angell*; G, following C, R: *angelles*.
- 2148 *dwelles*. A: *dwell*; G, following C, R: *dwelles*.
- 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 noght*. A: *hym noght*; G, following C, P, R: *but lytelle*. I have retained A, though the alternative makes more sense and better translates the Latin original.
- 2223 *Lyons*. A: *Lyon*; G, following C, R: *Lyons*.
- 2224 *possessyons*. A: *possessyon*; G, following C, R: *possessyons*. 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 2222.
- 2276 *holely*. A: *helely*; G, following C, R: *holely*.
- 2284 *body*. A: *bog body*, with *bog* canceled.
- 2304 *Thy marcé*. 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 as Goddus lawe wold*. A: *How thei schuld be withdon as Goddes wyll wold*. I have rejected this line for its sheer ugliness and substituted C.
- 2381–83 *Explicit Tundale . . . coopy was*. These lines, the indication of the conclusion of the poem, are indented in A.

Glossary

abadde <i>hesitated</i>	aneli, anely <i>only, specifically</i>
abayed, abayst <i>humiliated, abashed</i>	angwis, angwysse <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>anthems</i>
acordand <i>fitting</i>	aperceived <i>realized, perceived</i>
acordaunce <i>accordance, parallel</i>	apert <i>open</i>
adrad <i>afraid</i>	apertly, apertliche <i>openly, plainly</i>
adrede <i>to dread</i>	aplight <i>assured; assuredly, indeed</i>
aferd <i>afraid, frightened</i>	aqueled <i>destroyed (spiritually)</i>
aflight <i>afflicted, affected</i>	arrayd <i>arranged, arrayed</i>
aght <i>ought</i>	arase <i>arose</i>
ago <i>gone</i>	ar(e) <i>before; already</i>
agrise <i>dread</i>	arliche <i>early</i>
agrose <i>terrified</i>	arn <i>turned</i>
alblast <i>siege engine</i>	aros <i>arose</i>
ald <i>old</i>	aseth <i>reparation</i>
aldermest <i>most of all</i>	askus <i>ashes</i>
alegge(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>	at(t) <i>that</i>
allane, all ane <i>alone</i>	at(t)o(o)nus <i>at once</i>
alls <i>as</i>	atteryng <i>poisonous</i>
allswa <i>also</i>	aubes <i>albs</i>
alltha(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>altar</i>
alther hattest <i>hottest of all</i>	aventure <i>adventure, occurrence, experience, event</i>
alther maste <i>most of all</i>	aviis <i>advice, opinion; report</i>
amayde <i>amazed</i>	avoutry, vountry <i>adultery</i>
amorwe <i>morning</i>	avysede, avysud <i>considered</i>
ande <i>breath</i>	aw <i>ought; befits, is fitting for (impers.)</i>
ane <i>an, one, someone; alone</i>	

Glossary

awen <i>own</i>	besantes <i>coins</i>
ay, ey <i>always, ever</i>	besom <i>swishing (sound)</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>betide, occur</i>
bald <i>assured, sure, certain, strong</i>	bevereche <i>drink, beverage</i>
balder <i>bolder, more confident</i>	beymus <i>beams</i>
baldli, baldly <i>boldly, quickly, 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>	biheve <i>benefit</i>
bareyt <i>distress</i>	bihove(s), byhovus <i>behoove(s), obliges, must</i>
basseyrus <i>basins</i>	biis <i>gray</i>
bath(e) <i>both</i>	biknewe <i>revealed</i>
bathi <i>bathe</i>	bileft <i>left</i>
baume <i>balm</i>	bileve <i>belief; to remain</i>
bayde <i>abided</i>	bileved <i>left</i>
bayli(e), bayly <i>country</i>	bise <i>ponder</i>
baynly <i>obediently</i>	bitaught <i>commended, entrusted</i>
be, bi <i>by</i>	bithenche, bithinke <i>consider, imagine</i>
bede(s) <i>prayer(s)</i>	bituen, bituix <i>between</i>
bede <i>to pray; bade</i>	bityd <i>occurred</i>
bedene <i>completely</i>	biwent <i>went</i>
Bedlem <i>Bethlehem</i>	blamed <i>blamed, convicted, found guilty</i>
behoves <i>must; it behooves, it is fitting for (impers.)</i>	bleryd <i>stuck out</i>
beme <i>beams</i>	blew(e) <i>blue; blew</i>
bendes <i>bands</i>	blinne, blyn <i>cease, stop</i>
ben(e) <i>be; would be; been; are</i>	blo(o) <i>blue, livid</i>
bere <i>commotion, uproar; tone; burden</i>	blithe <i>glad, happy</i>
berell <i>beryl</i>	blytheliche <i>happily</i>
bere(s) <i>bear(s), wear; bore, wore</i>	bocchere <i>butcher</i>
berth <i>bears</i>	boiland <i>boiling</i>
	bon <i>bound</i>
	bond <i>bonds</i>

Glossary

bone <i>help, gift, boon</i>	burd <i>would; would have to; must</i>
boron <i>born</i>	burdoun, burdown <i>bass; pilgrim's staff</i>
borowde <i>borrowed, redeemed</i>	burges <i>burgess, citizen</i>
bost <i>box (usually a pendant), pyx</i>	bus <i>must</i>
bostus <i>boasters</i>	buxum <i>ready</i>
bot <i>but, except, only</i>	bwones <i>bones</i>
boune, bowne <i>ready; bound, obligated</i>	byd <i>bid, pray</i>
bounté(s) <i>bounty, benefit; virtues</i>	byde <i>abide, stay</i>
bowsomly <i>obediently</i>	bystad <i>afflicted</i>
boxum <i>courteous</i>	bytond <i>honed</i>
brac <i>broke</i>	
brad(der) <i>broad(er)</i>	caghe <i>cage</i>
bras <i>brass</i>	cald(e) <i>called, named; cold</i>
braste <i>overcome</i>	card <i>cared</i>
brawneschedyn <i>threatened</i>	caroly <i>sing (carols)</i>
brayd <i>shrieked</i>	catell <i>possessions</i>
bred(e) <i>bread; breadth; (all on) brede</i> <i>far and wide</i>	causteloines <i>chalcedony</i>
bredur <i>brother</i>	cawdoron <i>cauldron</i>
breke <i>broke; trilled</i>	celestien <i>celestial, heavenly</i>
brening <i>burning</i>	cessand <i>ceasing</i>
brend(on), brent <i>burnt, burned</i>	ceté <i>city</i>
brenne <i>burn</i>	chanoun(e)s <i>canons</i>
brerdes <i>rims</i>	chantryse <i>chantries</i>
brigge <i>bridge</i>	chapiter <i>chapter (meeting of friars)</i>
brithe <i>birth</i>	charbokull, charbukelston <i>carbuncle</i>
brochys <i>skewers</i>	chargyd, chargytt <i>laden, burdened</i>
brocking <i>calls of distress</i>	chaumber, chaumbre <i>chamber, room</i>
broddys <i>picks</i>	chaundelers <i>candle-holders</i>
brond <i>brand</i>	chekus, chekys <i>cheeks</i>
bryd <i>woman</i>	chele <i>cold, chill</i>
bryg(g)e <i>bridge</i>	chere, chyr <i>manner, disposition;</i> <i>countenance; cheer</i>
brymston, bronston, brunston, <i>brimstone</i>	cheryschyd <i>took good care of</i>
brywand <i>burning</i>	chymné <i>furnace, chimney</i>
bryn(s) <i>burn(s); brynt</i> <i>burnt</i>	chyne <i>chin(s)</i>
bryst <i>burst</i>	chynus <i>chains</i>
burde <i>board, bench</i>	clarkys <i>clerks</i>
	clothes <i>clothes</i>

Glossary

clen(n)es(se)	<i>purity</i>	<i>expression</i>
cleped	<i>called (out), named; clepeing</i>	<i>cours</i> <i>part, course, iteration</i>
	<i>calling</i>	<i>courtelage</i> <i>garden</i>
clepeth, clepi	<i>call (out), name</i>	couth(e), cowthe <i>knew, understood;</i>
clere	<i>bright, clear, shining</i>	<i>could</i>
clethyng	<i>clothing</i>	covand <i>promise</i>
cleyne	<i>pure</i>	cova(i)tise, covatyse, covetys(e)
clombon	<i>climbed</i>	<i>covetousness, greed</i>
clomsyd	<i>enfeebled</i>	covent <i>convent</i>
colagys	<i>colleges</i>	covetand <i>coveting</i>
cole	<i>coal; colis, colys coals</i>	cowpus <i>bowls; cups</i>
Colett(es)	<i>Collect(s) (short prayer)</i>	cracched <i>scratched</i>
colombin	<i>columbine</i>	creaunce <i>faith</i>
combret	<i>clumsy</i>	crepand <i>creeping</i>
comforth	<i>comfort; comforted</i>	cresolyte <i>chrysolite</i>
command	<i>coming</i>	Cristen <i>Christian</i>
commounliche	<i>commonly, generally</i>	croice, croyce <i>cross</i>
compeynie	<i>company, group</i>	crounes <i>crowns (of the head)</i>
con	<i>did</i>	crouthe <i>croud (stringed instrument)</i>
conjure	<i>command, order</i>	cryand <i>crying</i>
con(ne)(n)	<i>began to</i>	cultorus <i>ploughshares</i>
connynge	<i>understanding, comprehension</i>	cuntry, cuntré <i>country</i>
conseyons	<i>conscience</i>	
contakt	<i>dissension</i>	dart(es) <i>attack(s); barb(s)</i>
conteyni	<i>sustain</i>	de(d)d(e) <i>death; dead</i>
contré	<i>country</i>	dede <i>did; caused to (happen)</i>
contynanse	<i>gesture</i>	dede(s) <i>deed(s), action(s), occurrence(s)</i>
copy	<i>copy, text</i>	ded(e)li, dedely <i>deadly</i>
cop	<i>summit</i>	defygurd <i>disfigured</i>
coper	<i>copper</i>	degrese <i>degrees</i>
coround	<i>crowned</i>	del <i>times</i>
corounes	<i>crowns</i>	dele <i>bit, piece; dole, distress (see also dole)</i>
cors	<i>corpse, body</i>	deme(d) <i>judge(d), deem(ed), direct(ed)</i>
cosyn	<i>cousin, kinsman</i>	departabill <i>set apart for an individual; separate, individual</i>
cote	<i>coat</i>	deppest <i>deepest</i>
co(u)nsaile, conseil(y), consell,		deray <i>uproar</i>
conseyl(e), cownsel(l)	<i>counsel, advice</i>	
co(u)ntynance	<i>countenance, (facial)</i>	

Glossary

dere(s)	<i>harm(s), injure(s)</i>	drefull	<i>sorrowful</i>
derk	<i>dark</i>	dregh	<i>suffer</i>
derur	<i>more expensive</i>	dreynt	<i>drenched</i>
desayvabill	<i>deceitful</i>	Dright	<i>Lord</i>
descry	<i>reveal, proclaim, announce</i>	drof(f)(e)	<i>drove, pursued</i>
dyscryve	<i>describe, explain</i>	droghe, drowgh, drowyn	<i>pulled, drew</i>
desmay	<i>dismay; be dismayed</i>	drury	<i>woeful</i>
desseyves	<i>misleads</i>	dud(de)	<i>did</i>
dett	<i>determined</i>	dueling	<i>delay</i>
dett, deyt	<i>debt, obligation</i>	duelle	<i>remain</i>
develing	<i>sprawling</i>	dwelland	<i>dwelling</i>
devine	<i>figure out, divine</i>	dyamondus	<i>diamonds</i>
devise(d)	<i>describe(d); look(ed), examine(d)</i>	dy(e)(y)(d)	<i>die(d)</i>
de(y)th(e)	<i>death</i>	dylfull	<i>dolesful</i>
diamance	<i>diamonds</i>	dyppe	<i>deep</i>
diche	<i>ditch</i>	dysayvabyll	<i>deceitful</i>
dight, dyght	<i>set; built; ordered</i>	dyscryvynyn	<i>describe</i>
dispendes	<i>to use, dispend</i>	dytte	<i>fill up</i>
dispysede	<i>despised</i>		
divynour	<i>wise man</i>	edderys, eddrys	<i>adders</i>
do, don	<i>do; cause to</i>	ee(ne)	<i>eye(s)</i>
doctour	<i>doctor, learned theologian</i>	eft	<i>after; again</i>
dole	<i>sorrow, pain, suffering</i>	eftsones	<i>soon after</i>
dome	<i>judgment</i>	eger	<i>sharp, brusque, eager</i>
Domesday, Domusday	<i>Judgment Day</i>	egge	<i>edge</i>
dominical	<i>Scriptural reading</i>	eightene	<i>eighth</i>
dong	<i>beat</i>	eglentere	<i>briar rose</i>
dongyll	<i>deep valley</i>	eighen	<i>eyes</i>
dorrus	<i>doors</i>	eke	<i>also</i>
dose	<i>does</i>	eld	<i>age</i>
dotaunce	<i>doubt, uncertainty</i>	elles	<i>otherwise</i>
douhti	<i>doughty</i>	emastyce	<i>bloodstones</i>
dout, dowt(t)(e)	<i>doubt, unease, confusion</i>	emer	<i>guardian (angel)</i>
dowmpe	<i>dumb</i>	emeraudus	<i>emeralds</i>
drad	<i>dreaded</i>	emperis, emperys	<i>empress</i>
dredand	<i>dreading</i>	encheson	<i>reason, intent</i>
		encres(e)	<i>increase</i>
		ennamelyd	<i>decorated</i>

Glossary

enpayred impaired, broken
ensuample(s), ensaumpel(s) example(s), lesson(s)
entent intention, purpose
erbers gardens
erbes, erbys plants
er(e), erward before
er(t) are
ertheliche, ertethly earthly
ertow you are
es is, are
eutes newts
evell, evyll evil
even, evon straight, exactly, directly; evening
evencristen fellow Christian(s)
evensang(e) evensong (*Vespers*)
everilk each, every
eydur either
eyn(e) eye
eyr(us) ear(s)

fabill, fabyll fable, false story; deception
fairhede excellence, fairness
fall deadly
falon feel
falshede falsehood, deceit
fand(e) endeavor, undertaking; to tempt; looked after; found
fandyng temptation, troubling
farly, ferly wonder
faulland falling
fawe livid, angry
fay faith; source of doctrine
fayn(e), feyn glad, happy, pleased, eager(ly); like to
febull, febyll feeble

feffed endowed
fekul fickle
fel fall, fell
feld felt, sensed
fele many; avail
fel(l), fyll skin; destroy; feel; deadly
fellawered company, group, fellowship
felness evil, treachery
felyschepe fellowship
fend defend
fende(s), fend(us) fiend(s)
fer(e) far; healthy; frighten; take as a companion; companions; fire; (in) fere in a company, as a group
ferrede company, crowd
fetherfoy chrysanthemum
fe(y)t(t) feet
fine amour perfect love; refined love, courtly love
fithel fiddle, violin
flaumand flaming
flaumbe, flawm(m)e flame
flayd frightened
fleighe flew
fles(s)(ch)(e) flesh
fleyng flaying
flowe fled, flew
flowre delyce *fleur-de-lis*
flytte moved, removed
folowand following
foluydden followed
foly(e)(s), foli(es) sin(s), folly/follies
fond found; tempt
fonston baptismal font
forbrent burnt severely
force strength, power
fordo prevent
fore assaulted

Glossary

forght(he)	<i>forth</i>	gavelers	<i>usurers</i>
forlast	<i>lose, lost</i>	gederd, gederud, gedryd, geydoryd	<i>gathered; re-formed</i>
forlor(n)(e)	<i>lost, loss</i>	gent	<i>delicate</i>
forneise	<i>furnace</i>	ger	<i>prepare; cause to</i>
forsayd	<i>aforementioned</i>	gere	<i>clothing</i>
forst	<i>frost</i>	gert	<i>began to; caused to</i>
for that	<i>because</i>	geyre	<i>equipment</i>
forthi	<i>therefore</i>	ghate	<i>gate</i>
forthynkon	<i>repent</i>	gif	<i>given</i>
foryt	<i>forth</i>	ginne	<i>engine, contrivance</i>
foulen, foulys, fowles	<i>birds; bird's</i>	gle	<i>joy, glee</i>
fowrte	<i>fourth</i>	glow(e)and	<i>glowing</i>
fra(m), fro	<i>from</i>	gnayst	<i>gnash [teeth]</i>
frayne	<i>ask</i>	gnowe	<i>gnawed</i>
fre	<i>generous, gracious</i>	gobedys, gobettus	<i>gobbets, chunks</i>
Frere Austines	<i>Augustinians</i>	godspelle	<i>gospel(s)</i>
Frere Carmes	<i>Carmelites</i>	go(i)nfa(i)noun	<i>banner</i>
Frere Menours	<i>Franciscans</i>	gon ga	<i>began to go</i>
Frere Prechours	<i>Dominicans</i>	gonus	<i>opens [his] mouth</i>
frere(s)	<i>friar(s)</i>	gowle(yng)	<i>howl(ing); gowlyd howled</i>
fresand	<i>freezing</i>	gras	<i>grace</i>
frete, fretud	<i>bit; ate</i>	grayd	<i>troubled</i>
freyt	<i>fretted; decorated</i>	grayde	<i>prepared; performed; conveyed; given</i>
fryst(yng)	<i>delay(ing)</i>	graythely	<i>readily</i>
frytte	<i>fruit</i>	grede	<i>crying, lamentation; cry out</i>
furgons	<i>pokers</i>	grediris	<i>gridirons</i>
fure, fuyr, fyr	<i>fire</i>	greyron	<i>gridiron</i>
fyoolys	<i>bowls</i>	grenned, grennyd	<i>growled, grimaced, bared teeth</i>
 ga	<i>go</i>	gretand, gretynge	<i>moaning, weeping, lamentation</i>
game(n)	<i>game(s), delight, playing</i>	grete	<i>great; wept</i>
gan	<i>go; did; became; began to; proceeded to</i>	gretton	<i>greet</i>
gang	<i>go; came; went</i>	grevd(d)e	<i>grieved</i>
gapus	<i>gapes; gapud gaped open</i>	griseli(che), grysely	<i>gruesome</i>
gase	<i>go, goes; went</i>	gronden	<i>ground</i>
gast(e)	<i>ghost, spirit</i>		
gatys	<i>gates</i>		

Glossary

groonus <i>groans</i>	henge <i>hung</i>
grucchud <i>grumbled</i>	hennes <i>hence</i>
grynn <i>grimace</i>	hent <i>seize; taken, seized</i>
grysely, gryssly <i>horribly</i>	herd, hard <i>heard; praised</i>
gud <i>good</i>	here <i>here; hear</i>
gun <i>began to; did</i>	hereyng <i>hearing</i>
gy <i>guide</i>	herre <i>higher</i>
gyandys <i>giants</i>	hert <i>heart</i>
gyf(en) <i>give(n)</i>	herust <i>hear</i>
gylt <i>guilt</i>	her(ys) <i>their; here</i>
gyn <i>means; engine</i>	hete, heyte <i>n. heat</i>
haddestow <i>had you</i>	hete <i>commanded</i>
haght <i>have</i>	hetheing <i>abuse; to hetheing with abuse</i>
halden <i>held; considered; bound</i>	hethen, hethon <i>hence, away; here</i>
hale <i>whole; full; healthy</i>	heved <i>head</i>
halidom <i>relics</i>	hewe <i>hew, color; bright (of complexion)</i>
halows <i>saints</i>	heye <i>haste, quickness</i>
halvendel <i>half, a half part</i>	hider, hyder, hydour <i>hither, here</i>
hame <i>home</i>	hidous, hydous, hydwys <i>hideous, dreadful</i>
han <i>have</i>	hight <i>high; height</i>
harl <i>hurl</i>	hight, hyght <i>was named, was called</i>
harneys <i>armor</i>	hing, hyng <i>hung</i>
has(e) <i>has, have</i>	hir <i>her; their</i>
hast <i>has, have; haste</i>	ho <i>she</i>
hate <i>hot</i>	hokes, hokys <i>hooks</i>
hatter <i>hotter</i>	hole <i>hole; healed, whole</i>
hautain <i>treble</i>	holt <i>holds</i>
haylsed <i>greeted</i>	homerus <i>hammers</i>
hayre <i>hairshirt</i>	hondryt <i>hundred</i>
hedder, hedur <i>hither, here</i>	honget <i>hung</i>
hede <i>behead</i>	honging <i>hanging</i>
hedous <i>heads</i>	hoottte <i>hot</i>
hegh, heighe <i>high</i>	hor <i>their</i>
heighe <i>hurry, hie</i>	hosull, howsull <i>give the Eucharist;</i>
hem(selve) <i>them(selves)</i>	howsyld <i>given the Eucharist</i>
hend <i>hands</i>	howge, hogy, hugy <i>huge</i>
hende <i>courteous, gentle</i>	howsell <i>Holy Communion (Eucharist)</i>

Glossary

hows(es), howssus	<i>house(s)</i>	<i>teach</i>
hudde	<i>hidden</i>	kennes <i>know(s)</i>
hund(e)reth, hundryd, hundryt	<i>hundred</i>	kest <i>cast</i>
hu(y)r	<i>her</i>	kevered, keverdyn, keveryd <i>recovered</i>
hwond	<i>hound</i>	know(yng) <i>know; knowledge</i>
hy(e)	<i>quickly, hastily; haste; he; listen,</i>	kneland <i>kneeling</i>
	<i>hear</i>	kneld <i>kneed</i>
hyde	<i>hidden</i>	kne(y)s, kneus <i>knees</i>
hyes	<i>hie, gather</i>	knottes <i>(decorative) knots</i>
hyld	<i>held, believed</i>	krocus <i>crooks</i>
iacyntus	<i>zircons</i>	kyd(de) <i>known</i>
ich, yche	<i>(the) very; each</i>	kyndam <i>kingdom</i>
ich	<i>I</i>	kynde <i>nature; kind, kin</i>
ichave	<i>I have</i>	kyndeli, kyndely <i>natural; naturally,</i>
ichil	<i>I will</i>	<i>properly, according to nature</i>
icy	<i>comfort</i>	kyn(ne), kynnus <i>kind; kinds of</i>
ilk, ylke	<i>each, every; same, very</i>	
ill	<i>evil</i>	ladde <i>led</i>
intil, intyll	<i>into; unto</i>	lane <i>grace</i>
iren	<i>iron</i>	laned <i>concealed, overlooked</i>
ise	<i>ice</i>	lappud <i>surrounded</i>
Jacobins	<i>Dominicans</i>	lare <i>teaching; learning</i>
jogelars	<i>deceivers; entertainers</i>	lastand <i>lasting</i>
jowellys	<i>jewels</i>	lat(es) <i>let(s), leave(s)</i>
Jowes	<i>Jews</i>	lawed <i>uneducated (see also lewed)</i>
jugged	<i>judged</i>	lectornes, lettornes <i>lecterns</i>
kalendes	<i>calends (the first day of the</i>	led(d)e <i>lead (metal)</i>
	<i>Roman month)</i>	lede <i>nation, country, area</i>
kan	<i>know, understand; can</i>	lede(s) <i>lead(s)</i>
kele	<i>cool</i>	lef <i>leaf; willing, eager</i>
kelyng	<i>cooling</i>	legge <i>lie, lay, place</i>
kend(e)	<i>taught, explained; knowledge</i>	lem <i>gleaming</i>
kene, keyn	<i>sharp</i>	lende <i>remain, reside</i>
ken(ne)	<i>know, understand, apprehend;</i>	leryd <i>learned</i>
		les <i>lies; lost</i>
		lesing <i>lying</i>
		les(se) <i>less</i>
		lest <i>last; least</i>

Glossary

lest and maste <i>fully</i>	low <i>flame</i>
letany <i>litany</i>	luf(ed) <i>love; loved</i>
lete <i>let; had; avoid, give up; leave out</i>	luke <i>look, see</i>
leten <i>forgiven; leave, give up</i>	lychory <i>lechery</i>
lett <i>relieved; hindrance, obstruction, delay</i>	lye <i>fire</i>
levand <i>living</i>	ly(es) <i>lie(s)</i>
leve <i>dear, beloved; permission, leave, allowance</i>	lyf(and) <i>living; to live</i>
levedust <i>lived</i>	lyfed <i>lived</i>
levedy <i>lady</i>	lyf(f)(e) <i>life</i>
levenyng <i>lightning</i>	lygand <i>lying</i>
lever <i>rather</i>	lyg(ges) <i>lie(s)</i>
levon <i>live</i>	lykkynyd <i>likened, compared</i>
lewed, lewyd <i>uneducated</i>	lym(es) <i>limb(s)</i>
leyd <i>placed</i>	lythe <i>lies; joint</i>
leyn <i>lend</i>	lythur <i>evil</i>
le(y)ve <i>leave; believe</i>	lyveryt <i>delivered</i>
libbe <i>live</i>	
lic(c)houre <i>lecher</i>	ma <i>to make; more</i>
lif <i>live</i>	mack <i>match</i>
ligge, lygge <i>lay</i>	maine, mayne <i>strength, power, might</i>
lighting <i>lightning</i>	maister(s) <i>master(s)</i>
likeing, lykand, lykyng <i>liking, enjoyment</i>	malycoly <i>melancholy</i>
liif <i>life</i>	manast <i>menaced</i>
lili <i>lily</i>	manhede <i>manhood</i>
lite <i>little; light</i>	mankinne, mankyn(d)(e) <i>mankind</i>
lodder <i>louder</i>	mannes <i>men, people</i>
lod(d)ly, loghtly <i>terrifying, horrible, loathsome; angrily</i>	manslaghter <i>manslaughter</i>
lond <i>land</i>	marcé, marcy <i>mercy</i>
lo(o)gh(e) <i>laughed</i>	mare <i>delay; more, greater</i>
lopen <i>leapt</i>	mare and lesse <i>more and less, all</i>
lore <i>teaching</i>	margarites <i>pearls</i>
lorn(e) <i>lost</i>	marke <i>dark</i>
lotheliche, lothly <i>loathsome; hideously</i>	mase <i>make(s), made</i>
louken <i>lock</i>	mased <i>amazed</i>
	maste <i>most</i>
	maygrey <i>despite</i>
	mayn(e) <i>strength, power</i>
	maynsweryng <i>perjury</i>

Glossary

mayntene(d), mayntyn(iod)	<i>maintain(ed), support(ed), sustain(ed)</i>	mon(us) <i>man (men)</i>
mayre <i>mayor</i>		mond <i>might</i>
mede <i>reward, solace; beverage; (to)</i>	<i>mede for reward</i>	montayn, monteyn(us), montteyn
mele <i>meal</i>		<i>mountain(s)</i>
mene <i>to mean, signify; melody (middle part)</i>		mo(o) <i>more</i>
menegth <i>means</i>		more and les <i>more and less, everything</i>
meney <i>company, group</i>		morwe, moron <i>morning</i>
meng <i>join, unite</i>		mossel <i>morsel</i>
Menours <i>Franciscans</i>		most, mott <i>must</i>
mensk(ed) <i>honor(ed), worship(ped)</i>		mot <i>motes</i>
menstracie <i>minstrelsy</i>		myddelerd, mydylerde <i>(middle-) earth, the world</i>
merknes <i>darkness</i>		mydes <i>middle</i>
merre <i>mar</i>		myght, myghtes, myghttus <i>might, strength, power</i>
mervail(l)(e)(s), mervayle(s) <i>marvel(s), miracle(s)</i>		mylle <i>miles</i>
meschaunce <i>adversity, bad experience</i>		myn <i>less, lesser</i>
messe <i>mass</i>		myne <i>mine</i>
mett <i>performed</i>		mys <i>miss</i>
met(t)e <i>food; to dream; appropriate (adj.)</i>		mysavysede <i>ill-advised</i>
mevand <i>moving</i>		mysgane <i>erred, gone astray</i>
meyne <i>mean, middle part; company</i>		mys(s)(e) <i>sin</i>
michel, mekyll, mikell, muckyll,	<i>mykell, mykyll great(ly), large, much</i>	myster <i>need, needful</i>
	<i>midnerd (middle-) earth, the world</i>	
milde, myld(de) <i>mild, gracious</i>		nadder <i>adder, snake</i>
mir(e) <i>merry</i>		nakyn, nanekyn <i>no kind of</i>
misbileve <i>false belief(s)</i>		nam <i>took</i>
misgangyng <i>straying, going wrong</i>		nane <i>none, no</i>
misgilt <i>sin</i>		naru <i>narrow</i>
misours <i>sinners</i>		nas <i>was not</i>
missays <i>misery</i>		navylle <i>navel</i>
mode <i>manner; mind, state of mind</i>		nawgeres <i>augers</i>
mold(e) <i>earth, world</i>		ne <i>not, no, nor</i>
mon <i>must; attend to, mind</i>		neddren <i>adders, snakes</i>
		neghand <i>nearing, approaching</i>
		neghen <i>nine</i>
		neighe <i>near; nearly</i>
		nemon <i>name</i>

Glossary

nempne <i>call out, name</i>	omell <i>among</i>
nerre <i>nearer</i>	on <i>on, in; one</i>
nesche <i>flaccid, soft</i>	onacles, onicles <i>onyx</i>
nether <i>deeper, farther down</i>	ond <i>spite; fierce</i>
neven <i>explain, say, tell; (at) neven</i>	onlyve <i>alive</i>
<i>comparable, on a par</i>	onone <i>at once</i>
nevend <i>mentioned, explained</i>	onys <i>once</i>
nis <i>is not</i>	or <i>or; before</i>
nite <i>not know</i>	ordaine, ordelyn(yd) <i>command,</i> <i>arrange, ordain(ed)</i>
nithe <i>malice</i>	ordand <i>ordained, established</i>
no <i>no; not; nor; did not</i>	ordans <i>ordains; guides</i>
nold(en) <i>would not</i>	ordenance <i>guidance</i>
noither, nouder, nouther <i>neither</i>	order <i>religious orders</i>
nom(e) <i>took, taken</i>	ore <i>pardon</i>
none <i>noon</i>	orisoun(e), orysoune <i>prayer</i>
nones, for the nones <i>indeed</i>	orybly <i>horribly</i>
non(e)skines <i>none at all</i>	ought <i>aught, at all</i>
nonnes <i>nuns</i>	ourn <i>arranged</i>
nother <i>no other</i>	ous <i>us</i>
noure <i>nowhere</i>	outher <i>either</i>
noys <i>noise</i>	outrage <i>outrageous</i>
noy(se) <i>annoy(s), trouble(s), bother(s)</i>	outtane <i>except</i>
nye <i>nearly</i>	overbrewe <i>knocked over</i>
 	overflé <i>pass over</i>
o <i>of; one; on</i>	overschaken <i>passed by, overcome</i>
obedyons <i>obedience</i>	ovon <i>oven</i>
obedyand <i>obedient</i>	owhen <i>own</i>
ocur <i>usury, high interest rate</i>	owrys, oyres <i>hours</i>
oddes <i>points</i>	
odur, oodur <i>other</i>	payen(s) <i>pagan(s)</i>
of off	par(a)cel(l)s <i>parcels, pieces</i>
off of	parfyte, perfyte <i>perfect</i>
oftok <i>overtook</i>	parti <i>portion, part; period (of time)</i>
ogain <i>again; back</i>	party, ta party <i>one side</i>
ogain, ogaines, ogayne, ogayns	partyse <i>parts</i>
<i>against; up to; towards</i>	paruink <i>periwinkle</i>
oght <i>ever, at all; anything, aught</i>	
okering <i>money-lending</i>	

Glossary

pas(s), passe <i>pass, leave, go away, go on; (at) pas to pass, to go</i>	prevely <i>secretly</i>
Pasch <i>Easter; Passover</i>	prevetese, privatese, priveté <i>secret, hidden knowledge, obscure matter; secrecy</i>
passand <i>passing, temporary</i>	preve(y) <i>close, privy, confidential, secret</i>
Pas(s)e <i>Easter; Passover</i>	prevyté <i>privacy</i>
payne <i>pain</i>	prevytys <i>private parts</i>
pays <i>peace</i>	priis <i>value, price</i>
pen(y)s <i>pence, coins</i>	primrol <i>primrose</i>
perced <i>pierced</i>	proved <i>tried, attempted</i>
pere <i>peer, equal</i>	prow <i>testing, proof, benefit</i>
persayved <i>perceived</i>	pryd <i>pride</i>
pes(e) <i>peace</i>	purvayd(e), purveyed <i>provided; offered; conveyed; prepared</i>
peté <i>pity</i>	putt <i>pit</i>
pevertté, povertté <i>poverty</i>	putton <i>pushed</i>
peyn <i>pain</i>	pyne(d) <i>pain; to pain, to be pained</i>
piche, pyc(c)he, pykke <i>pitch</i>	pynnes <i>pains</i>
pilers, pylers <i>pillars, columns</i>	
pine, pyne <i>pain</i>	
pittes <i>pits</i>	
plas <i>place</i>	
playne <i>fully</i>	quarel <i>missile</i>
playne pase <i>brisk pace</i>	queinte(r), quynte <i>clever; (more) skillful</i>
pleyndon <i>lamented</i>	queyntaunce <i>acquaintance</i>
plough <i>land</i>	quic <i>caustic</i>
plyght <i>plight</i>	quic, quyk <i>alive, quick</i>
ponyst <i>punished</i>	
pople <i>people</i>	rad(de) <i>frightened</i>
pore <i>poor</i>	raght <i>reached</i>
poudre <i>powder</i>	rampyng <i>leaping</i>
Poule <i>Paul</i>	rasour <i>razor</i>
pourre <i>blameless, steadfast</i>	rathe(r)/(st) <i>(more, most) quickly; (more, most) promptly; soon(er/est)</i>
pourper <i>purple</i>	raw, on raw <i>in order (in a row)</i>
po(u)sté <i>power</i>	rays <i>raise</i>
pouwere <i>power</i>	reckys <i>care</i>
pover <i>poor</i>	rede(s) <i>read(s); advise(s); to study</i>
poynt <i>point (of doctrine)</i>	re(e)de <i>red</i>
prechours <i>preachers</i>	
prede <i>pride</i>	

Glossary

regnes reigns	sall shall
reles(e) release	salud saluted, greeted
religioun religious orders	samen together
rennand running	sampull example
renneth runs	saphere sapphire
repenti repent	sare sad(ly), sore(ly), agonizing
repreved reproved	sartus surely
reprove reproof	sary sorry
resayved received	saul(e)(s), sawl(e)(s) soul(s)
respyt respite, relief	saunfayle without fail, without doubt
reuthe, rewthe pity, regret	Sauter Psalms
revescyd vested	sautry psaltery
rew(eful) rue(ful)	sa(u)wes sayings, teachings, words
rewle rule	saw word
re(y)d(e) advice, teaching	sayand saying
reynyng reigning	schake hurry
ribaudie foolishness	schaltow shall you
ribes rubies	schape escape
rigge, rygge back	schappud created
rinneth runs	scheld shield
rode cross; red	schen must
rong rang	schend(e) destroy
ros rose, arose	schent overcome
rout bellow, shout	schet shut
rowte rabble	schevus sheaves
rugged torn (up)	schew(es), (ed) show(s), (ed)
ryfe rigorous; well-known	scheynod shone
ryg roof	schire entirely; brightly
ryghtwes(s)nes, ryghtwisnes justice	scho she
ryghtwis righteous	schon shone
rynand running	schorpyony s scorpions
rysand rising	schriche shrieking
ryseing rising, Resurrection	schrive, schryve forgive; be forgiven (in the sacrament of Penance)
ryve tear; ryvon ripped	schul shall
sa so, soever	schuld should
saferstones sapphires	schrevon shriven
salidoines celadon	schrist shrieked

Glossary

schryfen, schryven <i>shriven, forgiven</i>	seyn <i>seen</i>
schryft (<i>sacrament of</i>) <i>Penance, Confession</i>	seyner <i>sooner</i>
schryll <i>clearly, brightly</i>	seyntwary <i>sanctuary</i>
schynand <i>shining</i>	seyrwyse <i>in various ways</i>
schyre <i>shining</i>	seyt <i>says</i>
scole(s) <i>school(s)</i>	seytt <i>seated; seat</i>
scrattyn <i>scratching</i>	side <i>spacious</i>
scriche <i>screech, shriek</i>	sigge <i>say</i>
scrippe <i>pilgrim's bag or pouch</i>	sikelatoun <i>silk woven with gold</i>
scryve <i>confess; renounce</i>	siker(liche), siker(ly), sycur(ly)
se <i>sea; to see</i>	<i>sure(ly), certain(ly), firmly</i>
seculeres <i>diocesan priests</i>	sithen <i>afterwards, then</i>
sede <i>said, taught</i>	sithe(s), sythus <i>time(s)</i>
seett <i>set, established</i>	skathe <i>harm</i>
sege <i>seat</i>	sklaunder, sclandur <i>scandal, slander; sclanderyd</i> <i>slandered</i>
seighe, seyghe <i>saw</i>	skorne <i>scorn, mock</i>
seke <i>sick</i>	skyll <i>reason, rational capacity</i>
selly <i>remarkably, skillfully</i>	slane <i>slain</i>
semaland <i>appearing</i>	slaveyn <i>pilgrim's cloak</i>
semalande <i>appearance</i>	slete <i>sleet</i>
semblaunce <i>comparison, resemblance</i>	slewthe <i>sloth</i>
semly <i>pleasing</i>	slowe <i>slow, sluggish</i>
sen <i>since</i>	slyke <i>such</i>
sensowrys <i>chersers</i>	smal, smyll(e) <i>smell, odor, aroma; piece, bit</i>
septurus <i>scepters</i>	smal(e) <i>small, fine, slender</i>
se(e)r(e), seer <i>various, diverse</i>	smert <i>painful, sharp; be pained</i>
serewyse <i>apart</i>	smiche <i>smoke</i>
seriaunce <i>servants</i>	smylland <i>smelling</i>
sertaine, sertayne <i>certain</i>	smytheus, smythus <i>forges, blacksmith</i>
servydyst <i>deserve</i>	<i>shops; smythy forge</i>
sese(s) <i>cease(s), stop(s), remit(s); sees</i>	smythus <i>blacksmiths</i>
sesoune <i>season, time</i>	snow <i>snow</i>
sestow <i>do you see</i>	sobert <i>sobered, calmed</i>
sete <i>sat</i>	sogettus, suggettus <i>subjects</i>
sethen, sethyn, seyton <i>since, later, afterwards</i>	solemnyté <i>celebration</i>
sett <i>set, built</i>	sond <i>help</i>

Glossary

soster sister	store powerful, potent, fierce
soth(e)(ly), soth(fastly), soghth, suthely truth; truly, correctly	stowt staunch, sturdy
sotyll subtle	stounde time
souke sucked	strem(es) stream(s)
sour 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	suede oppressed, afflicted
spelle teaching	suffrayne (spiritually) beneficial; main, principal
spended spent, expended	suffri suffer
speyr despair	suld should
sponne span	sum a; some
spourged purged, cleansed	sumdele somewhat, a bit
spowsage marriage	sumtyme at one time, once upon a time
spyll(e) kill, ravage, shake	swa so
spylt killed, destroyed	swart, swert black
spyttyll forkus pitchforks	swepand sweeping
stabill, stabyll stable, steadfast, reliable, orthodox	swere neck; swear
stane stone	swete adj., adv. sweat; sweet(ly), comfortably
stark strong	swetter sweeter
sted situated; treated	swevening dreaming
sted(d)(e)(s), styd place(s), location(s)	swiche such
stell steal	swilk such
stel(l)(e), styl steel	swithe, swythe very, greatly; quickly; firmly
stely steal, sneak	swolo, swolewo swallow; swolloid swallowed
steron stir	swowyng groaning
ster(res) star(s)	sybbe kinship
steven(s) voice(s), speech(es), sound(s)	syde side, boundary
stighe climbed, went up	syde-lyppud wide-lipped
stille firmly	sykande sighing
stin(c)kand stinking	sykerer more surely, more certainly
stint stopped	sykud, sykyd sighed
stor possessions	

Glossary

sykurnes security	
symple frank, open, simple	
syngant singing	
sythe(s) time(s)	
ta toe; take	
tak take; took	
tak(e) (gud) tent pay (close) attention	
takenyng tokening, sign	
tald told; counted; recounted	
tane taken, caught; accepted, encompassed; the one	
tapaces topaz	
teche(d) teach (taught), show	
teght, teyt teeth	
tempore temper	
tene suffering; ten	
tentes pays attention, attends	
tenyd accused	
terestri terrestrial, earthly	
teythe tithes	
tha those	
thai they	
thair their	
thaire these	
tham them	
than then	
thare, thore there	
thaw(ye) though	
the the; thee, you, thyself; prosper	
thede country, land	
thefus, theves thieves	
thei they; even if, although	
their these	
thenche(n) think	
thennes, thennus thence	
ther where; there	
thethen thence	
thi your, thy	
thider thither, there	
thilche these	
thin thine, your	
thir these	
thirl(ed) pierce(d)	
tho then; those	
thole endure, bear, suffer	
thonder thunder	
thonk(ed) thank(ed)	
thratte threatened	
thrawe thrust	
thred, thridde third	
throw dangerous	
thrust thirst	
thurgh through	
thurt need	
thurh(out) through(out)	
thusgate thus; thusly; as follows	
thyse thighs	
tiding tidings, news	
til(l), tyll to, until	
tine, tyne lose, harm, destroy; harmful, damnable	
titter more quickly, quite quickly	
to two; too; to	
tobrent burnt fiercely	
todes toads	
todrawyn, todrowe torn apart	
toforn before, in front of	
tokening premonition	
tolys tools	
ton the one	
tong(us) tongue; tong(s)	
tonicles vestments, albs	
topes topaz	
torrent tore, torn to bits	
toryfe tear apart	

Glossary

toskus, toskys <i>tusks</i>	uncouthe <i>uncivilized, savage</i>
tothe <i>teeth</i>	undede <i>opened</i>
tother <i>the other</i>	undernome <i>assumed, put on</i>
totore <i>tore up</i>	unkynd, unkyndely <i>unnatural, unkind</i>
toucheth, towches <i>touches; is relevant</i>	unleylle <i>unfaithful</i>
tourn <i>turn</i>	unnethe <i>frighten; scarcely</i>
touten <i>arses</i>	unnethes <i>lest</i>
transyng <i>passing over, trance (unconscious state)</i>	unryghtwysse <i>unjust</i>
travaild <i>troubled</i>	unskylfull <i>non-rational</i>
travayll <i>travail, hardship</i>	untyll <i>unto, to</i>
tremblyd <i>trembled</i>	urn <i>flow</i>
trent <i>turned</i>	
tre(u)s(s) <i>tree(s); wood</i>	valay <i>valley</i>
trispas(s)e <i>trespass, sin</i>	varely <i>verily</i>
trone <i>throne</i>	vartu <i>power</i>
trow(ed) <i>believe(d), trust(ed)</i>	vayne <i>vain, useless, proud</i>
trowestow <i>do you believe</i>	velany <i>villainy</i>
trowth(e) <i>truth, fidelity</i>	venjans <i>vengeance</i>
trowyng <i>opinion, belief</i>	versickles <i>versicles (short, repeated prayers)</i>
trwe <i>true</i>	vertu(s) <i>power(s), strength(s), virtue(s)</i>
tuk <i>took</i>	vochensaffe, vochesave, vouchesave <i>promise, allow, grant</i>
tuk (gud) tent <i>paid (close) attention</i>	volenté <i>desire</i>
turmentri(e) <i>torment</i>	voutry <i>see avoutry</i>
turmentowrus, tormentowrys <i>tormenters</i>	vys <i>vice</i>
twoched <i>touched</i>	
twybyll <i>pickax(es)</i>	wa <i>woe</i>
twyne <i>part</i>	wait <i>know</i>
tyd, tyte <i>quickly</i>	wald(e) <i>would</i>
tyde <i>time, liturgical season</i>	walkand <i>walking</i>
tyre <i>attire</i>	walland <i>boiling</i>
tysus <i>entices</i>	walle <i>welled</i>
tyttest <i>most quickly</i>	wan <i>dim</i>
uggod <i>shuddered</i>	wandes <i>fear</i>
umlappud, umsett <i>set around, surrounded</i>	wane <i>won, earned; one</i>
	wanhope <i>despair</i>
	wapen <i>weapon(s)</i>

Glossary

war <i>was, were; aware; wary</i>	winne <i>salvation; to win, prevail</i>
warand <i>(be) cursed</i>	wirschepe, wirschiph <i>worship</i>
warkus, warkys, werkes <i>works</i>	wiseliche <i>wisely</i>
warf <i>world</i>	wist, wyst <i>knew</i>
wast <i>wasted, useless</i>	wite, wytte <i>know, understand</i>
wasted <i>washed, wasted</i>	witerly, wyterly <i>truly</i>
wat(e), wot <i>know, understand</i>	withalle <i>withal, completely</i>
wathes <i>perils, dangers</i>	withdrawe <i>withdraw from, forsake; withdrawn, taken out</i>
wawys <i>waves</i>	witt, wytt, whytt <i>know</i>
waxand <i>waxing, growing</i>	wittes <i>wits, intelligence</i>
wayly <i>wail</i>	wlatsom <i>disgusting</i>
wedla(y)ke <i>wedlock, marriage</i>	wod(e)(nes) <i>mad, crazy; fury, madness</i>
weld(es) <i>wield(s), control(s)</i>	wode <i>waded</i>
welth <i>wealth, well-being, abundance</i>	wold <i>would</i>
wemen <i>women</i>	woll <i>will</i>
wend(e), wendust, wendyst <i>go, travel; lead; thought, knew</i>	wombe <i>belly</i>
wene <i>doubt; know, expect</i>	won <i>one</i>
wennus <i>whence</i>	wond <i>moved; wander</i>
wenon <i>believe, think</i>	won(ne)(eth) <i>live(s); used to</i>
wepand <i>weeping</i>	wonnynge <i>dwelling</i>
weryed <i>troubled, wearied</i>	word(lyche) <i>world(ly)</i>
wether hokys <i>shepherds' crooks</i>	wost <i>would</i>
wetton <i>tell</i>	wott <i>know</i>
weved <i>quenched</i>	wox <i>grew, became</i>
whare <i>where</i>	wrayst <i>wrest, wrench</i>
whase <i>whose, which</i>	wreche <i>vengeance</i>
wha som <i>whoever</i>	wrenche <i>wiles</i>
whatkyn <i>what kind of (sort of)</i>	wretyn, wryten <i>written</i>
whele <i>wheel</i>	wroght <i>wrought</i>
whilk(e), whylk(e) <i>which</i>	wryche <i>wretch</i>
whilom <i>once, at one time</i>	wyle, wlye, wyls <i>while, times</i>
whys <i>wise</i>	wyn <i>win, achieve, reach; winning, achievement; (at) wyn</i> <i>to win</i>
wiche <i>what</i>	wys <i>know; explain, inform</i>
wick(e), wykud <i>wicked</i>	wyse <i>manner, way</i>
wif(e), wyf(e) <i>wife, woman</i>	wytty <i>intelligent, learned</i>
wight(es) <i>creature(s), person(s)</i>	
wimen <i>women</i>	

Glossary

Y I

yalu yellow
yardys rods
yatys gates
ybe, ybyn be, been
ybent bent, curved
yblisced blessed
ybore, yborn borne, carried
ybounde bound, imprisoned
ybrought brought
ych(e)on each one
ycleped called, named
ycristned christened, baptized
ydelt dealt, distributed
ydight, ydyght fitted out, constructed,
 shaped
ydo(n) done, placed
yede(n) came, went, stood
yeff(e) if
yefftus gifts
yeme note, notice, care
yemer guardian
yfere gathered together
yfeyll feel
yfilt filled
yha yes
yhe ye, you
yhede went
yheme protect
yherd heard; praised
yher(e) year(s); hear
yhing young
yhit yet

yhold held
Yhole Yule (*Christmas*)
yhong young
yhour your
yhow you
yhowth youth
yif if
yknawe known
ylete let, undertaken, done
yliche like, equal to
ylk(e)on each one
ymelt melted, molten
ynayled nailed
yneee eyes
ynome taken
yolow yellow
yo(o)d(e) went
ypilt thrust
yrke troubled
yschewed showed
yse ice
yse, gan yse (*began to* see; seen)
yseighe saw, had seen
ysett attired
yseyd said, explained
yseye saw
yvell evil
ywerd protected
ywis indeed
ywreked compelled
yye eye